Vol. 1 No. 2
Winter 2019

Critical Theology
engaging church culture society

Winter 2019 issue edited by Christine Jamieson

Introduction

By Christine Jamieson
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The underlying themes of this issue of *Critical Theology: Engaging Church, Culture, Society* are decolonization and reconciliation. The history of the relation between Christian churches and Indigenous peoples in Canada (and in many other parts of the world) makes decolonizing Christianity and Christian theology imperative. It seems a fitting focus given the Calls to Action in *Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future: Summary of the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada*. Calls to Action numbers 58, 59, 60, and 61 come under the heading "Church Apologies and Reconciliation." The three articles that make up the main part of this issue of *Critical Theology* refer to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the Calls to Action. All three testify to a striving to heed the calls to action, to become aware of unconscious and conscious colonial patterns of thought and behaviour and how these play out in the relationship between Christian churches and Indigenous peoples. All three papers take very seriously the deep wounds inflicted on Indigenous peoples that stem directly from errant interpretations of the teachings of Christ. Each paper engages in the hard, demanding work that is required to heal relations and seek reconciliation.

In "Christianities and Indigenous Peoples: The Urgency for 'New Paths,'" Michel Andraos asserts that it is *rupture*, not continuity, that is the starting point of healing and reconciliation. A "new theological imagination is needed" that will allow for "a radical rethinking of [the churches'] mission history, their theologies, and their structures." For Andraos, the "core of the colonial theological problem" is the "attitude of superiority" in "Western versions of Christianity." Andraos's interest in the relation between the churches and Indigenous peoples began with his doctoral work in Chiapas, Mexico, where he completed his last doctoral course. In his focus on Latin American liberation theology, he gradually came to realize that the churches and mission theology itself contributed to the problem of poverty and marginalization among Indigenous peoples. Until the Truth and Reconciliation Commission began, the Latin American context and liberation was his main focus. As Andraos wrote in an email communication: "I truly think that the Indigenous question today is one of the most central questions to theology in the Americas and elsewhere, and that mainline theologies have not taken it seriously enough yet." He recently

Contents

Introduction
By Christine Jamieson 1
Christianities and Indigenous Peoples
By Michel Andraos 3
Strangers on the Land
By Matthew Anderson 10
Indigenous and Christian Spirituality
By Benjamín Luján 15
Book Reviews 21

completed the editing of a book, *The Church and Indigenous Peoples in the Americas: In Between Reconciliation and Decolonization* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2019), in which he brings together Indigenous theologians from different parts of the continent expressing their experience, and non-Indigenous theologians listening, learning, and responding.

Matthew R. Anderson's paper, "Strangers on the Land: What 'Settler-Aware' Biblical Studies Learns from Indigenous Methodologies," proposes a "settler-aware exegesis" as a "gift" to the Settler–Indigenous community. As the grandchild of Settlers on the Canadian great plains, his experience from a young age was one of living a divided condition: both a "stranger on the land" and yet "a child of that earth and no other." His heightened awareness of his Settler identity is lived out in what he describes in an email communication as "an active interest in the often-neglected 'clearing of the plains' in the late 1800s that nearly annihilated the First Nations while opening the land for my ancestors to settle." Anderson has walked several 350-km historic trails as pilgrimages across the northern Great Plains with Settler and First Nations groups as part of his effort towards both research and reconciliation. In addition, he co-founded the annual treks of Concordia University students by foot from Old Montreal to Kahnawà:ke Mohawk Territory. Recent publications include "Pilgrimage and the Challenging of a Canadian Foundational Myth," in *Pilgrimage in Practice: Narration, Reclamation and Healing* (eds. Ian S. McIntosh, E. Moore Quinn, and Vivienne Keely, CABI, 2018).

The final piece, "Indigenous and Christian Spirituality: Theological and Pastoral Reflections for Reconciliation," by Benjamín Luján, communicates the spiritual and interconnected worldview of Indigenous peoples. In taking up the work of Indigenous theologian George Tinker and Latin American theologian Gustavo Gutiérrez, Luján brings together Indigenous and Christian spiritualities in their shared base of a fundamental commitment to and faith in the Creator God. The rupture of "a sacred interrelatedness" that all three papers point to calls for a "mutual transformation." Indigenous experiences of the Sacred offer a holistic affirmation of spirituality that, as Luján states, "permeates all aspects of life and seeks harmonious living with all." Benjamín Luján is Peruvian-Canadian. His doctoral dissertation examines the significance of the thought of Gustavo Gutiérrez and George Tinker for Indigenous justice in Canada, drawing on the work of Bernard Lonergan.

My interest in making the themes of decolonization and reconciliation the focus of the winter 2019 issue of *Critical Theology* stems from my own Indigenous roots, which are linked to the Boothroyd First Nation (member of the Nlaka'pamux Nation Tribal Council) in the Fraser Canyon, British Columbia. My great-grandmother belonged to the Nlaka'pamux people and my grandfather belonged to the Boothroyd First Nation.

Christianities and Indigenous Peoples: The Urgency for “New Paths”[1]

By Michel Andraos
Catholic Theological Union at Chicago

Introductory Remarks

Relationships between the mainline Christian churches and the Indigenous peoples of Canada, the Americas, and beyond are going through radical rethinking. The road ahead, however, is not yet clear. We live in new times that are still unfolding. A new theological imagination is needed to think about the future of these relationships.

The majority of Indigenous peoples around the world are Christian of one denomination or another; Indigenous peoples have been the main targets of “evangelization” of Western Christian churches for many centuries. Indigenous Christians themselves are rethinking their relationships with and within their churches, and are considering how to transform the colonial Christian legacy they have inherited. These discussions are happening all over the world, from Australia, to southern Chile, to northern Canada. The involvements of the churches in the violent colonial history, and the genocide, of Indigenous peoples are well documented, and are increasingly accepted as fact by many Christians and by the leadership of many churches. Mainline church complicity in the genocide and dispossession of Indigenous peoples is no longer a secret. However, this past history is, unfortunately, still also the present in many places. This evolving awareness of the violent history and of ongoing complicity has impelled the churches to radically reflect on their theologies and missions, and to seriously search for new paths for the future. “Amazonia: New Paths for the Church and for an Integral Ecology” is the latest document from the Vatican on this topic. It is one clear example of such searching.[2]

Apologies and other symbolic gestures towards reconciliation with Indigenous peoples have been recently made by the churches in many places around the world. In the Canadian context, which is the focus of this article, apologies by the mainline churches have been made on several occasions since the late 1980s. In 2008, the Canadian federal government also made a formal apology to the survivors of the residential schools system for the abuses experienced in these schools, and for the violent domination of Indigenous peoples in all aspects of their social, economic, cultural, and spiritual life. “Cultural genocide,” or simply “genocide,” have come to be publicly acceptable terms in Canada and elsewhere to describe this relationship and history.[3] In particular, the recent work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) of Canada, following the Government of Canada’s apology, raised the level of public awareness and became a driving force behind a cultural shift that is still under way. The TRC reports offered Canadians a new narrative of our history, putting Indigenous peoples’ experiences at the centre. The more important driving forces behind the current political, social, and cultural transformations we are now experiencing, however, have been multiple movements of Indigenous resistance, in particular from the 1960s to the present.[4]

The churches and their leaderships have been deeply affected by these cultural transformations. They have been forced to leave behind their self-images of innocence that hide inaction behind good intentions and benevolent theologies, to apologize, and to start undertaking a radical rethinking of their mission history, their theologies, and their structures. So far, the changes have been very slow compared to the magnitude of the task and the historic, ethical responsibility. This is the case all over the world. Despite the many recent public statements and gestures of goodwill, there are important questions and challenges concerning the colonial role of the churches and the accompanying role played by their theologies. A key challenge, I believe, is the continuing lack of a clear understanding, and at times a resistance to understanding, the seriousness of the colonial role of the Christianities represented in the mainline churches. Concrete historical and theological awareness of how churches were, and continue to be, structurally implicated in the colonial process, or the coloniality of power, leads me to the discussion below.

I will discuss some possible reasons for resistance to change in the churches in the following section. Then, following the orientation and inspiration of the preparatory document of the Synod for Amazonia, and in conversation with Indigenous thought, I will discuss the search for new paths in the relationship between the Catholic and Indigenous peoples called for in the convocation to the synod. In the last section of this

article, I will share some reflections for doing critical intercultural theology.

Resistance to Change

A recent study of the TRC's message about the history of residential schools in Canada reveals that many Canadians "are still unable to grasp what was 'so bad' about Canadian residential schools and why those schools had such a profoundly negative impact on so many Indigenous people."[5] While the focus of her study is on Anglicans in Canada's North, Gaver considers her research to apply to the rest of the country. The author examines three factors she believes help explain this lack of understanding and communication: "(1) ignorance and indifference, (2) personal knowledge, and (3) worldviews-in-collision."[6] I find Gaver's research conclusion, in particular her third point about the collision of worldviews, helpful for explaining the theological dimension that I will discuss below. Citing the work of Martin Brokenleg, Gaver agrees that

> Western cultures, strongly influenced by Western Christianity and Greek philosophy, emphasize that there is *one* God and *one* truth or *one* way to follow God; that governments are hierarchical, with *one* CEO at the top. Colonialism (however defined), with its emphasis on the superiority of Western culture over other cultures, is another example of Western worldview. Indigenous worldviews are generally quite different.[7]

The attitude of superiority intrinsic to Western cultural expressions and relations, including most Western versions of Christianity, is, I believe, at the core of the colonial theological problem. Theologies of Western Christianities for the most part still function within such a triumphalist paradigm, despite attempts over the past few decades towards understanding non-Western cultures, inculturation, intercultural and interreligious dialogue, and so on. The work of unmasking the colonial nature, structure, and tools of Western Christian theologies and their role in the encounter with Indigenous peoples, which I believe is an important task for Canadian theologians, has simply not been fully or seriously done yet. The continuing insistence on assimilating other Christian cultural experiences into the Western paradigms, or containing them in some way in the official teachings, pastoral practices, and structures of the churches is clear evidence. Without a deeper and more concrete understanding of the colonial legacy within the churches, a lot of the work on reconciliation and the talk about decolonization will mask more than reveal the colonial structures of the churches and their theologies. Recent developments in coloniality/decoloniality scholarship, and in social movements associated with it, are helping us examine colonial structures and their persistence at a deeper level. These theoretical developments help us better understand what it takes to make decolonial turns in the relationships between the churches and Indigenous peoples.[8]

Searching for "New Paths"

The relationship between churches and colonialism is not only a Canadian problem. Rather, it is a global problem of Western Christianities. The preparatory document for the Synod for Amazonia that will take place in Rome in October 2019, I believe, ushers in a significant new direction for the global Roman Catholic Church.

While recent popes have apologized to Indigenous peoples in many parts of the world since the 1980s, the new move to action by Francis outlined in the preparatory Synod for Amazonia document could be a significant theological and pastoral breakthrough for Catholic churches and Indigenous peoples. The document clearly states, as its title, "Amazonia: New Paths for the Church and for an Integral Ecology," indicates, that the Catholic Church needs to take a "new path," specifically, a decolonial path. The document includes clear acknowledgement of the colonial past and neocolonial present, and calls on the Church to rethink its theology and pastoral ministry in order to become a "post-colonial" church. This is the orientation given for the work of the Synod, which is intended to lead to action. While the main focus of the document is the local churches in the Amazonian region, the synod, the document says, concerns the whole Catholic Church in its relation to Indigenous peoples everywhere. In the section (no. 4) on the "Church's historical memory," the document states:

> The Church's presence in the Amazon Basin has its roots in the colonial occupation of the area by Spain and Portugal. … Today, unfortunately, traces still exist of the colonizing project, which gave rise to attitudes that belittle and demonize indigenous cultures. … It is frightening that still today – 500 years after external conquest, following more or less 400 years of organized mission and evangelization, and 200 years after the independence of Pan-Amazonian countries – similar vicious cycles continue to hold sway over the territory and its inhabitants, who today are victims of a ferocious neocolonialism, carried out "under the auspices of progress".

The method and purpose of the synod are clearly defined in the preamble of the document as an exercise in listening to, and accompanying, Indigenous peoples of the Amazonia:

> Listening to indigenous peoples and to all the communities living in the Amazonia – as the first

> interlocutors of this Synod – is of vital importance for the universal Church. For this we need greater closeness. We want to know the following: How do you imagine your "serene future" and the "good life" of future generations? How can we work together toward the construction of a world which breaks with structures that take life and with colonizing mentalities, in order to build networks of solidarity and inter-culturality? And, above all, what is the Church's particular mission today in the face of this reality?

The approach of and orientation to the Synod agree with what the TRC has also made clear, and what many Indigenous scholars and movements have been saying for a long time: that colonization is not a past history. It is rather the reality of the Indigenous peoples of the world today, Canada included, and this colonial and neocolonial reality permeates all aspects of the relationship between Indigenous peoples and the states in which they live. The mainline churches in Canada and elsewhere, and their theologies, are not outside these colonial constructs. Rather, they have been and continue to be complicit in this history and process, and continue to sustain coloniality in many unchecked ways. It is in this context that the question raised in the above quotation from the synodal document becomes globally relevant: What have the churches done in 400 years of organized mission and evangelization?

An important point of convergence between the vision for the synod and the experience of Indigenous peoples globally is the emphasis on the centrality of "integral ecology" to the new paths the Church is called to take, and to the call for ecological conversion, reiterating the teaching of *Laudato si'*, the recent encyclical by Francis. The vision laid out in "Amazonia: New Paths for the Church and for an Integral Ecology" for the synod builds strongly on *Laudato si'* and calls the Church to action in a particular region considered strategically crucial for the future of all humanity. The preparatory document also calls for learning from Indigenous peoples and supporting their organizations that are struggling for autonomy and self-determination. (no. 3) It affirms that "Protecting indigenous peoples and their lands represents a fundamental ethical imperative and a basic commitment to human rights. Moreover, it is a moral imperative for the Church, consistent with the approach to integral ecology called for by *Laudato si'*." (no. 5)

This ecclesial endeavour resonates well with the recent scholarship of several Canadian Indigenous and non-Indigenous thinkers and activists who are working on questions of Indigenous resurgence and reconciliation.[9] In fact, the thinking of these scholars could significantly expand the theological and pastoral approaches of the churches. Indigenous scholars Leanne Simpson and John Borrows, for example, explain in profound and inspiring ways the importance of learning *from* and *with* the land for building a hopeful future in the midst of the multiple civilizational crises and our destructive relationships as humans with our environments and with Mother Earth in general. Borrows puts reconciliation with the earth at the centre of Indigenous resurgence and emphasizes the centrality of such reconciliation to other possibilities of reconciliation between peoples. His main argument is that

> Indigenous peoples' own legal systems and life ways can more fully facilitate reconciliation with the earth. Reconciliation with the earth is the kind of resurgence I value most. In my view, resurgent relations with the natural world are key to the revitalization of Indigenous peoples' relationships with the rocks, waters, insects, plants, birds, animals, and other forms of life around us. They are also key to our reconciliation with other peoples.[10]

In the same vein, Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, in a chapter on "Land as Pedagogy" in her most recent work, *As We Have Always Done*, argues that Indigenous people "learned both *from* the land and *with* the land" in a communal, relational epistemology.[11] Making a connection between learning and wisdom, she attests that "this is what coming into wisdom within a Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg epistemology looks like. It takes place in the context of family, community, and relation. … The land, Aki, is both context and process. The process of coming to know is learner led and profoundly spiritual in nature." Learning for her comes from interacting with the spirit of elements of nature. This spiritual process of learning, she asserts, is the "vessel of resurgence."[12]

These brief insights from the works of two leading Indigenous Canadian thinkers offer only a glimpse of, and an invitation to, theologically engaged resurgent Indigenous scholarship and thought in line with *Laudato si'* and the call of the upcoming synod for taking new paths. Such an engagement, I believe, will facilitate the emergence of a decolonial theology, if theology were to make a contribution to decolonization in the Canadian context.

The Need for New Critical Public Theology

In Canada, the final report of the TRC and its Calls to Action give theologians an important task that has yet to be tackled:

> That Christians in Canada, in the name of their religion, inflicted serious harms on Aboriginal children, their families, and their communities was in fundamental contradiction to what they purported their core beliefs to be. For the

> Churches to avoid repeating their failures of the past, understanding how and why they perverted Christian doctrine to justify their actions is critical knowledge to be gained from the residential school experience.[13]

The challenge facing theologians in Canada after the TRC, then, is to examine how theology can contribute to developing the critical knowledge needed for a better understanding of the role of the churches and their theologies in the colonial past and present. It is important to investigate to what extent the churches, despite their well-intentioned apologies and gestures of reconciliation over the past few decades, continue to be part of the ongoing structures of coloniality. Many churches have committed themselves to make the change and to seek to build new right relationships with Indigenous peoples.[14] However, as noted, the work of the churches in this regard has been slow; in particular, there is significant resistance for changing ecclesial structures in line with the new understandings, the declarations of good intentions, and other commitments towards and with Indigenous peoples. In line with the TRC's mandate, it would be important to analyze and understand the reasons for such resistance, and the persistence of colonial structures and mentality in the churches: How do the churches and their theologies continue to be part of the persisting coloniality and why? Understanding more deeply why and how the churches and their Christian doctrines and catechisms justified a cultural (and physical) genocide for so long is a work that still needs to be done.[15]

Members of the mainline churches who are taking responsibility for the past need to know more concretely what went wrong, and why. According to many Indigenous and non-Indigenous theologians, the churches for the most part still do not have a decolonial theological and pastoral imagination, nor do they have clear plans of action to engage seriously in decolonizing their structures and ministries. This work is often done spontaneously, without deep understanding or long-term planning. The ways in which the mainline churches that were an integral part of the colonial violence can truly play a role in the movements of decolonization and become active participants in a new decolonial turn are still undefined and require deeper theological exploration. As the churches continue to unpack what it means to repent for colonization and seek new paths, a rupture, not continuity, with the past is needed.

Roussel rightly notes that in the current Canadian context, the social and political role of the traditional churches that were once historically powerful has been significantly weakened and diminished.[16] The scandalous history of relations with Indigenous peoples offers some of the main reasons for this loss of credibility. Canadian churches are not playing any significant leadership role in supporting the national Indigenous movements of resurgence and reconciliation, and are considered as marginal actors by these movements.[17] Indigenous Christian voices within and outside the churches are also weakened and marginalized. Furthermore, the voices of Indigenous Christians are not heard within Indigenous movements of resurgence. The key Indigenous scholars of resurgence and reconciliation do not give much importance or weight to what is happening in the churches, and not many Indigenous Christians who support the resurgence movements have any important voice in these movements.[18]

The churches have not been able to cultivate and support Indigenous leadership in their midst. Indigenous theologians in Canada and around the world have been engaging the churches in intercultural and interreligious dialogue for a long time, but with little impact. There is no lack of theological imagination among Canadian Indigenous Catholic theologians and pastoral leaders. Two examples come to mind of missed opportunities of intercultural theology around two key topics: ecclesiology and Christology.[19] In 1997, Cree Chief Harry Lafond addressed the Synod of Bishops' Special Assembly for America at the Vatican.[20] Chief Lafond, representing the Indigenous Catholics of Canada, shared a Cree vision for a new relation between the Church and Indigenous peoples. It was a vision for the Church coming out of his personal experience and his people's experience of resisting colonization, and rooted in the teaching and wisdom of the Cree elders. Lafond's address, which I discussed in more detail elsewhere, offers, in my opinion, a clear perspective for a new start, and for building together a decolonial church.[21] Chief Lafond's speech also offered a platform for dialogue between First Nations and the Canadian Roman Catholic Church and opened a genuine possibility for a new relationship.[22] He offered an invitation to deal with the hurt of the past and take the risk for journeying together in support of Indigenous peoples' self-determination and respect of their treaty rights. Unfortunately, this risk has not yet been taken and the invitation was a missed opportunity.

Another example of an invitation to dialogue was with an Anishinaabe experience of Christ. In 2005, Sister Eva Solomon, CSJ, completed a thesis for obtaining her Doctor of Ministry degree entitled "Come Dance with Me."[23] Solomon's work is fundamentally about an invitation to mutual intercultural theological dialogue between the Anishinaabe spiritual traditions, teachings, and practices, and the Catholic faith and tradition, a dialogue which the author calls interculturation of the faith. This theological study and reflection is a means for promoting healing, transfor-

mation, and reconciliation.[24] Solomon demonstrates in her work that the Native Pastoral Seminar in the diocese of Thunder Bay contributed, in the 1980s, "to the development of an authentic Native Church by providing opportunities for the participants to experience and celebrate Anishinaabe Catholic rituals and ceremonies." Solomon intentionally uses the term "interculturation" rather than the commonly used "inculturation," because for her interculturation "expresses the understanding of mutuality and dialogue that must be present in the process."[25] It would not be possible to present here the rich and profound Christology she articulates in her work, which is the result of a communal process among participants in the Native Pastoral Seminar over a number of years. The following long quotation, however, gives a brief summary of this core theological image and experience. The Anishinaabe Catholic participants of the seminar, Solomon reports, experienced Jesus in the centre of their traditional ritual. In her words, summarizing and commenting on the experience,

> … placing Jesus in the Center of the Pow-Wow as Drum, drummer, sacred dance, dancer, and teacher of the dance put him clearly in the context of the medicine wheel. As Son of Man he is there with us as human beings, and as Son of God he is there with Gitchi Manitou, the Creator and sustainer of the universe. As drummer he is the movement of the spirit in our hearts. As dance he is healing medicine itself. If he is present as dancer and teacher, then we are there as his disciples, we are learning by his example. Gitchi Manitou is there at the center as Creator of the universe, and we are there in the center with our free will, and each choice we make with the power of his spirit on the journey of life has the possibility of holiness. …
>
> As Drum, the Anishinaabeg Jesus is the heartbeat of the Creator. As Son of God he emanates directly from the heart of God, and as we listen to his heartbeat we come to know him as Word of God. He awakens us to the awareness of the creative love of God all around us. The heartbeat of the Drum is music to the ear so that the gift of the Drum, Jesus, is the gracious and beautiful gift of Gitchi-Manitou's self-giving love.
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> In this recognition the Anishinaabeg realize that our spiritual traditions are God-given gifts which we cannot deny if we expect to receive and accept Jesus. We sense a new dignity and pride in the gifts that we have been given to celebrate ourselves, and the ritual celebrations of our First Testament, as witnesses to Gitchi-Manitou's self-giving love to the whoCle universe.

This is a rich and complex theological context and imagination. My main point is that both examples, the Cree vision of the Church and the Anishinaabe experience of Jesus, were happening within Catholic ecclesial and theological contexts of dialogue, with theologians, church leaders, and bishops. While some theologians discussed these and similar topics in several journal articles in the 1980s and 1990s, these rich intercultural and interreligious dialogues were marginalized and eventually lost their momentum.[26] The invitation to intercultural and interreligious dialogue, or to interculturation, to use Solomon's term, extended by Indigenous pastoral leaders and theologians became a lost opportunity.

Roman Catholic theologian and Oblate missionary Achiel Peelman, who wrote extensively on the topic of the Church, mission, and Indigenous peoples, reflects on some of the questions raised above, and concludes that despite the Church trying since Vatican II to move in a new direction in relation to Indigenous peoples, this approach faced a number of obstacles. On the one hand, the Church hierarchy in the Vatican wants to control all initiatives of inculturation, and on the other, local church authorities also have fears of losing control.[27] Peelman adds that since the early encounters of the Church and Indigenous peoples, there have always been Indigenous Christian leaders, whom he calls "*sujets syncrétiques*," who created their version of an Indigenous church and experienced a deeply lived and rich dialogue between their traditional spiritualities and the Christian faith. Unfortunately, these experiences stayed at the margin of the Church, as the examples of Cree chief Harry Lafond and Sister Eva Solomon demonstrate.[28] In his more recent work on the dialogue between Christianity and Indigenous spirituality and religious experience, Peelman raises serious questions concerning the future of Christian mission, and argues for a radical rethinking of mission theology along the lines presented in Chief Lafond's speech.[29]

Concluding Thoughts

Despite their weakness and brokenness, the churches and their affiliate organizations and institutions continue to be influential minorities that could play an important role in supporting Indigenous resurgence and social reconciliation. To do so, they would need to rethink their existence, and their mission, in intercultural and interreligious ways, seeking new ways of being Christian communities for the future. Critical theologies can contribute to forging and promoting mutual relations of respect with Indigenous peoples and with their cultural and spiritual ways, in the spirit of the treaties, and of the agreements that were made with them since the beginning of European settlement in their lands. The exclusivist theologies of the churches contributed to creating the colonial situa-

tion, which is still with us: Can new critical theologies contribute to building a better path for the future? What would a theology that honours and respects the treaties in a spirit of mutuality and interculturality look like? The present brokenness and loss of credibility of the churches could become a *kairos* moment for radical rethinking in humility, away from the triumphalist theologies and attitudes that dominated most forms of Western Christianities until very recently, and still do in some instances. Could this brokenness become the crack in the wall through which the light comes in, as Leonard Cohen sings in his *Anthem*? "There is a crack in everything. That's how the light gets in."

I would like to conclude with what I consider to be a central call to the global Catholic Church by the preparatory document for the Synod for Amazonia:

> The entire People of God, along with their bishops, priests, religious men and women, and religious and lay missionaries, are called to enter this new ecclesial journey with an open heart. All are called to live together with their communities and to commit themselves to the defense of their lives, loving them and their cultures. (no. 15)

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1 This article builds on the following previously published works by the author: "Les églises, la théologie et les Autochtones : de la réconciliation à la décolonisation," *Théologiques,* 23:2 (2015), 59–73; "Doing Theology after the TRC," *Toronto Journal of Theology* 33:2 (Fall 2017): 295–301; "Christianity and Indigenous Peoples: Another Christianity Is Necessary," in Jean-François Roussel, ed., *Decoloniality and Justice: Theological Perspectives*, World Forum on Theology and Liberation (San Leopoldo, Brazil: Oikos, 2018), 25–34; and more recently, Michel Andraos, ed., *The Church and Indigenous Peoples in the Americas: In Between Reconciliation and Decolonization*, vol. 7, Studies in World Catholicism (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2019), forthcoming.

2 "Amazonia: New Paths for the Church and for an Integral Ecology," Preparatory Document for the Synod of Bishops Special Assembly for the Pan-Amazonian Region, press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/en/bollettino/pubblico/2018/06/08/180608a.html. The term "New Paths" in the title of this article is inspired by this document, which is the reason for using it in quotation marks.

3 Just to give some examples, see Beverley McLachlin, "Chief Justice Says Canada Attempted 'Cultural Genocide' on Aboriginals," *The Globe and Mail*, May 28, 2015; The final report of the Truth and Reconciliation of Canada frequently uses the terms "genocide" and "cultural genocide": see The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, *Canada's Residential Schools: Reconciliation. The Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada*, vol. 6 (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015), also available at www.trc.ca. As far back as 1993, Indigenous theologian George Tinker has used this term in relation to evangelization: see *Missionary Conquest: The Gospel and Native American Cultural Genocide* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993); the late Gregory Baum, whose name is particularly linked to this journal, also discusses this term in his article "Canadian Churches and Colonialism," *Concilium, International Journal of Theology* 1 (2014): 85–91; finally, see the excellent recent article by Brian McDonough, "The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada," in Andraos, *The Church and Indigenous Peoples in the Americas*, 56–77. Theologians and social scientists in Australia are also using the same term to describe what happened in their country, which is strikingly similar to the Canadian experience. See, for example, Jione Havea, ed., *Indigenous Australia and the Unfinished Business of Theology: Cross-Cultural Engagement* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), and in particular the chapter in the same publication by Sarah Maddison, "Missionary Genocide: Moral Illegitimacy and the Churches of Australia," 31–46; see also the collection of articles on this topic in the most recent issue of the *Australian Journal of Mission Studies* 12:2 (December 2018).

4 On the history and examples of these resistance movements, see Arthur Manuel and Ronald Derrickson's important book *Unsettling Canada: A National Wake-Up Call* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2015).

5 Cheryl Gaver, "Residential Schools in Canada: Why the Message Is Not Getting Across," in Brieg Capitaine and Karine Vanthuyne, eds., *Power through Testimony: Reframing Residential Schools in the Age of Reconciliation*, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2017), 198.

6 Ibid., 198.

7 Ibid., 211.

8 There are several articles on theology and decolonial thought in Roussel, *Decoloniality and Justice: Theological Perspectives*, cited above. In addition, the work of Canadian Indigenous scholar Marie Battiste, member of the Mi'kmaw Nation, on decolonizing education is a good example for doing parallel theological work by theologians for decolonizing theology and the churches. Among Battiste's many works on this topic, see in particular *Decolonizing Education: Nourishing the Learning Spirit* (Saskatoon: Purich Publishing, 2013), and a more recent book chapter that is relevant to the topic of this article, "Reconciling Truths and Decolonizing Practices for the Head, Heart, and Hands," in Andraos, *The Church and Indigenous Peoples in the Americas*, 177–92.

9 Just to use as an example one very recent publication, see Michael Asch, John Borrows, and James Tully, eds., *Resurgence and Reconciliation: Indigenous-Settler Relations and Earth Teachings* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2018).

10 John Borrows, "Earth-Bound: Indigenous Resurgence and Environmental Reconciliation," in *Resurgence and Reconciliation: Indigenous–Settler Relations and Earth Teachings*, eds. Michael Asch, John Borrows, and James Tully (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2018), 50. Several other authors in this collective scholarly volume offer profound insights that, if engaged theologically, could be generative of new critical theological thinking that could help in the development of a theology that contributes to decolonization and reconciliation, and in the process to the decolonization of theology.

11 Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, *As We Have Always Done: Indigenous Freedom through Radical Resistance* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2017), 150.

12 Ibid., 158.

13 The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, *Canada's Residential Schools: Reconciliation*, 98.

14 On the response of the Catholic Church in Canada to the TRC, see the excellent summary and theological reflection by Brian McDonough, "The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada," in Andraos, *The Church and Indigenous Peoples in the Americas*, 56–77. McDonough's chapter includes a good bibliography on the apologies of the churches in Canada to the Indigenous peoples, and an excellent discussion on the eight commitments of the Catholic Church in response to the Calls to Action of the TRC. See also the two other important related articles in the same publication by Eva Solomon, CSJ: "My Experience Working as an Indigenous Person with Indigenous People," 45–55, and Sylvain Lavoie, OMI, "Walking a New Path: A Harvest of Reconciliation—Forging a Renewed Relationship between the Church and the Indigenous Peoples," 78–97. For another recent example on the same topic from the Australian church context, see Michael Hardie, "Reconciliation Delayed: Searching for Justice

in Aboriginal Australia," *Australian Journal of Mission Studies* 12:2 (December 2018): 16–23.

15 This theological work by the churches is also requested by Call to Action #59 of the TRC: see http://nctr.ca/assets/reports/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf.

16 See Jean-François Roussel, "Churches and Theology in Canada after Residential Schools: The Difficult Path of Truth, Reparation and Decolonization," in Daniel Franklin Pilario et al., eds., *Concilium: International Journal of Theology*, 3 (2017), 113–20.

17 It would be important to mention as an exception to my statement above the important work of the ecumenical organization Kairos, a coalition of several churches and religious groups working together for justice in Canada and around the world. Kairos' education and advocacy program on Indigenous rights has been effective at the grassroots and public levels. Most notable is the organization's educational Blanket Exercise workshop. For more info on Kairos and this exercise, see www.kairoscanada.org/what-we-do/indigenous-rights/blanket-exercise.

18 Just to use one recent example, the new collective work by high-profile Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars on resurgence and reconciliation, Michael Asch, John Borrows, and James Tully, eds., *Resurgence and Reconciliation,* includes no mention or consideration of the work of reconciliation by the churches, church organizations, or Indigenous Christian groups.

19 I discussed other examples in the articles cited above in footnote no. 1. In a recent article, Rosella Kinoshameg discussed the integration into her Catholic faith of what she calls the Anishinaabe Gospel of Jesus. See Rosella Kinoshameg and Paul Robson, "Culture of Encounter: Reconciliation and Integration of the Anishinabe and the Catholic," *Religious Studies and Theology* 37:2 (2018): 241–58.

20 Harry Lafond, "The Church and the Indigenous Peoples of Canada," *Origins* 27:27 (December 18, 1997), 456–57.

21 Jean-Guy Goulet, "'We Must Become Risk-Takers': An Analysis of Interreligious Dialogue as Social Process," *Mission* V:1 (1998), 111–23. In this article, Goulet offers insightful anthropological observations that help us better understand Chief Lafond's address by situating it in the Canadian religious, cultural, and political contexts of the 1990s. See also Jean-Guy Goulet, "Liberation Theology and Missions in Canada," *Église et théologie* 15:3 (1994), 293–319.

22 Goulet, "We Must Become Risk-Takers,'" 111–23, and Goulet, Liberation Theology and Missions in Canada, 293–319.

23 The full title of the work is "Come Dance with Me: The Thunder Bay Diocesan Native Pastoral Seminar: A Medicine Wheel Model of Anishinaabe Catholic Interculturation of Faith and a Means of Healing, Integrity, Transformation and Reconciliation" (Chicago: Catholic Theological Union, 2005).

24 Ibid., 3.

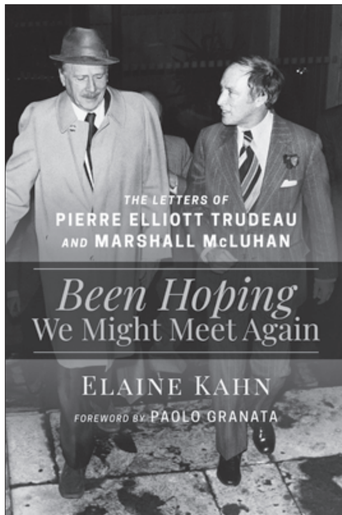
25 Ibid., 4.

26 See for example "The Church and Aboriginal People in Canada," I & II, numbers 37 and 38 of the journal *Kerygma* published in 1981 and 1982 respectively. The two issues include a series of articles by well-known theologians and missiologists of the time who discuss the revival of Indigenous spiritualities and practices and dialogue with mission theology.

27 Achiel Peelman, *Les nouveau défis de l'inculturation* (Montréal: Novalis, 2007), 169–70.

28 Ibid., 171–74.

29 Achiel Peelman, *L'Esprit est Amérindien* (Montréal: Mediaspaul, 2005), 31–37.



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Strangers on the Land

What "Settler-Aware" Biblical Studies Learns from Indigenous Methodologies

By Matthew R. Anderson
Concordia University, Montreal

In this paper, I propose that Settler or Settler-descendent scholars incorporate into biblical studies methodologies an explicit awareness and acknowledgement of one's status on colonized territory. Already in 2012, Fiona C. Black challenged the Canadian academy, asking, "Can one promote biblical study in this country without addressing the impact that the Bible and its related religious traditions have had [on First Peoples]?"[1] While many, perhaps most, academics would now agree on the importance of that question, not enough work has yet been done in response. Since that time, the findings of Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) have shone even more light on the dark complicity of churches who together with the Canadian government used the residential school system to systemically oppress Indigenous peoples, and the grave injustices, abuse, and, occasionally, deaths that ensued. It is important to revisit the kinds of academic and practical misuses of scripture that were used to justify this oppression.

This paper is focused on TRC Call to Action 62, "Education for Reconciliation." In section two of that Call to Action, the Commission demands that post-secondary institutions "integrate Indigenous knowledge."[2] As elsewhere, in this section the TRC's Calls to Action are two-pronged: they seek to find a place and guarantee funding for Indigenous academics, but also to educate those of us who are not Indigenous to respect Indigenous knowledges and to learn from them. The presupposition behind the TRC's Calls to Action, and behind this paper, are that making space in the Settler community for Indigenous methodologies and knowledge systems, and acknowledging their validity, are preconditions for a more just relationship.

To begin to explore what this might look like for non-Indigenous scholars of biblical studies, I will focus first on critiques of the hidden power behind the notion of objectivity, especially as identified by Indigenous scholarship. Second, I will examine how, despite their differences, Indigenous scholars' common emphasis on land, relationship, spirituality, and community good might affect the methodologies employed by Settler biblical scholars. Finally, using the example of Matthew 28:25-28, the so-called Great Commission, I will test some of the methods gained from this brief attempt at a "Settler-aware hermeneutics."

I see a Settler-aware perspective operating in two complementary ways. First, the shock of realizing—or, more commonly, being *forced* to realize—our Settler status and the hermeneutics that arise unconsciously from it can momentarily alienate us from scriptural texts that may once have seemed exclusively or primarily "ours." This breaking of ownership and the suspension of the usual habits of analysis and interpretation that go with it shows us that the familiarity we believe we have, for example, with the Gospel of Luke, or with Paul's letters, is part of our colonial blindness to privilege. By listening to how others encounter the text, we will learn from questions and observations we had not thought even to ask. This first benefit has been proven to arise from giving space to many different non-privileged methods of interpretation,[3] not just Indigenous ways of encountering scriptural texts.

Second, the inescapably spiritual, relational, and narrative hermeneutics that underlie Indigenous methodologies challenge the Western biblical scholar's pretence to objectivity and attachment to the idea of static, unchanging truth. Further, they invite us to ask the existential question of what good—or ill—our work may bring both to creation and to our communities. The texts have spiritual aims and effects; we are all spiritual beings, whether academics or general readers, agnostic, atheist, or committed to a particular tradition. According to Indigenous scholarship, this inevitably affects our interactions with scriptural texts.

Indigenous Methodologies and Settler "Objectivity"

> Nishnaabeg Elder Jim Dumont explained the origins of the word debwewin to a group of students and community members at Trent University's Annual Elders Conference in 2010. The word is normally translated as truth, and Dumont explained to us that he had difficulty breaking

> it down into its components, until an Elder told him to place the letter "o" in front of it. When one does that, the first component of the word is "ode" which means heart. The component "we" means the sound of. So (o)debwewin is "the sound of the heart;" or more specifically, in my own case, it is the sound of my heart. This means my truth will be different from someone else's.[4]

One of the ironies of biblical studies is that a scholarly discipline whose European founding principles emphasize dispassionate objectivity has historically been so bound up with the cultural contexts of its times. At least since Schweitzer, scholars note that images of the so-called historical Jesus arrived at through scholarship tend to resemble the ideals of the scholars studying that historical Jesus in their various places and eras. The "New Perspective on Paul" that took hold in the 1970s reflects Christian rereadings of the Pauline texts in light of the Holocaust; the Radical New Perspective in more recent times issues from the fresh eyes that Jewish scholars of Paul's letters such as Fredriksen, Nanos, and Levine bring to his work and to the field. Gendered, Marxist, and other hermeneutics have all added to our knowledge of the text by posing questions outside of what was considered the norm. Although first conceived as the science of biblical studies, the more nuanced reality of our day seems to be that, within a discipline marked by an overall ethos of critical self-awareness,[5] the scholar's position and his or her hermeneutic certainly help determine the results of their studies. "Interpreters as well as listeners and readers of the interpretation are both connected to and constitutive of their social locations."[6] Segovia, picking up on observations by Punt, agrees that "critical self-localization" is essential to the integrity of contemporary biblical scholarship.[7]

In one sense, until fairly recently in the field's history, most biblical studies could be characterized as "Settler biblical studies," insofar as they participated in the colonial enterprise and were used to support it. Instead, what is proposed here is a set of "Settler-aware" biblical studies methodologies. What distinguishes such an approach from other post-colonial methodologies? In response to this question, I would first agree with Linda Tuhiwai Smith that the term "post-colonial" raises as many problems as it solves, in that it appears to presume that colonialism is now, at least for those academics who practise post-colonial approaches, a thing of the past.[8] With Margaret Kovach, I would instead use the term "decolonizing" methodologies.[9] In the sense in which she employs this term, I believe that Settler-aware biblical studies participates in such a broad paradigm of academic endeavour. As Punt notes, there is no *single* "decolonizing" methodology, but rather it is characterized by "a different focus and purpose."[10]

However, there is a way in which decolonizing approaches still too often presuppose a methodology that is based on a "one-size-fits-all" answer to the problems raised by colonialism. That is, if you are in the dominant culture, it is assumed that a decolonizing approach is what will de-centre your research and encourage you to ask critical questions of the institutions and assumptions within which you work. Without disagreeing completely with such an assertion, it seems to me that the Indigenous methodologies I've encountered argue for a more nuanced approach. The interpreter is, without apology, bound to a certain locale and community, which influence her or his readings. There will be as many decolonizing methodologies as there are locales and contexts. Decolonizing may be the underlying approach, but the specific reading will always arise from a community and a land, and ideally serve that community and land.

Settler-aware methodologies for biblical studies are not strictly speaking post-colonial. Rather, they understand themselves to be still very much embedded in the imperial enterprise and in fact formed in an ongoing tension with it. They share with other decolonizing methodologies and with Indigenous methodologies[11] a starting point in self-identification, the "critical self-localization" that helps situate the researcher. This must be done personally and socially but, I would add, particularly for Settler biblical scholars, in relation to land, a factor that Indigenous researchers rightly point out is omitted primarily by those who benefit from not mentioning it.[12]

Remarking on the malleability of biblical scholarship, and so of its conclusions, is only a critique to those dwindling few who may still hold to ideals of its autonomy. Despite the difficulty that some biblical scholars still face in adequately incorporating this already established interpretive turn to the subject,[13] many have come to understand in the variability and responsiveness of approaches a richness of the discipline.

> … critical self-placement should be regarded as crucial, but such contextualization should be carried out with the same sophistication and determination as the interpretive argument itself. This has not been done much in postcolonial biblical criticism, and to that extent postcolonial biblical critics have largely followed the dominant tradition of self-effacement and, in so doing, have continued to preserve, unwittingly, the objectivist and scientistic paradigm of historicism.[14]

Land, Relationship, Spirituality, and "All My Relations"/the Common Good

"In Indigenous contexts," writes Absolon, "location does matter. People want to know who you are, what you are doing and why."[15] Tuhiwai Smith[16] underlines

the same point: "We know what we know from where we stand." She adds: "Decolonization, however, does not mean and has not meant a total rejection of all theory or research or Western knowledge. Rather, it is about centring our concerns and worldviews."[17] It is from an awareness of the inevitable cultural positionality of our biblical studies research, and a positive valuation of that fact, that I undertake this examination of how the identity of being a Settler, on colonized Turtle Island territory, and being critically aware of that position, can influence one's work as a scholar of biblical studies. At the same time, we must make every effort not simply to recolonize Indigenous property, but this time in academic territory.

Mainstream non-Indigenous methodologies are divorced from land, situation, and history, and so participate in ongoing oppression by a complicity born of the kind of blindness to perspective that is often practised by those whose relative position is already privileged. Paulette Regan notes that "Claiming ignorance is a colonial strategy.... Reconciliation conceptualized as an intercultural encounter involves creating a space for critical dialogue."[18] When those of us who are Settler-descended biblical scholars take seriously our heritage and identify as Settlers, that realization changes our research in ways that are positive both for us and for the community of scholarship, particularly in the lands in which we live.

"The methodology is just as much about the person doing the searching as it is about the search."[19] I am a grandchild of northern European and American farmers who were given land that had only 30 years before been cleared of its Indigenous inhabitants through a government policy of intentional starvation.[20] The approaches to methodology I suggest here arise from my experience of growing up on the northern great plains surrounded by places—Assiniboia, Piapot, Pasqua—whose alien names and connotations created in me the sense of not-quite-belonging that is helpful to the perspective of a later academic. As I grew aware that the people whose ancestors' ghosts haunted my corner of the prairies lived on nearby in a continuing existence of oppression, that realization placed me in a position of discomfort in a more pointed way. Because of this, and of my Lutheran upbringing, issues of justice are important to my readings of texts. In part because of a German cultural heritage tainted by the Second World War, and also because my academic career has been as a sessional professor without tenure, my research has been influenced by the suspicion of dominant narratives, despite my belonging to the colonializing culture and a position, otherwise, of some privilege. I pay respect to my grandparents and their social-democratic prairie politics, and in reading Indigenous scholars,[21] I find agreement that one's research should bring benefits back to the community.

Rather than defining biblical exegesis as an interrogation of the text, or perhaps *multiple* ways of interrogating the text, Indigenous methodologies seem to invite us to consider exegesis as a relational enterprise, something more like a conversation. Instead of the text being an inert object, or set of words that requires prying open, we come to understand the texts as living traditions and performative narratives. From its origins in the Enlightenment and because of its hard-fought independence from ecclesial authority, the discipline of biblical studies fashioned itself after the sciences early on: proposing and then testing propositions and proceeding from a Cartesian doubt of everything to (supposedly) limited but demonstrable truths. Such an approach, never fully successful, ironically has made biblical studies somewhat allergic to precisely the kinds of spiritual assertions made by the texts it studies. Margaret Kovach calls this "Western science's uneasy relationship with the metaphysical."[22]

This is perhaps where Indigenous methodologies differ most from Western post-colonial scholarship or qualitative methodologies. Most Indigenous methodologies unabashedly situate themselves within a worldview that assumes that humanity is spiritual and lives within a spiritual world. Kathleen Absolon Minogiizhigokwe notes: "Spirituality is inherent in Indigenous epistemology, which sees everything in relation to Creation."[23] While Absolon is speaking as, and for, Indigenous scholars, and not to create "pathways to sacred knowledges"[24] for the non-Indigenous community, Settler researchers who dismiss *a priori* any discussion of the spiritual aspects of life, or the performative spirituality of the texts, are automatically dismissing what Indigenous researchers are saying we need to look for first.

It may seem a small thing, but is not, that Indigenous methodologies are often also characterized by a sense of humour in interpretation and a keen eye to the humour already in texts that is often lacking in the Western academy—especially, sometimes, it seems, in biblical studies. Raymond Aldred, director of Indigenous Studies at the Vancouver School of Theology, told me how Cree Christians reading Jesus' statement "the Kingdom of God has come near to you," because of the language, understand a wordplay: Jesus is speaking of himself as the Kingdom, standing right beside them. They imagine him, like any good storyteller, looking at his audience as he says this, to see if they get it.

A Settler-aware biblical studies methodology sees its lack of ownership of the text and assumes instead a conflicted identification with it. It seeks to learn from Indigenous methodologies more about relationship, narrative, and spirit (and sometimes humour) as hermeneutical lenses through which to understand a

conversation with text. In common with Indigenous hermeneutics, but for its own reasons of repentance, it looks for what good might be brought back to its local community as a result of its research. It recognizes that, like the story-based cultures of the historic First Nations, most scriptures were also born out of story-based cultures, and the (eventually crystallized into text) narratives of scripture were earlier crafted and recrafted to ensure their memorability.[25] It starts out by assuming, with Boer, that "the Bible is in the end the church's bad conscience."[26]

A Test Case

It is beyond the scope of a conceptual paper to perform a full Settler-aware exegesis of a biblical text. Consistent with the methodology sketched out above, the results of any such study would vary greatly depending on the interrogator as well as the location. However, even a brief example shows something of what such a methodology might yield. Matthew 28:16-20 is a particularly fruitful text to examine employing a Settler-aware hermeneutic. The so-called Great Commission is foundational to the missionary enterprise as that has been carried out in conjunction with European imperial powers.

First, as the disciples travel towards the mountain in Galilee in verse 16, we note the journey theme and that the text carefully places the disciples' encounter with the risen Christ on specific land: terrain that was a satellite of the capital at Jerusalem (and further, colonized and held militarily by Rome). That is, Christ's commissioning moment took place in disputed, occupied territory. This is a privileging of the margins rather than the centres of political or economic power. The disciples do not own this land; they move through it, and yet it is home. Before he can commission them, the risen Christ makes the disciples journey across this territory; it is as if they must know where they are from before they can go anywhere else.

Similar to other decolonizing approaches, the dispossession from the text indicative of a Settler-aware methodology breaks the link that it is tempting to make here between the interpreter and the disciples: it is not *we* who travel to Galilee, it is the group of those Jewish followers of Jesus, the eleven, who represent the eschatological new Israel. This is not yet our story; our interpretive place in the text comes later. Verse 17 notes that some worshipped Jesus, while others doubted. Whatever Matthew's authorial aims, in the reception of the text amid "all our relations" there is a place for those who believe and those who doubt. The question of authority in verse 18 is read, in Settler-aware hermeneutics, not as an absolute authority but for the link to the resurrection that the author of the gospel, like all early Jesus followers, would have assumed. It was because the God of Israel raised Jesus from the dead that he is said to have "all authority." It is a relational authority, gained and maintained in relationship with God and exercised in ongoing relationship with the disciples (verse 20b).

Verse 19 is the crux of the passage, at least in terms of decolonizing and Settler-aware hermeneutics: "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations." It was because of an identification with the first disciples (if not with Jesus himself) that European, Canadian, American, and Australian missionaries in concert with colonial authorities made it their work to "Christianize" the "savages." A Settler-aware hermeneutic immediately flags at least two things: the movement of Jesus' first disciples at the time of the writing of this text was not yet Christianity, and the nations were not Others. They were *us*. Here is the hinge on which the European missionary enterprise has turned. It is based on a failure to note that the term "nations" in Matthew is also the term for "gentiles." Christians *are* the nations. European Christians, together with all other non-Jews before and since, are the recipients of the action envisioned in this text, not its instigators.

Because this passage is found in Matthew, with its very Jewish Jesus upholding the Torah (Matt 5:17-20), the words in verse 19 about baptism in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (unique in the New Testament) must be kept in relationship with those immediately following: "and teaching them to observe all that I have commanded…." There is nothing Euro-Christian about this part of the text. Part of its foreignness to the present-day movement is that it presumes that Jesus' followers will observe Torah. Once that is understood, the historically assumed superiority of European Christianity is revealed for the self-deceit that it has always been, and its arrogance towards (other) Indigenous forms of spirituality is shown as unsupported and unsupportable in the text. Matthew's text underlines what historians of the first-century origins of the Jesus movement have demonstrated with their constructions of present-day Christianity's progenitors: Indigenous acculturations of Christianity are not the exception, but the rule.

That there is an ongoing spiritual and relational importance of the text can be read into the last half of verse 20: "I myself will be with you until the end of this present age." From the beginning, the presence of Christ in spirit was one of the hallmarks of the movement, together with an eschatological expectation (until the *approaching* end of the age) that is foreign to the mindset of any power seeking to establish its permanence through domination of others. Yet Christ is present to the disciples, and to the nations that in all their variety will come to be included among them.

Conclusion

Read through a Settler-aware lens, the once-familiar "Great Commission" text from Matthew is revealed as alien in many ways not only to us, but to all forms of the European Christianity that used and continue to use it as an ideological cover for cultural and economic assimilation. Simply put, as a Settler I must realize that this is not a text I own. Our claim to own it has been a form of idolatry. This is, as Paulette Regan notes in a different context, "a truth telling in which we confront our own history and identity and make visible how these colonial practices continue today."[27] Matthew 28:16-20's inherent Jewish character—after all, it is the God of Israel who raised Jesus, and who will bring about the end of the present age—shows just how Jewish are the foundational documents of the New Testament and puts European Christianity into its proper place. Whatever sharing of gifts might take place between Settlers and First Nations should be seen as just that: a sharing between equals, branches grafted onto the tree together. This is quite different from the destructive and dishonest missionary "burden" that historically has barely masked an imperial ideology unjustified by this text.

Very near where I was born, in the Canadian province of Saskatchewan, on Treaty Four territory, there is a rare spot on the edge of a valley where the prairie grasses have not been touched by cultivation. The stones from an Assiniboine, or perhaps Cree, tent-ring in the 1800s lie in the grass. They sit, mostly undisturbed, in the same circle where they were left a century and a half ago by the people who once camped and hunted and made their homes there. Growing up I would perch myself on the edge of that coulee (the Michif or Métis name for such a valley) and look back at the falling-down buildings constructed by my ancestors on that same land. I could feel then – and still feel now – the peculiar identity of an aware Settler. This was my home, but at the same time it wasn't. I was a child of that earth and no other. But the grasses and the wind spoke to me also of my foreignness and my people's recent arrival, evidenced by the stones in that circle.

A reading of Matthew 28:16-20 such as that given above may seem to question more about the text than it asserts. Perhaps this is the gift that is brought back by Settler-aware exegesis to the Settler-Indigenous community. The title of this piece is "Strangers on the Land." That strangeness is revealed to be true not only of the place some of us biblical scholars have on Turtle Island, but also of our place in the pages of scripture. Reconciliation is still far off. But Settlers only begin to be good Treaty partners when we are ready to question foundations and to let the texts speak with voices other than our own.

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Indigenous and Christian Spirituality

Theological and Pastoral Reflections for Reconciliation

By Benjamín Luján
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Introduction

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action include specific invitations to faith communities to be part of reconciliation. Call to Action 60 asks the leaders of all faith communities in Canada to educate their clergy and staff on the need to respect Indigenous spirituality in its own right and on their responsibility to mitigate and prevent spiritual violence against Indigenous peoples. In addition, Call to Action 61 asks the Anglican, Catholic, Presbyterian, and United churches to establish permanent funding to develop, among other initiatives, regional dialogues with Indigenous spiritual leaders and youth to discuss Indigenous spirituality, reconciliation, and self-determination. These calls are rooted in the holistic and all-inclusive nature of Indigenous spirituality and are crucial for any real healing of Canadian society as a whole. In what follows here I will argue that the focus of Indigenous spirituality on mutuality, harmony, reciprocity, and balance, which themselves are rooted in sacred interrelatedness and holistic inclusion of all, is theologically in line with Christian living, and requires putting into practice ecumenical and interfaith initiatives of friendship and relationship-building with all.

I will develop this thesis in three steps. First, drawing on the work of George Tinker, I will bring to light the focus of Indigenous spirituality on the realm of lived experience—the realm of concrete, everyday living—where we find the affirmation of a spiritual way of living that permeates all aspects of life and that seeks harmonious living with all. Second, drawing on the work of Gustavo Gutiérrez, I will highlight a universal dimension of such a living from a Christian perspective, which also identifies a necessary spiritual commitment to the most excluded; this, as we will see, is also in line with Indigenous spirituality. Third, outlining some current initiatives of ecumenical and interfaith cooperation for Indigenous justice in the country, I will point out the need to strengthen the theological and pastoral support for such initiatives and will offer some guidelines for this.

Indigenous Spirituality: Some Key Insights from George Tinker

Tinker's theology of sovereignty for Indigenous peoples in North America can give important insights into the nature of an authentic Indigenous justice and reconciliation. His theology seeks freedom and self-determination in the religious, political, economic, and cultural arenas while being rooted in the core values of Indigenous spirituality.[1] The search for Indigenous justice, Tinker reminds us, is not simply a political undertaking but is first and foremost a spiritual one. For Indigenous peoples the spiritual is "a way of life … that encompasses the whole of life."[2] Thus Tinker explains that traditional ceremonies are an extension of the spiritual dimension of everyday life: "American Indian cultural characteristics manifest themselves repeatedly in the spiritual and ceremonial life of indigenous peoples in North America … since the spiritual and ceremonial life [of Indigenous peoples] is merely an extension of day-to-day existence, all parts of which are experienced within ceremonial parameters."[3] Apart from ceremonies, Tinker mentions that traditional stories also reflect Indigenous peoples' attempts to acknowledge how the spiritual manifests itself in everyday living. Narratives, he says, "capture something that runs deep in the experience of Indian communities – both in terms of our awareness of our own history as recipients of injustice and violence and the experience of the sacred. As Indian liberation must, the stories combine spiritual experiences and political sensibilities."[4]

Speaking about the key role of experience and stories as foundational components of his theology, Tinker says that the stories "recall experiences, personal and communal, that have helped to shape my own understanding of the world. As is the case in other liberation theologies, but in a significantly different sense, any American Indian articulation of a theology will necessarily be constructed on the foundation of experience."[5] Because in the Indigenous worldview every aspect of human life can be seen as spiritual and interconnected, Tinker suggests that Indigenous peoples must live in right relations with everything and everyone—with each other, with non-Indigenous people, and with the world as a whole.

From the perspective of Indigenous spirituality, the desire for Indigenous justice exists within the broader context of a desire for a more equitable distribution of wealth in the rest of the world and for a healthier planet.[6] This illustrates the Indigenous emphasis on holism and interrelatedness: for Tinker, Native sovereignty is framed in a larger context of *global* justice and healing. He says, “Returning Native lands to the sovereign control of Native peoples around the world … is not only just, but the survival of all may depend on it.”[7] In this way, the struggle for Indigenous justice takes place within and because of a wider and more fundamental spiritual embracing of all. “It is this worldview of the interrelatedness of all on the earth, including the earth itself, that gives us a chance to imagine genuine justice and an authentic peace in the world around us.”[8] This universal scope of sacred interrelatedness is what gives rise to the Indigenous value of caring for the most vulnerable members of society, seen for example in the special protection given to women and children in many Indigenous communities.[9] This is a spiritual way of living that seeks good relations with all one’s relations (peoples, animals, and all that exists) and that touches all aspects of human living.

The spiritual life, then, is not an additional aspect of human living (next to the economic, political, social, familial, etc.), and concern for the excluded is not merely an ethical duty dictating responsibility for specific members of society; rather, it is a way of living committed to all, available to all, and in harmony with all in the concrete context of everyday living. Thus Indigenous justice is not merely about Indigenous peoples but about how we all can live better. In this way, for Tinker any efforts to address the situation of Indigenous peoples should include fostering harmonious living for everyone in “a new and inclusive vision of wholeness.”[10] For this reason, all who live in North America should be part of the process of healing: Native resistance “must be matched,” he urges, “with the resistance of our non-Indian relatives for there to be real and creative transformation.”[11] From the perspective of Indigenous spirituality, the history of abuses in North America ruptured a sacred interrelatedness, and relationships suffered—relationships between Indigenous peoples and settlers, within Indigenous communities, and between human beings and the environment. These ruptures must be healed, for the sake of all involved. Stan McKay (Cree Elder and former United Church Moderator) argues that we can no longer “perpetuate the paternalistic concept that only Aboriginal peoples are in need of healing…. The perpetrators are wounded and marked by history in ways that are different from the victims, but both groups require healing.”[12] Due to the spiritual nature of this rupture that affects us all, Tinker puts a special emphasis on the role of religious peoples in the search for Indigenous justice. He says, “If we cannot rally the moral judgment of religious peoples … I suspect there can be no grassroots movements toward any creative transformation of our society.”[13] He adds that faith communities are “the critical mass necessary for generating a movement toward lasting change.”[14] Indigenous justice is a spiritual goal that requires us all and that is ultimately for the good of all.

Tinker puts at the basis of his theology of sovereignty the sacred experience of interrelatedness, together with, on the other hand, Indigenous peoples’ experiences of the rupture of such interrelatedness, such as their past and present experiences of oppression. That is, any theological understanding of how Indigneous peoples live in right relation with others, and how they could live better with all beings, should acknowledge their experiences of oppression and imagine the possibilities for overcoming such oppression by relating them to their spiritual experiences. Listening to Indigenous voices means respecting this experiential focus of Indigenous spiritualities, including the peoples’ experiences of suffering and oppression and the importance of traditional ceremonies and stories. Tinker emphasizes the difference and uniqueness of Indigenous spiritualities, particularly relative to Euro-Christian beliefs and theological categories, saying:

> [A]n American Indian liberation theology must necessarily have a different starting point than … other liberation theologies. Both the cultural particularities of American Indian communities … and the particularities of Indian experiences of colonization and conquest mandate a different approach … We were people who knew the spiritual side of all life … who had well-developed ceremonies to help us maintain harmony and balance in the life of our communities and the world around us … Thus any Indian liberation theology must take these ceremonies and spiritual traditions seriously. It must begin with the specifics of Indian cultures and cultural values.[15]

This passage is important because of the particularities of Indigenous peoples’ experiences of oppression and of spiritual life, as Tinker emphasizes. However, equally importantly, it also advocates a broadening of the spiritual life to include the perspectives of non-Christian spiritualities—making an all-inclusive approach especially appropriate, even crucial, for reconciliation, where the spiritualities of all persons of faiths are needed. Tinker criticizes the Christian Eurocentrism of North American theology, arguing, “We need to … insist that our … experiences of the Sacred are just as valid as the [ones] imposed on our ancestors by colonizing missionaries and enforced to this day.”[16]

Indigenous spiritualities' emphasis on lived experience as the locus of the spiritual, in particular in the midst of our struggles to overcome suffering and oppression, suggest a direction for working towards the goal of Indigenous justice. The spiritual bases for seeking Indigenous justice are not ultimately the stories or ceremonies, but the concrete actions and attitudes in everyday life through which one seeks to live in proper relations with all. In other words, this is an unrestricted commitment to live responsibly with all beings, which, precisely for that reason, requires the prioritizing of those who might be most excluded or at risk; the lived expression of this commitment in concrete actions and attitudes requires making value judgments about who and what needs to be prioritized, for the good of all. Importantly, persons of different faiths (and of no faith) also practise this commitment to others in their everyday lives, even without noticing it, though they might describe it or understand it differently. In the next section, for instance, I will draw on the thought of Gustavo Gutiérrez to show that Tinker's Indigenous view of what it means to live spiritually is in fact far from at odds with the core components of the spiritual life in Christian interpretation.

Christian Spirituality: Some Key Insights from Gustavo Gutiérrez

Gutiérrez's theology of liberation, says Enrique Dussel, is really a meta liberation theology or a sort of fundamental liberation theology, since it provides bases for all contextual theologies.[17] Indeed, Gutiérrez questions the notion of "contextual theologies" as a special class: "people sometimes talk about contextual theologies as if they were a special kind of faith-understanding. It depends on what one means because, in a certain way, all theology is contextual, although this does not mean calling into question what is permanent in theological effort."[18] For Gutiérrez, the commitment of Christian faith is an existential stance that is concrete, thus it can and must take different forms in different situations. He explains, "To say that faith is a commitment is true for all ages, but the commitment is something much more precise: I commit myself here and now. The commitment to God and to human beings is not what it was three centuries ago. Today I commit myself in a distinctive manner."[19] This means that theology too, as the understanding and interpretation of that faith, is necessarily tied to its context.

In all contexts, however, religious living is fundamentally expressed as a commitment to the good of all beings, concretely embodied in a commitment to the most excluded or forgotten, all of this moved by the experience of grace. This is what Gutiérrez calls the "preferential option for the poor." Gutiérrez clarifies that the word *option* does not merely denote a choice (as it typically does in English) but rather, as in Spanish, "it evokes [a] sense of commitment. The option for the poor is not optional."[20] Furthermore, the label "the poor"—along with alternative wordings that Gutiérrez uses interchangeably with it, like "the oppressed," "the disadvantaged," or "the excluded"—is simply a heuristic notion that receives concrete content only in particular social situations; such terms are not meant to create different categories of people. The preference for the poor, then, is ultimately not a preference for a particular social class, gender, or ethnic minority;[21] rather, if a particular group receives preference in a given social context, it is because of a desire to love all, a desire to reach *all* persons and *all the dimensions* of the person.

For Gutiérrez, the option for the poor refers to one's actions in everyday life that manifest a commitment to help the poor directly as well as fighting against the causes of their poverty, oppression, exclusion, or disadvantage. This type of commitment means not simply trying to be the voice of the poor, but facilitating their empowerment so they can have their own voice.[22] The specific way in which this option is lived rests on people's particular circumstances and degrees of agency; thus, Gutiérrez speaks of "a thousand ways" to practise the preferential option.[23] Indeed, the poor themselves, Gutiérrez says, within the limitations of their difficulties, are invited to practise this commitment—and often do—to care for themselves and others who suffer exclusion in their everyday lives; this is important, since neglecting this point would imply that the poor have nothing to contribute and nothing to give their lives to. On the contrary, however, Gutiérrez emphasizes the agency of the poor themselves, and the mutual relations between the parties involved. "The poor" are not passive recipients of help or charity from those who are "better off"; central to Gutiérrez's descriptions of the preferential option is an emphasis on closeness, friendship, and sharing with and among the excluded.[24]

Gutierrez explains that the preferential option requires mutuality because it brings transformation to all involved. For Gutiérrez, the reason for this is the ultimately spiritual source of such a commitment, which transforms our lives and the lives of others as we enter into relations with them. More specifically, Gutiérrez's preferential option is a spiritual commitment because it ultimately comes from the experience of grace as this occurs in everyday living. Gerhard Müller argues that Gutiérrez's liberation theology can be understood as "a theology of grace, as developed by Karl Rahner, now applied to history and society."[25] Gutiérrez uses "grace," and derivative terms such as "gratuity" and "gratuitousness," to indicate the ultimately spiritual origin of the preferential option, as opposed to a merely psychological or sociological basis for it:

> The ultimate reason for commitment to the poor and oppressed does not lie in the social analysis that we employ, or in our human compassion, or in the direct experience we may have of poverty. All these are valid reasons and surely play an important role in our commitment. But as Christians, we base that commitment fundamentally on the God of our faith. It is a theocentric, prophetic option we make, one which strikes its roots deep in the gratuity of God's love and is demanded by that love.[26]

Psychological and sociological motivations have particular scopes, while a commitment to justice rooted in spiritual motivations is in principle unlimited. Gutiérrez explains: "In his letter to Philemon, Paul says: 'I write to you, knowing that you will do even more than I say.' Gratuitousness goes beyond the behaviour required by justice. There is nothing more demanding, nothing more productive of commitment in daily life, than the gratuitousness that has its source in the love of God."[27] This gratuitousness is nothing else than the experience of grace that in Catholic theology is considered to take place in the midst of everyday living, and which Catholics trust occurs to us all, whether one notices it or not. It is not primarily a mystical experience; it could refer to *any* event, since it takes place in the midst of everyday life. These spiritual events gratuitously orient us to assume greater levels of responsibility with everyone and everything. Gutiérrez points out that such spiritual experiences (or perhaps, more precisely, "spiritual *experiencing*"—of any ordinary event) can certainly take place in the midst of witnessing injustice and suffering, and the struggles to overcome these.[28] As Bernard Lonergan puts it, the experience of grace is

> as large as the Christian experience of life. It is experience of man's capacity for self-transcendence, of his unrestricted openness to the intelligible, the true, the good. It is experience of a twofold frustration of that capacity: the objective frustration of life in a world distorted by sin; the subjective frustration of one's incapacity to break with one's own evil ways.[29]

Lonergan's words resemble Gutiérrez's above about the radical exigency of what it means to respond to the experience of grace. Lonergan says that the experience of grace demands "the totality of a person's response, that may affect his relation … to everything else, to himself, to his neighbor, to the stars."[30]

For Gutiérrez, the "preferential option" originates from the moral judgments of any person who seeks to act responsibly in the face of injustice and suffering—judgments that one makes as part of a broader commitment to others that colours every aspect of one's life. Gutiérrez (and the Christian tradition as a whole, in Gutiérrez's interpretation) sees that commitment as ultimately referring to a gratuitous effect—the "fruits"—of experiencing God's grace in everyday living, which often occurs in the midst of interpersonal relations, and the commitment Gutiérrez refers to means seeking to live in harmony with it. Hence, for Gutiérrez, the preferential option for the poor is fundamentally a spiritual way of living that can already be found in the concrete efforts of anyone who, at a given moment, puts the most vulnerable first, even at the expense of bringing struggles and difficulties to her own life.

Ecumenical and Interfaith Initiatives for Reconciliation

Tinker and Gutiérrez highlight certain aspects of Indigenous and Christian spirituality that tend to be overlooked in pastoral and theological discussions about reconciliation. Specifically, both refer to the centrality of the realm of lived experience as the locus of "the spiritual" and the characterization of "the spiritual" first and foremost as a way of life in the midst of everyday life. Indigenous and Christian spiritualities both acknowledge that such a way of living is available to all, since the experience of sacred interrelatedness, in Indigenous traditions, and the experience of grace, in Christianity, permeates the everyday lives of all. Whenever a person seeks to live in right relations with all and commits to the most marginalized precisely for the sake of restoring relations with all, then there is the possibility that such a person is living already in a truly spiritual way. In addition, both traditions emphasize that this commitment is not one-directional; rather, it is a joint task where the parties in question enter into right relations with one another and undergo mutual transformation. As we have seen, from the perspective of both Indigenous and Christian spirituality, mutuality is crucial for grounding reconciliation on authentic friendship and relationship building.

Thus Michel Andraos reminds us, in a recent article, that Indigenous theologians Janet Silman and Stan McKay have stressed for a long time that "the recognition and practice of mutuality are the first steps of a long journey in the process of decolonizing Christianity, theology and pastoral ministry."[31] Andraos points out, however, that "There is yet … no systematic theological reflection in the churches on what mutuality could mean, why it has not been able to take place in the churches yet, and why it is so difficult to imagine, let alone achieve."[32] From the perspective of Indigenous spirituality, mutuality and other spiritual values such as balance, reciprocity, and harmony have their root in the experience of sacred interrelatedness and holism, whose rupture harms us all. Thus, such a rupture is the ultimate source of the examples of "spiritual violence" acknowledged by the TRC.[33] Indeed, from an

Indigenous spirituality approach, all violence has its root in such a rupture of relations. Reconciliation, then, not only has an important spiritual dimension, a point which has also been acknowledged by the TRC,[34] but such a dimension is actually a *fundamental* feature of reconciliation and deals with restoring relations among all.

That reconciliation has a fundamental spiritual dimension is a point that has also been acknowledged by many faith communities in Canada. They have even done this jointly through a statement of the Canadian Interfaith Conversation: "Reconciliation is, fundamentally, a spiritual process that needs to be accomplished first in the hearts of Canadians."[35] Through this joint statement they say that they "publicly support the work of truth and reconciliation, and commit to an ongoing implementation of it in our individual and collective hearts, lives, and practice."[36] This is all good news, but perhaps the missing point is the need to stress the fact that, from the perspective of Indigenous spirituality, the reason why reconciliation is spiritual is because it aims to restore a rupture of something sacred that pulls us all together. This is not only an issue of stressing mutuality between two particular parties (such as a specific Christian denomination and Indigenous peoples), but also the mutuality of all our relations, that is, among all Canadians in the larger context of global justice, equality, and solidarity. This suggests a new way of living with one another in Canada and beyond. It is for this reason that the TRC asks for the special participation of all Christian denominations, faith communities, and interfaith groups in reconciliation: we are all in this together—all Canadians—and the hope is that faith communities can be an example of how Canadians can do this together. This last point has been acknowledged in practice by the creation of several ecumenical and interfaith initiatives.

For example, ecumenical encounters addressing the calls of the TRC were organized in November 2015, at Six Nations of the Grand River (near Brantford, Ontario), and in October 2016, in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. These brought to light the need to develop mutual trust and stronger, more positive relations between Indigenous peoples and Christian communities, and to encourage specifically political support for Indigenous justice on the part of Christian churches, including supporting the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) as a framework for reconciliation. In April 2018, the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, along with leaders of other Christian denominations, signed a joint letter to Prime Minister Trudeau, also supporting UNDRIP.[37] In November 2017, Stan MacKay initiated an ecumenical working group with the Indigenous animators of the Presbyterian, Anglican, and United churches, along with other ecumenical leaders and theologians. In June 2018 in Winnipeg, this group reached out to Indigenous ministers from various denominations for input on how best to respond to Call to Action 61, in particular to the invitation to establish regional dialogues with Indigenous spiritual leaders and youth to discuss Indigenous spirituality, self-determination, and reconciliation. The Canadian Interfaith Conversation, for its part, has established the Canadian Interfaith Research Centre for Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE) and the youth-based New Generation Interfaith Initiative, both of which are intended to facilitate interfaith projects, with Indigenous justice as a priority.

All of this illustrates the desire on the part of faith communities—Christian communities and others—to be part of reconciliation and to be part of it together. It is encouraging to see how ecumenical and interfaith initiatives like these indirectly support the insights of Indigenous spirituality presented here. However, without more robust and consistent institutional support from Christian churches and other faith communities, initiatives like these can only be very limited, and run the risk of being short-lived. This is one reason that theological and pastoral reflections on the spiritual nature of reconciliation are so important.

Conclusion

I have tried here to offer some brief reflections on the spiritual life, specifically from Christian and Indigenous perspectives. For both spiritual traditions, at least in Tinker's and Gutiérrez's respective interpretations, the spiritual is found in everyday commitments, and people live spiritually as long as they live in responsible relations with all. However, my main point here has not been to indicate parallels between these spiritual traditions, but rather to bring to light certain emphases with regards to the spiritual life—from both an Indigenous and a Christian perspective—that are often overlooked, but that might be helpful to orient further theological and pastoral approaches to reconciliation. The emphasis on establishing right relations with all helps to open the discussion around, and action for, reconciliation to other faith groups in Canada, as well as to those of no faith. Neither Indigenous nor Christian spirituality negates a spiritual dimension in the lives of persons outside their own traditions—quite the opposite. Furthermore, the emergence already of liberationist approaches in, for example, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism[38] is an indication that some of the key ideas presented above might resonate with how other traditions see the spiritual life. I hope that the reflections suggested here might encourage further discussion about the relation between spirituality and justice in other faith traditions, specifically with the goal of gaining greater insight into the spiritual dimension of reconciliation from other faith perspectives.

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1 Tinker (Osage) uses Indigenous spiritual principles such as balance, reciprocity, harmony, and right relations among all as the grounds of his theology, which most recently has become increasingly focused on solely Indigenous notions and experiences. See, for example, George Tinker, "Why I Do Not Believe in a Creator," in Steve Heinrichs, ed., *Buffalo Shout, Salmon Cry: Conversations on Creation, Land Justice, and Life Together* (Waterloo, ON: Herald, 2013), 167–79.

2 George Tinker, "Spirituality, Native American Personhood, Sovereignty, and Solidarity," in James Treat, ed., *Native and Christian: Indigenous Voices on Religious Identity in the United States and Canada* (New York: Routledge, 1996), 125.

3 George Tinker, *American Indian Liberation: A Theology of Sovereignty* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2008), 10.

4 Ibid., 127.

5 Ibid.

6 See Tinker, *American Indian Liberation,* 160–61.

7 Ibid., 83.

8 Ibid., 161.

9 See George Tinker, "A Native American Response," in Irfan A. Omar and Michael K. Duffey, eds., *Peacemaking and the Challenge of Violence in World Religions* (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley & Sons, 2015), 176, and "The Irrelevance of Euro-Christian Dichotomies for Indigenous Peoples: Beyond Nonviolence to a Vision of Cosmic Balance," in *Peacemaking and the Challenge of Violence in World Religions*, 212.

10 Tinker, *American Indian Liberation,* 154.

11 Ibid., 160.

12 Quoted in Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, *A Knock on the Door: The Essential History of Residential Schools* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2016), 146.

13 Tinker, *American Indian Liberation*, 163.

14 Ibid.

15 Ibid., 128.

16 Ibid., 139.

17 Enrique Dussel, "Transformaciones de los Supuestos Epistemológicos de la Teología de la Liberación," in José Ferraro, ed., *Debate Actual sobre la Teología de la Liberación, Volumen 2* (Mexico City: Itaca, 2007), 46.

18 Ibid., note 5.

19 Gustavo Gutiérrez, *Essential Writings*, ed. James B. Nickoloff (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1996), 24.

20 Daniel Hartnett, "Remembering the Poor: An Interview with Gustavo Gutiérrez," *America Magazine*, February 3, 2003, http://americamagazine.org.

21 Groody, "Reimagining Accompaniment: An Interview with Paul Farmer and Gustavo Gutiérrez," in Michael Griffin and Jennie Weiss Block, eds., *In the Company of the Poor: Conversations with Dr. Paul Farmer and Fr. Gustavo Gutiérrez*, (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2013), 166.

22 See Gustavo Gutiérrez, "Desde el mundo de la insignificancia," *Páginas* 35 (2010): 15.

23 Gustavo Gutiérrez, "Saying and Showing to the Poor: 'God Loves You,'" in Michael Griffin and Jennie Weiss Block, eds., *In the Company of the Poor: Conversations with Dr. Paul Farmer and Fr. Gustavo Gutiérrez* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2013), 32. See also Gutiérrez, "Desde el mundo de la insignificancia," 14, and "Pobreza y teología," *Páginas* 191 (2005): 24.

24 Gustavo Gutiérrez, "The Option for the Poor Arises from Faith in Christ," *Theological Studies* 70 (2009): 325.

25 Gerhard Müller, "Liberation Theology in Context," in Gustavo Gutiérrez and Cardinal Gerhard Ludwig Müller, *On the Side of the Poor: The Theology of Liberation*, trans. Robert A. Krieg and James B. Nickoloff (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2015), 81.

26 Gustavo Gutiérrez, "Option for the Poor," in Ignacio Ellacuría and Jon Sobrino, eds., *Mysterium Liberationis: Fundamental Concepts of Liberation Theology* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1993), 240.

27 Ibid.

28 See Gustavo Gutiérrez, *The Truth Shall Make You Free: Confrontations*, trans. Matthew J. O'Connell (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1990), 34–36.

29 Bernard Lonergan, "Mission and the Spirit," in Robert M. Doran and John D. Dadosky, eds., *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan: A Third Collection* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2017), 32–33.

30 Bernard Lonergan, "First Lecture: Religious Experience," in *A Third Collection,* 119.

31 Michel Andraos, "Christianity and the Indigenous Peoples: Another Christianity is Necessary," in Jean-François Roussel, ed., *Decoloniality and Justice: Theological Perspectives* (São Leopoldo: Oikos, 2018), 30–31.

32 Ibid., 31.

33 See Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, *Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future: Summary of the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada* (Ottawa: Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015), 272.

34 See TRC, *Honouring the Truth*, 278: "[T]he churches, as religious institutions, must affirm Indigenous spirituality in its own right. Without such formal recognition, a full and robust reconciliation will be impossible. Healing and reconciliation have a spiritual dimension that must continue to be addressed by the churches in partnership with Indigenous spiritual leaders, survivors, their families, and communities."

35 Canadian Interfaith Conversation, "Statement on the Importance of Truth and Reconciliation and the Rights of Indigenous Peoples," March 28, 2016, https://www.interfaithconversation.ca/sites/default/files/Statement%20on%20Truth%20and%20Reconciliation%20and%20the%20Rights%20of%20Indigenous%20Peoples%20 (March%2028,%202016)_0.pdf

36 Ibid.

37 "Ecumenical Letter on the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples," April 27, 2018. http://www.cccb.ca/site/images/stories/pdf/PM_Trudeau_C262_Third_Reading.pdf. The letter explicitly asked Prime Minister Justin Trudeau to support Bill C-262, which was proposed by NDP MP Romeo Saganash.

38 See Dussel, "Transformaciones," 48.

Book Review

Tanya Talaga. *All My Relations: Finding the Path Forward*. CBC Massey Lectures.
Toronto: House of Anansi Press, 2018, 258 pp.

Tanya Talaga is a national reporter for the *Toronto Star*. She is an exceptional researcher and an excellent writer. In March 2018, she was asked to give the 2018 CBC Massey Lectures. *All My Relations: Finding The Path Forward* is based on the five Massey lectures Talaga gave. Her concern in these lectures and in the subsequent book focused on Indigenous youth, particularly on their high rates of suicide. Suicide has become normalized among Indigenous people in Canada, and it particularly has become an escape for traumatized, desolate youth whose parents and grandparents, often as survivors of the residential schools system, are dealing with their own demons. The Lectures build on research she started as the 2017–2018 Atkinson Fellow in Public Policy investigating a series of deaths in Thunder Bay. Without high schools in their remote northern communities, Indigenous teenagers were forced to attend school in that city. In *All My Relations*, Talaga researched past and present challenges of Indigenous people not only in Canada but also in Norway (the Sami), Brazil, Australia, and the United States, exploring similarities among Indigenous peoples in these countries. Her book is a combination of stories, interviews, statistics, and an extensive survey of literature concerning Indigenous health, education, racism, poverty, and incarceration. To prove the point of normalization, Talaga returns again and again to the issue of suicide among Indigenous youth.

All My Relations is a harrowing report on the past and present conditions of Indigenous people in Canada, but also elsewhere in the world. The book points to histories of genocide, of the deliberate attempt by Settlers after arriving in "New Worlds" to annihilate Indigenous culture and Indigenous people. Yet, it is also a book about hope, about finding a path forward for Indigenous people. The hope is expressed by Talaga through her reference to children:

> This book is about righting past wrongs; it is about collectively upholding and adhering to the rights of Indigenous children—the right to proper health care, an equitable education, clean drinking water, a secure community, and a warm, safe home to sleep in at night, tucked in by parents who tell them that they love them. It is about restoring their pride in who they are and where they come from. (p. 17)

The focus on children and youth is important. Near the beginning of chapter 1, Talaga cites four important questions that Senator Murray Sinclair, Chairman of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, shared with her during an interview in September 2018: "Where do I come from? Where am I going? What is my purpose? Who am I?" These are questions all Indigenous children (and all non-Indigenous children as well, as Talaga states at the end of her book) have a right to know the answers to. The title of the first chapter, "We Were Always Here," comes from an interview with Dr. Helen Milroy, the first Aboriginal psychiatrist in Australia. It is a conviction that is shared by Indigenous people in Canada and by Indigenous peoples in many other countries.

"Big Brother's Hunger" is the title of chapter 2. It refers to a story told to Talaga by residential school survivor Edmund Metatawabin, who now is a community leader to his people, the Cree of James Bay. The insatiable hunger of "big brother" damages the earth. As Ed Metatawabin observes,

> the more we damage the Earth, the more our Indigenous selves will wither and hollow with the destruction of the land. Take the Indian out of the land, away from their language, culture, mode of thought, and traditional way of living, and you begin to destroy their soul. Each bulldozer ploughing through the muskeg is like another cut. (p. 42)

In this chapter, Talaga carefully conveys the truth of this observation through many examples of destruction both to the Earth and to Indigenous peoples.

The title of chapter 3 is "The Third Space." Here, Talaga again draws on the insight of Dr. Helen Milroy. Milroy identifies the "third space" as the space between Indigenous culture and non-Indigenous culture. The third space is the space of "trauma and loss and grief and despair" (p. 101) in which Indigenous children float. It is a blank space, an empty space where children have no point of reference to ground them. In this chapter, Talaga explores the grim impact of this reality and how children who "float" in the third space are particularly vulnerable prey for perpetrators. She describes the damage that Anglican priest Ralph Rowe inflicted on hundreds of boys between the ages of 8 and 14 through sexual abuse. What is particularly

startling about this one example is the impact Rowe's actions have continued to have on the families of his victims. Talaga demonstrates how his actions are linked to the suicide of seven girls in 2015—almost 40 years after he was charged and sentenced.

Chapter 4 is titled "I Breathe for Them." The statement was spoken by a young First Nations paramedic working in northern Saskatchewan. Many of the calls he gets are from young people who are feeling suicidal. At times he performs CPR: "I work CPR on young people. I breathe for them." (p. 140) Talaga often expresses her profound respect and admiration for Indigenous people who devote their lives to helping others within the community. Those who work with young people are particularly significant, as it is the young people who are the path forward. Talaga explores the lack of basic determinants of Indigenous health: "education, basic services, a safe environment, and employment." (p. 146) The roots of what disables Indigenous communities are widespread and systemic.

The final chapter, "We Are Not Going Anywhere," points to the resiliency of Indigenous peoples. They will not be made to disappear. In this chapter, Talaga relates examples of resistance that clearly demonstrate the truth of the statement "We are not going anywhere." The book ends with the following assertion: "This is where we are from. We have always been here." (p. 220)

All Our Relations is a book that weaves together stories, statistics, and personal accounts to clearly convey the damage that Indigenous people in Canada (and elsewhere) have endured. At the same time, it is a book of hope. It is a book that dares to name the truth of the systems in Canada that have harmed and continue to harm Indigenous people. It focuses a light in a consistent way on Indigenous youth, and particularly on the normalization of suicide, which needs to be addressed. We all need to pay attention to this book and what it teaches us. We need to listen to the stories, confirm the truth of what is being said, and do everything we can, particularly in the context of critical theology, to bring this message and its challenge of how to move forward to the Christian churches in Canada.

As Indigenous writer Thomas King puts it, "But don't say in the years to come that you would have lived your life differently if only you had heard this story. You've heard it now." (Quoted on p. ix)

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Book Review

P.R. John, John Mundu, and Joseph Lobo, eds. *Searching Christology Through an Asian Optic.*
Delhi: ISPCK/JERES, 2017, xvii + 226 pp.

For the past few years, the Forum for South Asian Jesuit Theologians has dedicated itself to studying Christology. This book derives from the Forum's seminar held in Bangalore in April 2016. Its title comes from Karl Rahner's notion of a "searching Christology," which explores how Jesus Christ can be understood and what meaning Christ has in various contexts. The first chapter, by Michael Amaladoss, explores the cosmic Christ affirmed in Colossians 1:15-20 and John 1. Here the divine Word not only becomes incarnate but is also at the heart of all reality. Christ is the source and *telos* of creation and is present in all things.

Amalados contrasts this to the dualistic approach of Western Christologies, which tend to see the divine as distinct from creation. Sebastian Painadath also advocates a non-dualist Christology in which Christ is the transforming presence of God within each person and all creation. P.R. John draws on understandings Indian Christian theologians have developed of the Holy Spirit in dialogue with Hinduism to develop a Spirit Christology in which the Spirit is sent into the world before Christ, who in turn comes to complete the Spirit's mission. Joseph Lobo explores the meaning of the bodily resurrection of Jesus in India. The hope inspired by Jesus' resurrection should lead the Church to engage the surrounding world in a mission to overcome suffering and oppression. Lobo argues that this hope is unique to Christianity; it is not found in such a pronounced form in other Asian religions and philosophies. Yet he notes that the presence and activity and the risen Christ and Christ's Spirit can be found in all cultures and religions.

Samuel Simick describes his experience of the earthquake that devastated Nepal on April 25, 2015, and how he saw Christ in his fellow relief workers as they supported survivors afterwards. Raj Irudaya draws on Jesus' proclamation of the reign of God in the Synoptic gospels, Jesus' address of God as "Abba" in John's gospel, and the Johannine theme of Jesus as the source of life to develop an understanding of Jesus as a source of dignified life for the marginalized, broken and oppressed. Francis Minj's contribution draws upon interviews conducted with 50 Roman Catholic Sarni Adivasis in Jharkland. Minj proposes that as *Adivasi* means "original dweller," Jesus the Word incarnate can be understood here as Paramadivasi, the Supreme Primordial Dweller. Victor Edwin examines how Jesus is understood in the Qur'an and in Sufism, and then how some Christians have sought to relate Jesus to Islam in recent years. Henry D'Almeida undertakes a dialogue between the portrayal of Jesus as a teacher in John's gospel and the notion of *jangama*, wandering preacher, as understood in Lingayata, a religion of the Indian state of Karnataka. D'Almeida argues that understanding Jesus as a special *jangama* can provide a meeting point between Christianity and Lingayata.

In the book's conclusion, Leonard Fernando notes that the first five centuries of church life were a time of courageous and creative theologizing, as theologians like Origen and Augustine laboured to understand Jesus with Greek and Latin concepts. But the scholastic theology that followed this became the accepted norm, to be imposed in all cultures and countries. Against this trend, Jesuits in India like Roberto deNobili sought to inculturate the gospel, beginning what is now an ongoing tradition of seeking to develop an understanding of Jesus that is appropriate to Asian contexts. Fernando notes that in this book there is a conscious shift from Word Christologies to Spirit Christologies, in recognition of how the Spirit is at work in many liberation movements in the multi-religious Asian context.

This fascinating collection of essays offers a window on the kinds of Christological reflection happening amongst Jesuits in India and Nepal. The necessity of dialogue with other religions and cultures and taking the particularities of each region seriously in thinking about Christ is forcefully presented here. The need to take seriously the particularity of the gospel is also emphasized. Western theologians can learn from these essays about how the ongoing task of understanding Jesus requires a twofold loyalty: to the gospel, and to the place where one lives. This book will be useful for anyone pondering the meaning of Jesus in South Asia or working in Christology more generally.

Don Schweitzer
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Why Are We Here?
A Meditation on Canada

By Mary Jo Leddy

Join writer, activist and theologian Mary Jo Leddy on a fascinating journey of reflection on time and place, encounter and mystery, identity and living together. Drawing on scripture, literature, history, geography, spirituality and personal experience, she offers a poignant and probing look at the nation called Canada – past, present and future.

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Mary Jo Leddy is founder of Romero House, a centre for refugees in Toronto. She is the author of *Radical Gratitude* and a member of the Order of Canada.

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Subscriptions: Canada: $16 • International: $33 (postage and taxes included).
To order: Periodicals Dept., Novalis, 1 Eglinton Avenue East, Suite 800, Toronto, ON M4P 3A1

Tel: 1-800-387-7164 Fax: 1-800-204-4140

ISSN: 2562-0347

Please send submissions and correspondence to criticaltheology@novalis.ca.

Printed in Canada