

“Starlight” — 47 - 02

PAUSE TO CONSIDER: REFLECTIONS ON SESSION #2

1. Monday Night’s experience without the powerpoint had Wayne, Joan and I going for a little while. Somehow, prior to Sunday morning’s service, a change was made to our zoom account allowing participants to share screens. This is a great setting for a family kind of show and tell, however, for a church service with almost 80 connected computers, it meant that the shared screen from a participant took over the service. Oh, dear!! Anyway, we have since fixed the problem and at last night’s St. David’s Council meeting, we were back on task with me hosting and Deb sharing screen. The good news is that we will soon be moving to a live-streaming system which will connect those at home with those at church. Be safe, my friends, and soon we will be back together. I went through pictures last night and I have so many taken at our special times together at St. David’s ...

2. From Chat - Session #1

Cheryl commented that “painting the link of ‘Starlight’ with the land the the wolves — so beautifully done — underlines the real loss to Indigenous people when they were torn away from their families and elders.” As Wagemese mentioned in the video clip, he was a “60s scoop” child, taken from his Ojibway parents at the age of two.

Trish added, “I always think — hotw would the world be different if our culture respected animals and nature the way the Indigenous people did... Factory farming wouldn’t even be a thing.

Sheryl said that, “In our group, we talked about getting to know the Indigenous culture — love of the land, working hard and working with their hands, respecting the animals.”

In answer to wondering why Wagemese chose to make Emma and Winnie white, Cheryl commented that “It was to show that violence and the effects of violence are not limited to Indigenous people.” And as Karen pointed out in an email to us, the energies spent by law enforcement to

find a missing white woman is so much greater than to find a missing Indigenous woman.” <https://mashable.com/article/black-indigenous-victims-media-coverage-gabby-petito>

Cheryl went on to ask, “will white people reading the book identify more acutely if they hear about this violence happening to a white woman than if they read the same happening to an Indigenous woman? Maybe it was a strategic choice. ... His other book, “A Quality of Life,” speaks very well of the Indigenous hero’s relationship with his adoptive parents. Interesting that the old man was not Indigenous but taught ‘Starlight’ this positive and strong link to nature which was one of his great strengths and would have normally been his heritage if he had stayed with his family.”

About Margie’s Closing, the comment was “What a marvelously moving experience. Thank you for sharing the story — beautifully told.” That echoed the thoughts of us all. Thanks, Margie.

3. National Day of Truth and Reconciliation:

The purpose of our study which Wayne introduced at the onset of our study fits right into this new Federal holiday: “To find better ways to know the truth and experience reconciliation.” Personally we’ve come a long ways from the pride of Colonialism and Imperialism to seeking what for some of us older folk a “new/ different” Truth and then seeking a way to experience reconciliation.

Our own Chinook Winds Regional has a week of activities with daily messages from Rev. Tony Snow at Hillhurst. Check it out at <https://chinookwindsregion.ca/indigenous-right-relations/> As well, each day the Herald has included articles that inform us and articulate possible directions we may go in as we experience reconciliation. Monday’s paper carried an article entitled “Survivor offers ways to honour Day for Truth and Reconciliation — “I ask Canada to see us, to hear us and to believe us.” The new National Day for Truth and Reconciliation is also being known as Orange Shirt Day. “This year, 2021, is a year of Truth for us survivors.”

4. Over the next few weeks, I will be referring to an article that I read recently which offers some reasoned responses to the major obstacle

standing in the way of truth and reconciliation, namely “Denialism.” It’s strange how much impact an ‘ism’ has to a familiar word.

Today, I’ll pick up a second phrase from the first video shown on Session #1 from CNN. This segment speaks to the issue of “School” — so important as we experience reconciliation. The article from which I’ll be quoting from time to time is written by Prof. Daniel Heath Justice from UBC and Sean Carleton from U of Manitoba.

School: *A place where children are taught a variety of academic subjects. Physical assault, sorting of children according to racist assumptions and on the basis of ability and class have long histories in Canadian education. But the particular combination of factors distinguish residential schools from comparative schooling contexts. These factors include: racist assimilationism; cultural shaming and sexual violence combined with multi-generational collusion of church and state; the explicit aim of isolating children to neutralize community resistance to government control.*

Denialists often make false comparisons between boarding schools and the violent carceral institutions known as “residential schools.” Canadian policy meant that for more than 100 years and multiple generations, Indigenous children were removed from their families and cultures to institutions where many were abused, malnourished, trafficked to local white families and inflicted with substandard education focused on manual labour and servitude — while government also systemically dispossessed Indigenous lands and resources.

The complete article: <https://theconversation.com/truth-before-reconciliation-8-ways-to-identify-and-confront-residential-school-denialism-164692>

I continue to listen to the audiotape of the **chapters 5-9** and, as requested by Wayne, asked myself as I listened (and read) **what this reading says to me about Canadian indigenous cultures, its meaning and values.....**

Chapter Five sees Emma and Winnie on the road again, mentioning Williams Lake, and giving us a little more of her background — she is familiar with farming and able to do some tasks on a farm in return for gas and food plus this piece of advice, "Whatever it is you are running from is never really gonna be left behind."

Chapter Six reveals how Cadotte and Anderson escape the fire and set off on their revengeful journey to find Emma.

Chapter Seven shows that Eugene and Frank have finished their septic tank renovation, dress up and go to town. We learn more about their relationship and their relationship to the town.

Chapter Eight has us discover the town of Endaco, BC — I had to look it up on the map. It's on Highway 16. Emma and Winnie find a temporary place to call home.

Chapter Nine has Eugene and Frank setting off to collect firewood for winter. Again their comfortable companionship is demonstrated through dialogue.

Enjoy your read! (all the while thinking about our growing awareness of Canadian Indigenous culture — and even moreso, how poverty controls the lives of people like Emma.)

Thoughtfully yours,
Brenda

