



National Day of Healing and Reconciliation

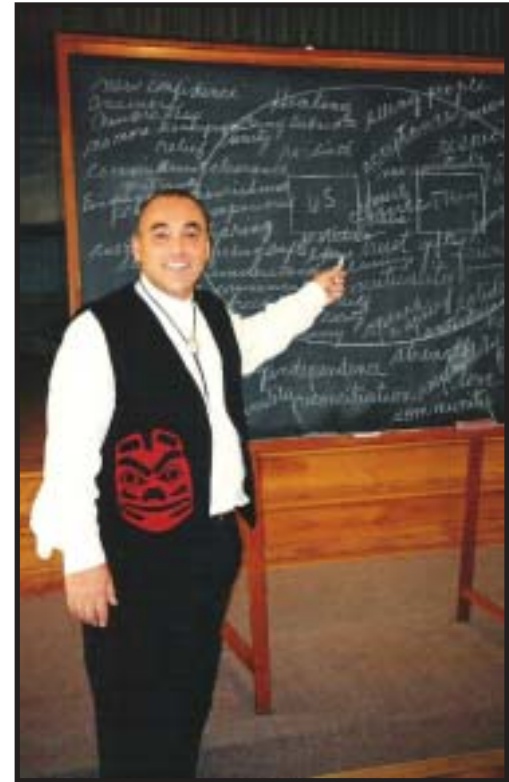
Issue #2 - August 2004

RETURNING TO SPIRIT

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“Miraculous medicine,” “The work of the Creator,” “Profoundly liberating,” “The most important workshop I have ever attended,” “A great awakening.” These are how participants spontaneously describe Marc Pizandawatc’s innovative workshops called *Returning To Spirit: Residential School Healing and Reconciliation*. Marc, an Algonquin man from Kitiganzibi First Nations, is deeply committed to First Nations people and communities. For Marc, his motivation for creating this program is to break the vicious cycle of suffering, resentment, resignation, and apathy and for First Nations children to be born into and be part of vibrant communities. *Returning To Spirit* is difficult to communicate unless you are doing the work and experiencing the amazing insights about your own life. Interviewing participants and trainers about their stories of transformation, however, is inspiring and even contagious as I too began to glean insights into my own life and hope the reader does too.



Marc Pizandawatc leading a reconciliation process in Winnipeg

NDHR is an initiative meant to effect healing and reconciliation among all races, creeds, and denominations now residing in Canada.

This newsletter is intended to build and strengthen networks from coast to coast and beyond.

Marc’s cutting edge approach to residential school healing and reconciliation is transforming hearts and changing minds - both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, survivors and clergy alike. Marc explains, this program has nothing to do with legal, religious, or political matters; rather it is all about moving people forward. Marc explains “I do not lead ‘retreats’ but rather ‘forwards’.” He insists if we don’t complete the past then we will merely re-create it in the present and the future. “Unless we resolve the residential school issues, our grandchildren’s children are still going to talk about the effects of residential schools.”

Tired of treatment programs that tend to keep people stuck in being a victim, Marc wanted to design an approach that helps people move forward and have transformative breakthroughs. He explains, “people need to be right about their pain and prove their pain to the world. This needs to be challenged. Rather than thinking we need to be healed before doing those things that are important to us, we need to get on with life and healing naturally occurs.” For example, some people say they must first deal with their fear before going back to school. Marc says, “go back to school and the fear begins to be handled naturally. Self-esteem is best built through accomplishments. We discover who we are through creating our lives.”



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Marc Pizandawac facilitates a closing ceremony in his *Returning To Spirit* workshops

The *Returning To Spirit* training program is about **returning people to who they are** rather than reliving the painful experience of residential school. Learning to live from the depth of spirit and rekindling a connection to life, participants leave with a deepened respect and love for life. Remarkably people are catapulted forward shifting from being victims to powerful creators of their own lives virtually overnight. For example, in one community twenty-one out of the twenty-three participants who were on welfare are either now working or have gone back to school. Within three years, Tammie Wylie, an Aboriginal woman, has gone back to school to complete a Masters degree in Leadership and Training, has become a national trainer for *Returning To Spirit*, and has hired a nanny. Most recently she has gone from being a single mother squeezed into a three-bedroom home with four kids to building her own home with rooms for everyone including one for her new live-in nanny. Marc explains that participants who identify a particular way of being in life that is self-defeating leave his workshops with an aliveness and new capacity and thirst to express themselves. Overwhelmingly the majority of people who have taken this program have experienced increased well-being, intimacy, and self-expression in their significant relationships.

This transformative approach is a three-part training program that involves both First Nations and religious communities. Marc explains, "people are stuck in a particular conversation - First Nations have one conversation and the church has a totally different conversation. Even though there are many talking circles between First Nations and religious communities, people continue to have two different conversations. Each conversation tries to prove to the other who is right and the result is always the same - more anger, more frustration, more pain, and the vicious cycle continues. Reconciliation is about having the same conversation. First Nations need the church for completion and the church needs First Nations for completion." Marc first works separately with each group and then brings them together.

Part I involves a five-day workshop exclusively with First Nations. Participants inquire profoundly into areas of their lives that continuously duplicate themselves despite best intentions. Marc calls this a "vicious cycle, though it is painful and creates suffering, it keeps getting repeated." Marc helps participants see how they have been living in the past and re-creating the past throughout their lives. Marc explains, "we are very good at suffering. We have PhDs in suffering and a kindergarten in joy." While there are things that are really important to carry from the past like culture and language, Marc points out there are many things in our past that we carry that don't contribute to our lives. These are the issues that participants dismantle in the workshop.

Participants examine how being caught in the vicious suffering cycle costs them - in terms of communication, aliveness, and love. They take a close look at how expensive suffering has been on their lives. In letting go of needing to be right at all costs, participants immediately gain a new sense of aliveness, capacity for love, and increased levels of communication. In the evenings, participants are given assignments to facilitate experiential shifts and by the end of the five days people are profoundly transformed. Tammie Wylie, a new trainer for the program, describes how people's faces are visibly different from the beginning of the workshop to when they leave after five days. Watching the shifts in people, she explains, is both moving and inspiring.

Dave Fortin, from Pic River First Nations and program coordinator for Biidaaban Healing Lodge, initially attended *Returning To Spirit* to learn new strategies to work with residential school survivors. To his surprise he underwent a deep personal change in how he relates to others. For example, prior to the workshop Dave lived his life as a perfectionist. He couldn't show his work to others and was unable to tell his boss when he was over-worked. During the workshop, he had a revelation that his self-esteem was based on how others saw him. Now rather than seeking approval he is able to recognize his own gifts. Moreover, he now sees mistakes as opportunities for growth. This awareness has had a tremendous impact on his work. He is now able to talk directly with his boss and consequently his job is now tailored to his strengths rather than what his boss guesses he can do. The change in Dave was so dramatic that his boss asked for *Returning To Spirit* workshops for her entire staff. As a result, increased communication and self-responsibility has become a way of life for workers at Biidaaban Healing Lodge. Most recently, Dave is training to become a *Returning To Spirit* trainer himself.

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Worldviews, Treaties, and Community Building in Saskatoon

If ever you are feeling despair about the state of the world and need a quick pick-me-up you only need to turn to a brilliant and inspiring group of youth in Saskatoon to re-ignite hope for the future. It all started as a simple conversation during a woman's Aboriginal circle gathering and quickly grew to include other university students and community members, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal. They were concerned about the social divisions, racism, and increased community violence in Saskatchewan and wanted to do something that would address the root cause. Their vision was to bring Aboriginal, Métis, White settler, and new immigrant groups together to learn about the treaties from the various worldviews represented by people currently living on the land. Their motto in all their publicity read, "All of our histories are intertwined and our future is going to be intertwined, we all have to work together if we are going to have a future that is going to be healthy for our children."

Within three months they were able to engage the support and partnership of 27 different groups and organizations representing diverse interests and origins such as First Nations, Métis, intercultural, and community-based organizations as well as church groups, businesses, media, educational institutions, and government. In the process of organizing they built new relationships, increased their own awareness, and learned about the each other's worldviews. The ground swell of interest inspired them to expand the event from one evening to an entire weekend in March 2004.



Treaty Awareness organizers give gifts of blankets to elders

Over 300 people attended this groundbreaking event called "Miyo-wicehtwin Gathering" or "Treaty Awareness and Community Building Event." Tyler McCreary explains "Miyo-wicehtowin is a Cree word that means building right relationships. We use it in the context of Treaty as an agreement to build and maintain good relations with one another." The organizers certainly modelled their message of right relationships as they came together Friday afternoon for a sweatlodge ceremony. They explain, "historically, treaty negotiations opened and closed with ceremony, to mark the gravity of the occasion, to create a peaceful place where people could share openly, and to acknowledge the role of the earth and the creator in the negotiation process." For the organizers the sweatlodge helped root themselves in their shared history and guide them in a good way into the future.

Over the course of the weekend, participants learned about treaties and how they are a good guide to right relationships. They also had an opportunity to explore First Nations, Métis, White settler, and new immigrant worldviews and understandings about the treaties. For many participants hearing these stories were transformational moments, deepening their own understanding about their shared history and possible future.

During the course of the weekend there was discussion about the roots and historical context of the racism and division in their communities today. Charlie Clark, one of the organizers explains, "in order to build right relations into the future, we have to understand the ways that people have been and are being excluded and marginalized in our communities, to create a society where all people are engaged in the building process together as equals."

Part way through the event a peace march commemorating the first year since the beginning of the Iraq war converged on the Miyo-wicehtwin Gathering. Over lunch prepared and donated by the *Child Hunger Education Project*, speakers from the peace march and the *Treaty Awareness Event* gave eloquent presentations connecting violence and social divisions locally to global issues and responsibilities. Honouring the spirit of community building evoked in the event title, the organizers stepped beyond academic discussion, focusing the final day towards identifying the next steps for building community and fulfilling the promises of respectful relationships agreed to in Treaty.

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Returning to Spirit (con't)

Religious communities participate in a similar five-day workshop in Part II. They too experience profound shifts in seeing how their stories are re-created and keep them stuck. Sister Ann Thomson, who was trained by Marc to lead the workshops with the religious communities, describes how she gleaned a new insight about "how much pain there is amongst the church people and their need for healing. Many church people feel blamed, angry, hurt, and scared."

Both groups learn about the impact of trauma and how this leads to victimization and a generalization of pain. This is particularly helpful to clergy who have been struggling with some of the stories from First Nations people. In many cases denial is replaced by compassion and self-responsibility. Bishop Denis Croteau explains that understanding how generalizations are part and parcel of profound trauma has helped many Church participants develop more compassion for First Nations and has helped them better understand what is behind some of the generalized criticisms against the church.

Finally, Part III brings both groups together for reconciliation. The first two days each group meets separately to learn communication skills that emphasize moving from blame to self-responsibility. Marc explains that self-responsibility does not mean it is their fault but rather their responsibility to pull up their socks and move forward. During the communication training, each participant works on two or three things they want to say to the other party. In addition, participants learn listening skills. Both groups have real judgements about each other. In letting go of these judgements, participants are able to listen to each other in new ways. Communication, Marc explains, "doesn't happen in the speaking, but in the listening. Part of completing the past is having someone to listen to what you have to say." In this way, Marc prepares both groups to listen to the other group. The result is that rather than talking to a brick wall, participants are listened to by a receptive human being.

Both First Nations and church participants describe the powerful impact of coming together for the reconciliation part of the workshop. For example, many First Nations' experience tremendous relief and transformation after expressing exactly what they want to say to the church representatives. Others described how during the opening ceremony they no longer needed to say what they had prepared and only wanted to listen to understand the human being on the 'other side'.

Participants also have an opportunity to say something to the whole group. During one reconciliation workshop, a First Nations man gave an eagle feather to a Sister who worked at the same residential school he attended as a symbol of reconciliation. Important apologies have also happened during group sharing. One example is a provincial leader for the Sisters of St. Anne telling the group, "I am very sorry for the hurt for some of my sisters caused you." This personal apology from a provincial leader had a very powerful effect on the group.

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Treaty Awareness (con't)

For Colleen Thomas, from the original Aboriginal women's circle where the idea germinated, the most successful and remarkable aspect of the event was the multicultural aspect of the organizing committee. She explains, "at the end of the event there were fifty people from different cultures to thank." Cheryl Thompson, from Cree/Métis/Nuu-chah-nulth First Nations, echoes Colleen's delight in seeing a diversity of cultures gathered to understand the meaning behind treaties for many First Nations and their ancestors. Cheryl intends to continue the spirit of the gathering by holding storytelling events where First Nations, refugees, people living with HIV/AIDS can come together to hear each others experiences and learn to create community together today and for future generations.

The organizing team is currently looking for funding to edit the videotaping of the Miyo-wicehtwin Gathering to be able to use as an educational tool for community outreach initiatives. Clearly, this group are movers and shakers and we will have to keep our eyes open for more groundbreaking initiatives to inspire the whole country to move towards right relationships.

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Charlie Clark (306) 665-9140 /
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Colleen Thomas (306) 249-1864 /
email: cfthomas@sasktel.net.

Candlelight Vigil at Edmonton's City Hall

Twelve people from various churches, universities, and Aboriginal communities gathered outside Edmonton's City Hall on a crisp winter's evening on May 9th, Mothers Day, for a candlelight vigil to honour survivors of residential schools and all those who have gone missing due to violence. The group lit candles, shared prayers, and in some cases built new relationships. Shirley Armstrong from *Breaking the Silence Society* organized this event in collaboration with *Bent Arrow Circle of Hope*. Shirley explains she was inspired by a candlelight vigil in Grand Prairie and felt it was a powerful way to send a message.

Shirley certainly has a powerful message that everyone needs to hear. She explains, "I want people to realize how many people have been lost and bring attention to the issue. So many people have gone missing. Only their loved ones realize they are gone. The event was to give hope and let them know they are not alone."

Bringing people together for a candlelight vigil proved to be a powerful way to build relationships and get Shirley's message out. Indeed the event raised awareness among some of the university students who have since become more involved in issues connected to residential schools, violence, and missing people. For example, the students have expressed an interest in joining a local healing circle on Justice and Reconciliation.

For more information about *Breaking the Silence* and this candlelight vigil contact Shirley Armstrong at: sharney@telusplanet.net

For more information about on-going Justice and Reconciliation circles in Edmonton contact Jack Freebury at freebury@telusplanet.net or Yi Yi Datar at: ydatar@shaw.ca

Returning to Spirit (cont)

Within weeks, participants experience profound changes in their lives. John Peter Flett, from St. Theresa First Nations, explains how before Returning To Spirit, he was confused about whether to follow traditional ways or continue the Christian faith. Now he embraces both. During the workshop John realized that he was carrying his experiences in Day School with him in the present. He describes not understanding the teacher in grade one and being hit and made to stay in class through recess. He now realizes he has been scared to make mistakes and has avoided learning new things. Since attending Marc's workshops he ran and was elected for Council, is more open with his children and no longer judges them when they make mistakes and is now eager to learn new things and take on bigger challenges in his own life. In fact, he is currently training to be a Returning to Spirit trainer and has big plans for his own community!

The gem in this approach is that both First Nations and Church people are seen as human beings. One participant explains, "we often put people in a box but the hurt and fear are in both groups." For Shirley Leon, an Okanagan First Nations woman, it was a revelation to no longer put religious people on pedestals and see them as "human beings just like me." As a result she can now communicate directly her likes and dislikes to priests. Shirley believes "Marc was chosen by the Creator to bring this into our lives."

For Father Gary Gordon Returning To Spirit is divinely inspired. He insists, "it is the best thing I have ever done as a priest. Giving me some real solutions to issues that I deal with on a day to day basis in my own life and in the community I serve." Bishop Denis Croteau explains that "the process is fantastic, lots of tears, lots of smiles. It has deepened my compassion for all those who participated in residential schools. It is miraculous medicine."

Excitement for this revolutionary approach to residential school healing and reconciliation is gathering momentum. To date Marc has given close to sixty workshops, including eight reconciliation workshops. After only one year of giving workshops, nineteen people came to Marc's new train-the-trainers program. Asked how Marc manages to maintain his deep sense of humility in the face of so much praise, he is quick to describe how he is "deeply moved during every workshop because it is so profound what happens." Marc feels this is the Creator's work and he is merely sharing the gift. He explains he has no interest in keeping this work to himself and has an enormous interest in giving this work away responsibly."

For more information contact Marc Pizandawac at (403) 251-3577 or email: pmarc@telusplanet.net

Australia's National Sorry Day

Submitted by John Bond, Secretary, National Sorry Day Committee

It is hard for a country to admit its mistakes. It is harder to proclaim those mistakes in a place visited by hundreds of thousands of people each year.

The Australian Government has done both these things. It has created a national memorial which recognizes as 'cruel and misguided' the policy of removing Aboriginal children from their families in an attempt to assimilate them into Western culture. The memorial is situated between the National Library and the High Court in Canberra.

Many have been astonished that the Government would take this step. When an inquiry into the removal policies reported in 1997, the Prime Minister, John Howard, was reluctant to accept its revelations, or to do anything substantial towards healing the wounds. When two of the 'stolen generations' - as they have become known - went to court, the Government spent over \$10 million to defeat them, and won on a technicality.

The response of the Australian community was very different. Community organisations came together and established a committee to organise a Sorry Day in 1998. A million people wrote messages in specially-created 'Sorry Books'. Two years later, a million people took part in walks calling for reconciliation between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australians, and many carried placards urging a national apology to the stolen generations.

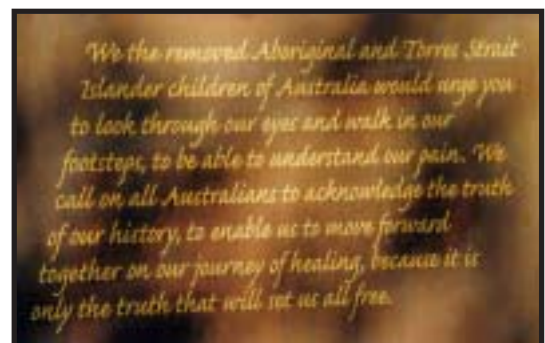
The Government could not ignore a million people, and that year the Prime Minister announced that a central area in Canberra would be set aside "to perpetuate in the minds of Australian public the importance of the reconciliation process, and include a memorial and depiction of the removal of children from their families."

The *National Sorry Day Committee* offered to conduct consultations to create the memorial, and the Government accepted. We consulted hundreds of the stolen generations, and staff of the institutions to which the children were taken, and reached consensus on how the story should be told. Though it differed considerably from the Government's approach, the Prime Minister approved it, and the memorial was dedicated in May this year.

Meanwhile, Sorry Day is commemorated each year in hundreds of events across the country, when Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians come together to remember the past and commit themselves to the Journey of Healing - the community initiatives to heal the wounds and overcome the discrimination and injustice which many stolen generations people face. More information about these initiatives can be found at www.journeyofhealing.com.



A group of Aborigines from the Stolen Generations in front of memorial in Australia



text on Stolen Generation's memorial in Australia

Blackfoot First Nations Celebrates NDHR

Five hundred members of the Blood tribe from the Blackfoot confederacy gathered to celebrate the National Day of Healing and Reconciliation on May 26th with a community healing walk, feast, and two days later an honour night and round dance. The events focussed on individual, family and community healing on international and local levels as a way to support and be apart of the NDHR movement.

Community members gathered at 9am and walked together through Cardston and the surrounding area. When they arrived at their destination, the Moses Lake gym, they participated in a special program. Over lunch, they heard presentations from elders, survivors, and other special guests. Speakers provided information on the Blackfoot confederacy's collective history with a particular focus on residential school abuses and intergenerational trauma.

Festivities continued two days later when they gathered once again for an honour night, feast and round dance. Several individuals from the Blood Community were honoured in an awards ceremony for their service and dedication in the healing process.

The Kainai community healing networking group hosted these successful events in collaboration with Aboriginal Healing Foundation, St. Paul Treatment Centre, the Blood Tribe Interagency Group, Blood Tribe Recreation Department and Moses Lake Community members. Charles Weaselhead, CEO of the Blood Tribe's department of health, explains this initiative is not an isolated event but part of an overall strategy to raise awareness about residential schools, intergenerational trauma, and community healing and reconciliation initiatives.

For more information contact Caen Bly, project coordinator at: 1-888-737-3757.

A CALL TO ACTION

Healing and reconciliation initiatives coast to coast are gathering momentum. The National Day of Healing and Reconciliation (NDHR) is an initiative meant to effect healing and reconciliation among all races, creeds and denominations now residing in Canada. This year, twenty-two NDHR events were celebrated across Canada (see NDHR newsletter issue #1).

To support NDHR you can:

1. Organize your own NDHR event. For a copy of a NDHR activity booklet please see www.ndhr.ca
2. Make a charitable donation. Please make cheques payable to Nechi Institute and clearly indicate somewhere on the cheque "NDHR Donation." Nechi is a registered charity and will issue charitable donation receipts.
3. Sign and send the following letter of support to:

National Day of Healing and Reconciliation
PO Box 34007, Kingsway Mall PO
Edmonton, AB T5G 3G4

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

I wish to support the declaration of a National Day of Healing and Reconciliation in Canada for May 26th of each year. This day will focus on healing and will coincide with "the National Sorry Day" which was pioneered by the Aboriginal people in Australia. This is an opportunity for all Canadians to be engaged in activities that acknowledge how far we have come on the reconciliation movement and to examine what challenges we still have to deal with in strengthening relationships when examining some of our collective history.

This is an opportunity to focus on individual, family and community healing. This day would offer an opportunity to provide more education on our collective history that has affected us all indirectly or directly. I am confident the churches, government and communities will join in supporting activities on May 26th across Canada on this year and each year thereafter.

(Please sign your name and include your address, phone number, fax, and email)

Pilgrimage Towards Right Relationships



Don McKay, Wii Haughtkm Skiik, facilitates a dialogue circle

If you have ever doubted Margaret Meads assertion “that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world,” than you surely have not been exposed to Vancouver Island’s “Pilgrimage Towards Right Relationships.” It is a dynamic faith-based alternative holistic education and action process inspired by and grounded in the 1996 Royal Commission Report on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP). Through consultation with many Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people, Yvonne Zarowny designed and initiated a five year education action plan for nurturing personal and societal transformation in righting relationships between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in Canada. An ambitious goal, but through the hard work and dedication of a dynamic group of volunteers, it has come to fruition and has inspired many coast to coast.

Since 2001, there have been bi-annual ecumenical gatherings, entitled Nurturing Deep Understanding and Hope, in Parksville-Qualicum beach on Vancouver Island. Yvonne describes this ‘pilgrimage’ as an on-going process to nurture a new relationship based on RCAP’s guiding principles: mutual respect, mutual recognition, mutual sharing, and mutual responsibility. The gem of this approach is that it starts with where people are rather than where we hope them to be. Yvonne explains that shifts in consciousness do not occur without an opportunity to share and feel deep emotions. In this way, the gatherings include a spiritual dimension such as rituals from diverse traditions, input sessions to glean new understanding from knowledgeable speakers, powerful experiential exercises such as role reversals, and dialogue circles where people are encouraged to share their own feelings and experiences as well as reflect upon how any new knowledge translates into their daily lives. Moreover, the gatherings offer opportunities for informal conversation over delicious meals and timely coffee breaks as well moments for creative expression through song and dance to inspire friendship and solidarity.

Yvonne points out, “There has usually been a minority tradition within the church that has walked with Aboriginal people, working side by side for justice and Aboriginal rights against dominant society and often even dominant church policy.” She is quick to acknowledge her own motivation and inspiration along the way. She has felt deeply connected to Indian Residential School and other issues involving justice and Aboriginal people because of intimate family and friend connections. Bringing over thirty-five years of experience as an educator, community organizer, and social activist in Canada, Central America and Africa, Yvonne has gifted the Pilgrimage with her passion and significant knowledge on how to create sustainable change for justice and dignity.

In year four, Yvonne needed to step down for personal reasons; however the Pilgrimage has continued to grow. Now the planning team uses a shared leadership approach comprised of both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people. What is special about this planning team is their level of commitment and willingness to “walk the talk” even when conversations become challenging. For example, Ingrid Braathen, a Métis woman describes how at one point she was not feeling heard by the other members and eventually shared this with the rest of the team. What astounded her was the level of respect and outpouring of acknowledgment that came from everyone. Since that time, she has felt a new level of respect from the team and support for her own leadership. Ingrid explains that the Pilgrimage has helped her “switch from talking verbally to really listening to the soul and spirit of what each person is saying which brings power and allows the Creator to move.” For Ingrid, the Pilgrimage is more than a team; it is “a group of people working as one, healing as one and that spills over into the weekends.”



Sharing Food, Sharing Faith

Mary Jean Crouch, a non-Aboriginal woman, originally joined the Pilgrimage as Ingrid's support person and now realizes how she needs to be involved for herself. She explains that seeing her own blind spots has been profoundly unsettling and brings up her own insecurities. She realizes that she tended to dismiss things she did not readily see herself. Moreover she is becoming more aware of her own prejudices towards other groups and realizes she needs help in walking this new journey. In the end, she admits that perhaps it is Ingrid who will help her rather than the other way around.

Harley Eagle, a Dakota and Saulteaux First Nations man was invited by Ingrid to join the planning team because they were looking for more Aboriginal input. His first concern was what happened to the Aboriginal input during the previous years. He soon realized that it was important to model what the Pilgrimage is about which is not always easy. He explains, "when I saw the willingness of other planning team members to struggle, to challenge themselves, and share personal stories from the heart it helped me want to stay."

For Harley working with an ecumenical church group has been a difficult journey, given the history of Christianity and its relationship with First Nations, however through working on the team he is "learning to recognize that which is good in Christian denominations and Christian teachings". When asked what gift he has brought to the team, Harley explains, "I feel I have brought a translating role - helping the non-Native folks understand a little better a Native perspective as well as link in a deeper way with local Native people."

Rick Sullivan, a long time Pilgrimage planning team member of Irish-Canadian descent, explains having Ingrid and Harley on the planning team has helped changed perspectives and re-focused the issue of responsibility in modelling the changes we seek. Rick describes how before working with the planning team he used to dismiss the complexity of First Nations cultures and now makes a concerted effort to seek out opportunities to participate and learn about First Nations cultures and build new relationships.

Jillian Harris of the Penelatik band has been involved with the Pilgrimage since the beginning. Entering into this journey has helped Jillian see the broader picture. She explains, "I began to see the cause of my problem not as white people but a colonial plan, an economic plan to get labourers and not just us but also poor white people who were also brought into the system who did not know the history themselves."

Don McKay, Wii Haughtkm Skiik, Warrior of Tsimshian Nation says the most important thing is for non-Aboriginal people to get away from the notion of "fixing" Aboriginal people and rather focus on their own healing. He says the "dreams of our forefathers, on both sides, was not to be where we are today. We need to go back to that vision." For McKay the Pilgrimage has helped him develop more patience and "made him a little stronger, see a little further, and understand a little more."

If Rick were to give one piece of advise to others wanting to start other processes he cautions, "not to expect to save the world overnight. It is a long process and there are deeply felt emotions that need to be worked at slowly. It is easy to think we have jumped ahead and everyone is with us."

The *Pilgrimage Towards Right Relationships* has had a ripple effect from coast to coast. Closest to home a *Friends of the Pilgrimage* group, comprised of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people, meet regularly to build relationships and nurture better understanding. Similarly, local churches such as the Comox Anglican church has brought Aboriginal issues out from the cold and into the pews through special services for Aboriginal Day as well as collaborating on a social justice issues connected to righting Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal relations. Likewise during the BC treaty referendum people connected to the Pilgrimage stood in solidarity with Chief Judith Sayers who opposed the process. In addition, the Pilgrimage has participated in initiatives such as the Aboriginal Rights Coalition petition for an independent treaty commission. Groups across the country have contacted the Pilgrimage to learn from their experience so they can develop similar processes in their region. To that end, the Pilgrimage now has a 26 minute video and study guide to help other groups begin similar initiatives. Most recently, four planning team members hope to start a similar process in the Comox-Courtenay region.

For more information about the Pilgrimage Towards Right Relationships visit their website at www.ptrr.org or contact Rick Sullivan at rmsullivan@shaw.ca.

Resources

Research, writing, and production of this newsletter was done by **Jessie Sutherland** of Worldview Strategies. Jessie offers workshops on “worldviewing skills” to groups and organizations committed to indigenous and non-indigenous reconciliation. Contact info: 250-642-6184 / jessie@worldviewstrategies.com / www.worldviewstrategies.com

The Nechi Training, Research and Health Promotions Institute hosts and administers the *National Day of Healing and Reconciliation*. NDHR is an initiative meant to effect healing and reconciliation among all races, creeds, and denominations now residing in Canada. For information, resources, and innovative ideas visit www.ndhr.ca, email: info@ndhr.ca, or phone (800) 459-1884.

Shirley Armstrong, of Métis descent, is committed to ending the silence of residential schools in community. For more information on her workshops please email: sharney@telusplanet.net

Harley Eagle is of First Nations heritage and brings his Native perspective to his work in dismantling racism workshops and restorative justice practices. Contact info: incircle@telus.net Ph (250) 338 4522.

Jillian Harris and Yvonne Zarowny offer a workshop called *Follow the Money* which outlines the evolution of current dominant social and economic arrangements, including the dominant understanding of Christianity and how this influenced the treatment of peoples in both Western Europe and North America. For more info email Jillian at: snumithiya@shaw.ca or Yvoone at yaz@macn.bc.ca.

Don McKay, Wii Haughtkm Skiik, Warrior of Tshimpshin Nation and survivor of 12 years of residential school, is available to give workshops or present to bring more understanding to residential school issues. Don is also available for drum making workshops. Contact info: drummkr@citytel.net

Marc Pizandawac, Algonquin First Nations, offers a cutting edge and innovative residential school healing program called *Returning To Spirit* which includes a train-the-trainer component. Contact info: pmarc@telusplanet.net ph: (403) 251-3577

Pilgrimage Towards Right Relationships has a 26 minute video and study guide. Contact info: Rick Sullivan: rmsullivan@shaw.ca

This newsletter is part II of a series of articles on healing and reconciliation initiatives as a way to build and strengthen networks coast to coast and promote Canada’s new National Day of Healing and Reconciliation celebrated on May 26th each year. This edition is a collaborative effort between the National Day of Healing and Reconciliation and the Catholic Aboriginal Council to highlight healing and reconciliation initiatives between First Nations communities, religious orders, former residential school students, and faith communities.



For More Information about NDHR, contact:
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