St. Stephen's College

"LIVING A LIE"

The Edmonton Residential School 1950 to 1960 – A Story of Sexual Abuse by a United Church Minister and the Response by the Church of the Time.

By

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A Project Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of St. Stephen's College in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

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I dedicate this dissertation to

Wii' Haughtkm Skiik

Who works every day to make the future better than the past.

With determination, persistence, integrity and unfathomable courage he seeks to live in a "good way."

He has taught me much.

And to

All the survivors of The Edmonton Residential School and their descendants.

May their futures be what they wish.

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Abstract

Using hermeneutic inquiry with a critical theory lens, I sought to document and unconceal the involvement of the United Church of Canada in a case of sexual abuse of children at the Edmonton Residential School during 1950 to 1960. Through analysis of the archival data, I sought to understand how the discourses created by the UCC in documents and policies reveal factors at play which normalize practices, attitudes and beliefs resulting in harm, a legacy which affects the First Nations Peoples of the Tsimshian Nation of Lax Kw'alaams, British Columbia. These factors at play are: patriarchy/sexism; colonialism /settler mentality; racism; and Government/Church relations. I utilized critical analysis of the current literature to examine the structures and systems that supported the abuse at the Edmonton Residential School. I, as a United Church minister, and a lifelong member of the Church, am deeply and emotionally connected to this inquiry through my own personal and professional relationship to the United Church of Canada and to the people of Lax Kw'alaams. I aspire to contribute to a better understanding of the past that informs all of us within the United Church of Canada to develop a polity that contributes to reconciliation with Aboriginal Peoples. I do so with the deeply felt belief that without truth telling there can be no reconciliation.

Key words: hermeneutic; critical theory; Edmonton Residential School; First Nations; Aboriginal; United Church; Tsimshian Nation of Lax Kw'alaams, BC; reconciliation; colonialism; racism; patriarchy; sexism; settler mentality; feminist theology; ecological theology

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List of Abbreviations

BC	British Columbia
BHM	Board of Home Missions
UCC	The United Church of Canada
TRC	The Truth and Reconciliation Commission

Introduction

The history of residential schools in Canada has had a devastating effect on Aboriginal Peoples [1] and their culture. This effect has been both communal and individual and has crossed generations.[2] It is hard to imagine that there is a Canadian alive that does not know this. Yet, it is apparent that the dominant non-Aboriginal society in Canada has little understanding of the history or of the impact and unfortunately little interest. Our dominant society, of which I am a member, prefers to ignore, discount and dismiss this history.[3] Present day Canadian society, in my opinion, appears to deny that they had anything to do with this history and fails to recognize that the benefits that they have in race, class and privilege come at the expense of Aboriginal Peoples. Canadians would rather believe that there was an inherent fault in the nature of Aboriginal Peoples.

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[1] The word "Aboriginal" has been used in Canada to include First Nations, Inuit and Métis. Some date its origins to the 1982 constitutional amendments (Monture-Angus 1995: 2). Or see http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100014642/1100100014643 for definition.

[2] W. Churchill, *Kill the Indian, Save the Man: The Genocide Impact of American Indian Residential Schools* (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 2004); Constance Dieter, *From Our Mother's Arms: The Intergenerational Impact of Residential Schools in Saskatchewan* (Toronto: United Church Publishing House, 1999); T. Fontaine, *Broken Circle: The Dark Legacy of Indian Residential Schools: A Memoir* (Victoria: Heritage House Publishing, 2010); M. Fortier, *Behind Closed Doors: A Survivor's Story of the Boarding School Syndrome* (Belleville: Epic Press, 2002); Suzanne Fournier and Ernie Crey, *Stolen From Our Embrace: The Abduction of First Nations Children and the Restoration of Aboriginal Communities* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1997); Elizabeth Furniss, *Victims of Benevolence: The Dark Legacy of The Williams Lake Residential School* (Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press, 1992); Agnes Grant, *No End of Grief: Indian Residential Schools in Canada* (Winnipeg: Pemmican Publications, 1996); Agnes Grant, *Finding My Talk: How Fourteen Native Women Reclaimed Their Lives After Residential School* (Calgary: Fifth House, 2004); Celia Haig-Brown, *Resistance and Renewal: Surviving The Indian Residential School* (Vancouver: Tillacum Library, 1988); J.R. Miller, *Shingwauk's Vision: A History of Native Residential Schools* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996); Bernard Schissel and Terry Wotherspoon, *The Legacy of Residential School for Aboriginal People: Education, Oppression, and Emancipation* (Don Mills: Oxford University Press, 2003); Cliff Standingready, *Children of the Creator* (Port Perry: The Boys Press, 2010).

[3] Eric Bays, *Indian Residential Schools: Another Picture* (Ottawa: Baico Publishing, 2009); Clarence Bolt, *Thomas Crosby and the Tsimshian: Small Shoes for Feet Too Large* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1992).

It is only the emergence of economic devastation for both the churches and government, as a result of lawsuits, that has forced both to respond, although still somewhat unwillingly.[4]

Throughout the residential school era, spanning more than one hundred years, government and churches worked together to implement and enforce a policy of assimilation of Aboriginal Peoples through the removal of their children to a system which would teach them to become "like" mainstream society.[5] The process was to separate them from the influence of their families and their culture so that "Indians"[6] would eventually "disappear". The overriding aim of the government was to "capture" the lands and the resources, and divest themselves of any responsibility for living up to treaty agreements.[7] A secondary goal was to produce a labour force of "inferior" people who would do the jobs that most of the dominant society felt below them.[8] The reality of the schools, in many thousands of cases, was one of oppression and abuse. Children experienced brutality, psychological, physical and sexual abuse. Fortunately, the goal of assimilation was not achieved. Distinct societies of Aboriginal Peoples have survived and

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[4] John S. Milloy, *A National Crime: The Canadian Government and The Residential School System. 1879 to 1986* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1999); The United Church of Canada, *Justice and Reconciliation: The Legacy of Indian Residential Schools and the Journey Toward Reconciliation: A Resource For Congregations* (Etobicoke: Division of Mission in Canada, 2001).

[5] David A. Nock, *A Victorian Missionary and Canadian Indian Policy: Cultural Synthesis vs Cultural Replacement,* Editions SR (9) (Waterloo: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 1988).

[6] The term "Indian" is not widely accepted by Aboriginal Peoples for defining themselves. It will appear in the quotes from the archival data but I will not use it when referring to Aboriginal Peoples. See http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100014642/1100100014643 for the government definition.

[7] Martin J. Cannon and Lina Sunseri, eds., *Racism, Colonialism, and Indigeneity in Canada* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

[8] Celia Haig-Brown, *Resistance and Renewal: Surviving The Indian Residential School* (Vancouver: Tillacum Library, 1988); Sharon Wall, *To Train a Wild Bird: Hegemony, Moral Regulation and the Project of Native Industrial Education at the Shingwauk and Wawanosh Residential Schools* (master's thesis, Queen's University, 1994), accessed July 2011, Pro Quest Ebrary .

are faced with the monumental task of dealing with the "fall out" of this terrible history. Now both governments and churches must come to terms with their part in this history and attempt to restore relationship with Aboriginal Peoples.[9]

As a minister of The United Church of Canada (UCC), I am personally deeply concerned about the role of my UCC in this history. The first response of the UCC leadership, guided by lawyers, was to deny and defend.[10] When it was apparent this would fail, the UCC policy became one of acceptance of culpability. A process of reconciliation with efforts to restore relationships with Aboriginal Peoples followed. The UCC subsequently participated in the Alternative Dispute Resolution process, advocated for a national Truth and Reconciliation process, and collaborated in the historic Indian Residential School Settlement Agreement. The UCC also offered to assist in the healing process for survivors of residential schools. There has however, been little healing for the members and within the structure of the UCC. We, as the oppressor, are also in need of healing.

When I entered ministry, the UCC I knew as a lay person was not the UCC I experienced. In ministry with the Tsimshian[11] people on the North West coast of British

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[9] Canadian Council of Churches, *Mamow be-mo-tay-tah: Let Us Walk Together (*Toronto: Canadian Ecumenical Anti-Racism Network, 2009); Canada, *Royal Commission on Aboriginal People* (Ottawa: 1996); Kairos Canada, *In Peace & Friendship: A New Relationship with Aboriginal Peoples,* 2nd ed. (Toronto: Kairos, Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives, 2010); David MacDonald, "A Call to the Churches: "You Shall Be Called the Repairer of the Breach," in *From Truth to Reconciliation: Transforming the Legacy of Residential Schools* (Ottawa: Aboriginal Healing Foundation, 2008); Paulette Regan, U*nsettling The Settler Within: Indian Residential Schools, Truth Telling, and Reconciliation in Canada* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2010); The United Church of Canada, "Background Statements: A Brief Overview, Principles to Guide Our Response in Resolving the Legacy," The United Church of Canada Web Site, http://united-church.ca/aboriginal/schools/statements/overview (accessed July 21, 2011).

[10] MacDonald, 2008: The United Church Web Site, http://united-church.ca/aboriginal/schools/statements/overview (accessed July 21, 2011).

[11] My first ministry was with the Tsimshian Nation in the isolated village of Lax Kw'alaams situated north of Prince Rupert on the west coast of BC. It is isolated with access only by sea plane or ferry.

Columbia (BC), I was acutely aware of an overriding UCC culture of patriarchy, misogyny and even abuse. I came to believe that there was something inherently "broken" within our structure and polity that needed to be healed. I wondered if this "thing", this "brokenness" was part of the long history of residential schools and if in fact it was still with us. What could have been wrong in our polity that allowed us to make decisions which protected the elite of the UCC while children were suffering? Why and how were voices of truth and resistance silenced? What had the UCC naturalized as normal that was a product of prior and on-going patriarchy, privilege and gender relationship dysfunction?

To surface answers to these questions, I researched our archives to see what discourses were normalized about 'Indians', about patriarchy, authority and allegiances, loyalties, and cultural, religious, and timed influences which created decisions that influenced and allowed for abusive behavior. Further, I wanted to know whether this "thing" was still with us and if so how might we recognize and change it?

It is imperative for me, the author of this work, that the reader understand my perspective right at the beginning. The stories of residential schools and the particular story that I engage, are a common story shared by both Aboriginal Peoples and Canadian society and in particular, from my perspective, the UCC. We all share these stories as we all had a part to play in this devastating history. Stories are important. They teach us about who we are and who we might be. The survivors of residential schools have shared their own personal stories with great courage and determination and in many ways. There has been a great deal written to document their stories. In this work, I did not intend to include the stories of survivors of the Edmonton Residential School. I made this decision

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For more information please see http://faculty.arts.ubc.ca/menzies/anth220/a_Tsimshian_Overviewpdf

very concertedly for many reasons. First and foremost, I am a non-Aboriginal person and the stories from the perspective of Aboriginal Peoples, and especially from Aboriginal survivors and their descendants must be told by them. (I will say more about this in my section on ethics.) I endeavored to tell this story of sexual abuse from the side of the United Church by documenting the archival record. I believe this is very important. The story of the UCC involvement must be concrete in story form, not just in abstract analysis, so that all of us in the UCC might be able to see ourselves in the story. The stories that I have heard and read of Aboriginal survivors are very important to me and I strive to respect and honour those stories in any way that I can. They are crucially important to all of Canadian society to deepen our understanding of the experiences of survivors of all manner of abuse and how that impacted them and their descendants. The importance of their stories cannot be understated! The fact is that they are not my story to tell. My story is the story of the UCC because as a lifelong member and a clergy person, that is "my story." In this work I sought to document "my story" and to learn from it.

When I began the work of archival research my intent was to interview people who may have known the key actors in the story that I document. It became apparent early in the process that I would not be able to achieve that. I was obliged to follow the restrictions of the UCC Archives regulations on privacy. In particular, I could not use names that I found in the archives to determine who I might interview. Those people who I knew of through my own personal knowledge were not available to me, for the most part, because of advanced age or deteriorating health issues. I have remained convinced through my work that there was significant value in documenting the story of sexual abuse at the Edmonton Residential School through only the documentation of the archival

data. This is what I have done. To my knowledge there has been no actual writing done that tells the story of the UCC in particular cases of UCC clergy sexual abuse at any of our residential schools. I strongly believe that it is important that this be done.

My Research Question

What was present in the polity of the UCC during the time frame of 1950 – 1960 which may have contributed to the sexual abuse of the students in the Edmonton Residential School as revealed in the UCC archival data of the period?

Research Sub questions:

1. How did the administration of the School and the UCC function in its relationship with the government to administer the governance of the School?
2. What was the attitude of the School's administration to the children who were under their care?
3. How did the Board of Home Missions administer the UCC's role and responsibility for the governance of the School?
4. What was the attitude of the Board of Home Missions to the children at the School?
5. What was the relationship between the local administration of the School and the Board of Home Missions?
6. How did both the local and wider UCC authorities respond to complaints and crises brought on by the disclosure of abuse and what did this indicate in their overall relationship and attitudes to the children and the Aboriginal Communities whom they were serving?

7. How was the disclosure of abuse resolved?
8. What was done to resolve and address the impact of the abuse on the children?
9. Is there a possibility that the UCC still functions in some of the same ways that it did during this historical case?

I have been greatly influenced by my personal knowledge of the experiences of some of the Edmonton Residential School survivors, although my focus in this research was on the functioning of the church during the time frame 1950-1960. Having attended The Truth and Reconciliation Commission in Edmonton in March of 2014, I reaffirmed my commitment to understanding how my church could have taken the actions it did in regards to this one particular case of clergy sexual abuse. My preliminary research indicated that there were possibly sufficient rules and regulations in the polity as listed in The United Church Manual to have taken a different approach. I pondered whether there was something deeper in the thinking of those who had authority that was either not recognized or was even subconsciously accepted as the norm which allowed for the possible ignoring of the polity. I audited a class on colonialism[12] in the spring of 2014 at St. Andrew's College which raised for me the issues of how deeply unaware most of us, in the past and in the present, are of the influence of this phenomenon in our history. Further reading also opened me to the complex reality of racism in our Canadian society from the time of first encounter with this land and its original inhabitants. My hope was

[12] The term colonization is derived from the Latin *colere,* "to till" cultivate, farm (land). Thus colonization can be thought of in terms of the steps involved in a process of cultivation: taking control of the indigenous soil, uprooting the existing indigenous plants (peoples), overturning the soil (the indigenous way of life), planning new colonial seeds (people) or transplanting colonial plants (people) from another environment, and harvesting the resulting crops (resources) or else picking the fruits (wealth) that result from the labour of cultivation (colonization). [Steven Newcomb, *Pagans in the Promised Land: Decoding the Doctrine of Christian Discovery* (Golden, Colorado: Fulcrum Publishing, 2008), 14.]

that by exploring this particular case through a hermeneutic process with a critical theory lens, insights would surface into what could be different if we were open to the learning. We then could all create a different present and future.

These questions deepened as I researched the archives in Saskatchewan. They also influenced my research concerning critical theory and racism. Again the class on colonialism began to expand my thinking about the attitudes of the UCC when doing the research in the National Church archives. It seemed to me that the UCC took an approach that abuse was an issue of an individual person's actions and failings. This was most evident when the abuser was a lay person employed by the UCC to work in the schools. It clearly was more difficult for the UCC to take this approach when the abuser was clergy and in positions of authority. By examining the archives and continuing my research I hoped to go deeper and answer these questions. I felt a responsibility to explore how much of the attitudes and policies of the UCC and those who worked in the school were affected by deep unrecognized and unacknowledged issues.

Locating Self in the Research

The Past

I was "born into" the United Church of Canada in Saskatchewan. My parents taught my brothers and me a deep commitment to faith and to our church with an acute awareness of social justice and the equality of all people. We were encouraged to stand up to and against anything that did not uphold those ideals. Both our parents valued education very highly and taught us that ideal.

I was aware from an early age that my paternal Grandmother, who had emigrated from Russia, was very much "afraid" of the "Indians" who lived all around her. I was

puzzled by the fact that, even though there were Aboriginal People all around, we had very little contact with them. My maternal Grandfather taught me an entirely different way of relating. I remember my Grandfather taking me into the circle of Aboriginal People who gathered on the street corners on a Saturday evening. I remember him telling me that these folks were just like us and that I had nothing to be afraid of. They were his friends and he wanted them to meet his granddaughter and I was duly "fussed' over.

In early adulthood I lived in Saskatoon, going to university, marrying and raising a young family. My husband and I owned duplexes and sometimes rented to Aboriginal People but we had little other contact. We moved to Alberta in 1980 where my husband began a law practice. In 1992, I decided I wanted to study theology. I had to radically change my life for my education as my husband was not supportive of my new direction. We have remained married but have continued careers in different places.

As I was preparing for seminary, I was required to take one university class and the only one available to me was in Native Studies. I had no intention of going in that direction but was "taken" with some profound new learning. I was shocked by what I was learning about the "real" history. I could not grasp how I grew up in Saskatchewan without learning this history. As I look back, I see this as a gift from the Creator because I went on to do an Honours BA in Native Studies while at the same time doing a Masters of Divinity. It was a unique opportunity for the juxtaposition of these two areas of study.

My first Ministry was with the Tsimshian People on the North West Coast of BC in an isolated village called Lax Kw'alaams. This village was strongly affected by residential schools over a long period dating from the late 1800's. This was 1997 and survivors of residential school were beginning their lawsuits against the UCC. It was a

difficult time for me and for the people with whom I lived. I experienced a crisis of faith, as I was confronted by the knowledge that my "justice seeking" UCC could be so deeply involved in what was so unjust. The village had a long history with the Methodist and then the UCC. In the 50's and 60's the UCC sent their boat to the village to collect all the children. These children were subsequently taken from their families to residential schools. Many of them were taken to the Edmonton Residential School. My relationship with the people in the village was very positive. They patiently taught me a great deal and supported me with great love and care when I was diagnosed with cancer and had to leave the village for treatment. We mourned my leaving as the UCC was a central part of the village culture. When I left the village, I was given a feast, at which I promised that I would continue to press the UCC to find a better way to deal with the situation of residential schools and the pending lawsuits.

While I was in the village, I was confronted by a UCC bureaucracy and hierarchy that were misogynistic, patriarchal and abusive. My mostly male colleagues discounted my education (which they did not have), and attempts to alter the culture from which the UCC operated were met with resistance and hostility. This did not seem congruent with my understanding of my UCC.

It was a time of great stress in the UCC as the national leadership was going through a process of discerning a way forward in the face of lawsuits and confronting the UCC's involvement with residential schools. I began to ask myself if what I was experiencing in my role as a woman in this UCC had any connections to how my UCC had made decisions around residential schools. Was there some deeply imbedded "brokenness" in our polity? I wondered about the connections to what I was experiencing

from colleagues and from a hierarchy that was sympathetic to my situation but seemed unable to change it. The UCC that I had radically changed my life for was a horrific disappointment to me.

The people of the village were dealing with many social issues and yet they supported me in very deep and caring ways. I asked myself many times how that could be. Why did they not “hate” me as a representative of a church that had caused them so much harm? Why did they continue to support and value the UCC and my presence in their village? Whatever was wrong with the UCC's decision making of the past seemed to be still present. What was that “thing” that made for such dysfunctional behavior and action?

The Present

I have a deep and abiding gratitude to the people of Lax Kw'alaams. Returning after eight years for a feast held by our national UCC to apologize to one survivor, as part settlement in a lawsuit, I was greeted with the same care and love. At the feast I was “honoured” as one who had come “home”. This relationship is one of the most important reasons for my research. I want them to know that I have kept the promise I made to them.

The UCC continues to focus on “restoring” right relationship and encouraging congregations to learn about the past and to build relationships with Aboriginal Peoples with whom they have had little contact.

More recently, there is recognition that there are some “problems” in how the UCC leadership relates to its staff and ministers. I continue to question the UCC response to “restoring” relationship. I do not believe that the church has “really” recognized the

complexity of the past relationship. The focus on looking "outward" to understand and correct the past will not get us to a new and healthy relationship. We must look to ourselves and our polity in order to answer the questions about why we acted the way we did. We cannot justify the past by blaming societal norms of the time. People who questioned the UCC's direction during the residential school era and who exposed cases of abuse were silenced and dismissed. No amount of societal norms or pressure can justify the abuse of children and the protection of perpetrators who abused them. Why were there no safeguards within our polity that would have mitigated the worst of the abuses? A common explanation to the sexual abuse is that society as a whole did not recognize sexual abuse during this era. A church structure in particular cannot use that excuse. It opposes our faith at a very fundamental level. The UCC is sure that it will never abuse children again but what other abuses will it and does it engage in that have their roots in a polity that does not recognize a deep "brokenness" within its self?

The "Story" of Abuse

I was settled in the village of Lax Kw'alaams at Grace United Church in 1997. It did not take very long after my arrival for people of the village to begin to tell me their life stories and their stories of abuse at the hands of a minister at the Edmonton Residential School. The stories were often horrific and left me sometimes with an acute experience of actual physical illness.

One member of my congregation, in particular, was deeply affected by the sexual abuse that he endured from the age of five to about thirteen at the hands of this minister, Reverend James Clarence Ludford. This parishioner's story was also of another minister, Reverend Earle Stotesbury who came to the School to bring Cree children from

Saskatchewan and to whom some of the children began to disclose what was happening to them. Reverend Stotesbury intervened, confronted Ludford, actually had a physical confrontation with him, locked him in a room in the school and called in the authorities from the Board of Home Missions who happened to be in Edmonton at the gathering of the General Council. My parishioner remembered seeing Ludford being removed from the school in handcuffs by the RCMP. He told me that when he was interviewed by the authorities that he was unable to even speak and was "frozen in terror."[13] I made an attempt to learn about Reverend Ludford and the incident through the UCC national office but was unsuccessful. No one seemed to "know" this story.

In 2001, when this parishioner and I were preparing for a summer week at Naramata, he searched the yearbooks to discover what happened to Clarence Ludford. His response was one of dismay when he discovered that this man had, within six months, gone back into ministry with an Aboriginal Community in Ontario and further had eventually retired and been "honoured" at his death. He was truly devastated by this information and expressed his dismay that, "This man had died with the honour of the Church while his own life and his family's life had been ruined by him."[14]

I once again tried to verify this story, phoned Church House (UCC national office) to inquire, and within a couple of days was told that the story was indeed true and was recorded in the archives. I was incredulous that I was hearing this and when I questioned the UCC official the response was, "The time for secrets is over."[15] This research project

[13] Personal conversation, 1997. ("Confidential to protect the person").

[14] Personal conversation, 2001. ("Confidential to protect the person").

[15] General Council Office official, May, 2001.

sought to document this story and to discover as much as possible how this could have happened.

My journey through the archival data and literature begins with Chapter One which describes the methodology I use to surface understanding. In true hermeneutic fashion, Chapter Two discloses who I am, my preunderstandings and suppositions as well as those who have influenced the way I think and live each day. Chapter Three lets you, the reader, examine the archival data I found. This way you may come to your own understanding which may be different from mine. Chapter Four is an articulation of my own understanding of what the archival data has unconcealed for me. Chapter Five contains what I learned from my experience with the hermeneutic circle, the way forward for myself and my own understanding of the way forward for the UCC.

Chapter One: Methodology

Research as Relational Accountability

This Chapter begins with my understanding of how Aboriginal scholars use Indigenous methodology. I then describe my use of hermeneutic inquiry and conclude with an explanation of critical theory, data analysis, rigour and validity and finally ethics.

Although I have not used an Indigenous research method, my understanding of this methodology informed my first and final steps. I am deeply connected to the Tsimshian People and proceed in this research with them close to my heart. If I had not lived with them, heard their stories of residential school experience and witnessed for myself the tragic outcomes of that legacy, I would not have been as committed to this process.

Shawn Wilson contrasts the dominant system and Indigenous methodologies when he says:

> Basic to the dominant system research paradigms is the concept of the individual as the source and owner of knowledge. These paradigms are built upon a Eurocentric view of the world, in which the individual or object is the essential feature. This premise stands in stark contrast to an Indigenous world view, where relationships are the essential feature of the paradigm.[16]

My relationship with the people and the place of Lax Kw'alaams is very important to me. The knowledge that I gain from this research, I intend to share with the people of Lax Kw'alaams. Prior to beginning my formal research process, I travelled to Lax K'alaams and I approached the people and requested guidance from the Elders. I shared with those who were interested what I was doing and why I was doing it. Since the focus of my

[16] Shawn Wilson, *Research Is Ceremony: Indigenous Research Methods* (Halifax: Fernwood Publishing, 2008), 127.

research was partly on the specific Edmonton Residential School, where many village children were sent, I was at least in part, sharing their story with others. I needed to honour this in some way. I needed to be accountable to the relationship that we have. Wilson describes this as relational accountability meaning to "demonstrate respect, reciprocity and responsibility (be accountable as it is put into action)."[17] He describes putting this accountability into practice within research in four different ways: how research topics are chosen; the methods of data collection that are used; the way the learning is analyzed and finally the way the outcomes of the research are presented.[18] Although I, as a Non Aboriginal person, may not totally grasp these concepts at a deep internal level, I wanted to respect them in how I conducted and presented the outcomes of my research to the people of Lax Kw'alaams.

Listening Through Hermeneutic or Interpretive Inquiry

I am at my soul a justice seeker. I have always known that about myself. When I first began to be aware of the United Church's involvement in the residential school abuse cases that were being brought to public knowledge in the late 1990's, I was dumbfounded. Although I had studied Native Studies as my undergraduate degree in the early 1990's, there was little focus on residential school history. Since I was living in an isolated village that had been affected greatly by this history, I found myself obsessed with finding some way of understanding how this could have been part of the United Church's history. Early in my time in the village, I began to hear stories of abuse that had happened at the Edmonton Residential School, and how that legacy of abuse had affected

[17] Wilson, *Research Is Ceremony,* 99.

[18] Ibid., 107.

several people throughout their adult lives. In 1999, I inquired about a particular minister at the school, Clarence Ludford, whose name appeared in many stories of abuse at his hands. I was given the basic story, over the phone, by staff at the General Council Office of the United Church. That was the beginning of my quest to document this history and attempt to answer why it was that this story appeared to be a "secret". I further questioned what meaning that had in my own confusion and sense of abusive treatment in my relationship to the UCC leadership in my first ministry assignment. This research project was my way to understand and give meaning to this history and my own history as a minister in the UCC. The method of hermeneutic inquiry fits with my quest since "Hermeneutic research is interpretive and concentrated on historical meanings of experience and their developmental and cumulative effects on individual and social levels . . . as it focuses on meaning that arises from the interpretive interaction between historically produced texts and the reader." [19] The beginning of the process is self-reflection where biases and assumptions of the researcher are "embedded and essential to the interpretive process." [20] I have carried this story within myself for such a long time and have pondered the historical connection to my own experience in the church. I was searching for what that means for the ongoing practices of the church into the future. As I analyzed the historical records I was aware of the importance to "give considerable thought to [my] own experience and to explicitly claim the ways in which [my] position or experience relates to the issues being researched."[21]

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[19] Susann Laverty, "Hermeneutic Phenomenology and Phenomenology: A Comparison of Historical and Methodological Considerations," *International Journal of Qualitative Methods 2, no. 3* (2003): 27-28, http://creativecommons.org//licenses/by/2.0 (accessed November, 2013).

[20] Ibid., 28.

[21] Ibid.

There are many well-known and great thinkers in the history of interpretive inquiry or phenomenology. These stretch all the way back to Augustine in the 2nd century and through: Martin Luther, Frederick Schleiermacher, Wilhelm Dilthey, and in the 19th and 20th century: Edmund Husserl, Martin Heidegger and Hans-George Gadamer.[22] These thinkers are the ones Moules says, "whisper loudest" and through their voices we recognize "which philosophers fit best with our own beliefs, philosophies, and practices" and so "they guide and direct" how we do hermeneutics.[23] Susan Laverty contrasts Heidegger and Husserl and says:

> Heidegger focused on 'Dasein', that is translated as 'the mode of being human' or 'the situated meaning of a human in the world.' Husserl was interested in acts of attending, perceiving, recalling, and thinking about the world and human beings were understood primarily as knowers. Heidegger, in contrast, viewed humans as being primarily concerned creatures with an emphasis on their fate in an alien world.[24]

I am grounded in Gadamer who was influenced by both Husserl and Heidegger and "moved to extend Heidegger's work into practical application."[25]

Gadamer was concerned with clarifying further that an individual gains understanding in their own lived world by questioning and interpreting that world within concrete situations in which that understanding takes place. This allows an individual in an evolving process to broaden their own understanding and allow for new

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[22] Nancy J. Moules, "Hermeneutic Inquiry: Paying Heed to History and Hermes an Ancestral, Substantive, and Methodological Tale," *International Journal of Qualitative Methodology* 1, no. 3 (2002): 1-21, http://creativecommons.org//licenses/by/2.0 (accessed November 2013).

[23] Ibid., 12.

[24] Laverty, "Hermeneutic Phenomenology and Phenomenology," 24.

[25] Ibid., 25.

understandings and new meanings to emerge.[26]

I was attempting to interpret an event in the past that seems to me to have a connection to my own experience. I sought to understand or make sense of this connection. In this struggle I accepted "that meaning is found as we are constructed by the world while at the same time we are constructing this world from our own background and experiences."[27] There is no doubt that for me being exposed to this history has affected my journey as a minister and my relationship with a Church which I have sought to serve over almost eighteen years of paid accountable ministry. The journey has not been easy for me, as I found myself reacting to situations and circumstances in that relationship which do not seem consistent with my prior experience of the Church as a child and a lay person. Since much of what happened in the Edmonton Residential School has never been known by members of the UCC, I was left to ponder what this "secrecy" meant in how the UCC functioned in the past. I sought to look at this particular event in our history in juxtaposition with my own experience, to discern whether there was learning both for myself and for how the UCC functions into the future, as we focus on rebuilding positive relationships with Aboriginal Peoples. As I examined the historical record, I sought to understand what experiences shaped the behaviour of those who served in the Edmonton Residential School and how that has continued to influence administrative decision making into the present. My belief was that by understanding what happened in the past "we venture into the contingent

[26] Laverty, "Hermeneutic Phenomenology and Phenomenology," 25.

[27] Ibid., 24.

understandings that are situated in lives, relationships, contexts, and histories"[28] and we can therefore better understand what we do in the present not as "a replication nor a justification [but] an acknowledgment that things come from somewhere; they are not simply fabricated."[29]

What we learn from our past is not only important to our present but also to our future as we focus on building *right* relationships with First Nations Peoples within our UCC. This history is not easy to read or to understand in the context of who we are or think we are today. By examining it we have the possibility of "illuminating details and seemingly trivial aspects within experience that may be taken for granted in our lives, with a goal of creating meaning and achieving a sense of understanding."[30] Interpretation is critical to one's understanding and in particular as one interprets text it is possible to "find intended or expressed meanings."[31] Moules describes it as a "reflective inquiry" in which we, as Gadamer stated, are concerned with "our entire understanding of the world and thus . . . . all the various forms in which this understanding manifests itself."[32] Of particular interest to me, was not only the sexual abuse by a minister of our UCC, but how the leadership of the UCC reacted to this case, and how it informed their ongoing relationship with this minister, Clarence Ludford, and his continuing career as a minister in the UCC. An understanding of what happened in this history can inform how we understand ourselves as UCC now and how we conduct ourselves in the future. Moules

[28] Moules, "Hermeneutic Inquiry," 2.

[29] Ibid., 3.

[30] Laverty, "Hermeneutic Phenomenology and Phenomenology," 24.

[31] Ibid.

[32] Moules, "Hermeneutic Inquiry," 3.

states that "Gadamer saw humanism as an ongoing search for "civility in human affairs . . . [and] what distinguishes humanity is not a capacity of reason, but the ability to reach beyond our own particularity, to gather up our heritage, and to see our place in what is to come."[33] Hermeneutics is described as being the "practice of *aletheia"*, the Greek word which means to reveal something which was concealed."[34] It is "about remembering" so that we can "make sense of our lives in such a way that life can go on . . . Hermeneutics begins with the premise that the world is interpretable. "[35]

I chose this method because I wanted to understand and interpret the United Church's involvement in child abuse of Aboriginal children by examining a particular case at the Edmonton Residential School. It is not only important to me that I understand and interpret what happened in this particular case, but that "as a result of what we study, we carry ourselves differently, and we live differently."[36] This connects me to Gadamer's philosophy and as Moules says, "I cannot remove my subjectivity from my work, but I can take it up with a sense of responsibility in recognizing how it translates into the way . . . I interpret it."[37] My hope was that I would not only be transformed in my work, but that I could contribute to some deeper understanding of this phenomenon for my UCC. I wanted this research to transform me so I could love my UCC and I wanted it to transform my church so that loving it would be easier! I am further connected to Gadamer's philosophy in his belief that:

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[33] Moules, "Hermeneutic Inquiry," 10.

[34] Ibid., 3.

[35] Ibid., 3-4.

[36] Ibid., 12.

[37] Ibid.

> although we may not like what tradition has done, we must account for it, we must take it all up and own it, and we must then speak to these very influences of tradition. Whether we like particular traditions or not does not change them; it is *not* about honoring all traditions, but recognizing and becoming responsible for their implications, not just choosing the ones for which we have preference.[38]

As I explore the case of abuse at the Edmonton Residential School, I sought not only to understand how it happened, but to make a connection to the possibility that the "truth" of what happened speaks to us about how the UCC functions today. For Gadamer truth is "the event of meaning, rather than something of objectivity or repetition" and as Moules states, "To say that we uncover truth in understanding simply means that we have found a meaningful account that corresponds to experience."[39] I did not seek to make the truth that I uncover to be without objection but rather to allow "the conversation to go on, recognizing that understanding is not a solo undertaking for it always occurs with others."[40]

Heidegger speaks of our understanding coming from our "preunderstandings and forestructures" which Gadamer describes as our "'prejudices' or presuppositions, or our leanings toward what we are able to see."[41] In hermeneutics it is important to not only acknowledge these but also to be aware that we have prejudices that we are not even aware of. These prejudices influence how we interpret our perceptions of the world and our relationship to it.[42] This was very important to me as I examined the archival data. For many years of my life I thought it impossible to criticize the UCC, and when I

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[38] Moules, "Hermeneutic Inquiry," 11.

[39] Ibid.

[40] Ibid.

[41] Ibid., 12.

[42] Moules, "Hermeneutic Inquiry," 1 – 21.

became aware of the residential school legacy, I moved through many emotions of disbelief, anger and disillusionment. I began to see my UCC as something "bad" and my own experience, or the experience of others that I observed, seemed to reinforce that. The UCC participated and allowed bad things to happen and continued to be blind to this reality until facing it was forced upon the UCC by multiple lawsuits. I was compelled to explore this "bad" so that we could understand and recognize what caused it and be attentive to further possibilities in the future. We will never abuse Aboriginal children again but what else are we blind to? I will carry this long journey with me, neither denying it nor justifying it but rather with the intent to understand, and discover in the understanding that the present and the future can be different then the past. I have lived with my own experience in our UCC and this case for over eighteen years now. It has not left me alone and in this there was that obligation to "a sense of opening and transforming . . ."[43] This case I examined is what Moules calls an "exemplar case."[44] It is one among very many cases of abuse of children but for me it was the one case that I knew of in which the UCC and an ordained minister of the UCC were entangled. That was what made it so significant. The beliefs, attitudes and polity of the UCC were integral to how this case unfolded.

I carry with me always, the story of one person who shared what Clarence Ludford, did to him when he was a very young child, and for years, and how this life experience affected his entire life. It almost destroyed him. He has been able to reach a large degree of healing thankfully, but what happened to him and to others at that school

[43] Moules, "Hermeneutic Inquiry," 13.

[44] Ibid., 14.

gripped me with a possession that I could not escape. Moules calls this "the experience of address."[45] She explains her understanding from the writing of Gadamer (1989) and Jardine (1992; 1994) as:

> the feeling of being caught in something's regard and of being guided by the thing itself rather than someone else's version of it. Before the researcher arrived, it already existed and something was at play. Hermeneutics lets what is already at play move forward . . . it asks the researcher to suffer the topic – to be compelled to do well by what comes to greet you, in the letting of itself in a way true to how it was given to you.[46]

This is so very true for me. I never wanted to document the experience of Ludford's victims as I have always believed that it was their story to tell not mine. What compelled me was the desire to understand the Church's actions or inactions in this case. I wanted to ask for the answers to my questions from the perspective and history of the UCC's involvement.

Seeing Through Critical Theory

I chose to use critical theory in my analysis because I believed strongly that this work must be about "an emancipatory interest in knowledge."[47] There has been writing about and by the survivors of residential schools. That is crucial information for all of us and I have seen how important the telling and the uncovering of those stories are to the survivors. Many have told me of the long years of silence which harmed them and deeply affected their lives. Many non-Aboriginals in the church today are deeply affected by the guilt those stories have evoked. As church members are confronted by these stories, the guilt that our UCC was involved in this horrific history can paralyze us. I have been very

[45] Moules, "Hermeneutic Inquiry," 13.

[46] Ibid.

[47] Mats Alvesson and Kaj Skoldberg, *Reflexive Methodology: New Vistas for Qualitative Research* (Los Angeles: Sage, 2009), 144.

intentional in my own work to not retell the stories of the abuse that children suffered at the Edmonton Residential School. If survivors are interested in telling their stories I have listened and encouraged them to find ways to share those stories.

The story that I explore is the UCCs story. I believe very strongly that the UCC has something to learn about itself in this particular story. "Critical theory aims at enlightenment, emancipation and transformation, including self-transformation."[48] The Church cannot "only" listen to the stories of survivors and then try to build right relationship from that listening. I have always believed that the UCC and the society in which it is situated are in need of healing as much as our Aboriginal brothers and sisters. My whole premise is "that societal conditions are historically created and heavily influenced by the asymmetries of power and special interests, and that they can be made the subject of radical change."[49] As Alvesson and Skoldberg state, "Critical studies aimed at emancipation from repressive institutions and ideologies can also make constructive contributions."[50] As they discuss the philosophy of Habermas' critical theory, I am encouraged by the thought that "we need not simply let ourselves be steered by traditional ideas and values, but we can also scrutinize and question these, reaching out towards increasingly well-reasoned views."[51]

Alvesson and Skoldberg describe Habermas' epistemology as being differentiated into three forms, technical, historical-hermeneutic, and an emancipatory interest. I am interested in the historical-hermeneutic as "interhuman understanding . . . between

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[48] Piet Strydom, *Contemporary Critical Theory and Methodology* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 9.

[49] Alvesson and Skoldberg, *Reflexive Methodology*, 144.

[50] Ibid., 148.

[51] Ibid., 150.

different historical eras . . . so that the distance between different individuals or traditions can be overcome. The primary interest thus concerns significations and meanings."[52] This understanding then seems to me to lead into the emancipatory mode which "By way of self-reflection and the critical inquiry into ideas, perceptions, fantasies, and so on. . . . helps to combat repression."[53] It seems to me that the Church has not done enough to analyze a very sad historical era. To move to reconciliation, this practice of self-reflection from a critical standpoint must be foundational since "Critical awareness can make it more likely that systems, goals, procedures, reforms, control and ideas are not taken for granted, but are reflected upon, and may thus work more 'positively'."[54] It is in this reflection on this particular case history that I hope to raise for the UCC the possibility "of stimulating self-reflection and overcoming the blockages of established institutions and modes of thought."[55] There is no doubt that I am "guided by an emancipatory cognitive interest" in which I feel that I am asking "questions that certain elite groups are reluctant to have answered but which might be crucial from the perspective of some disadvantaged group."[56] I have often found myself in opposition to the UCC's focus on moving forward in our relationship with Aboriginal Peoples without a concerted effort to fully understand what has happened in our past relationship. I am certainly aware that "Self-reflection and critical awareness seriously challenging

[52] Alvesson and Skoldberg, *Reflexive Methodology,* 155.

[53] Ibid., 155- 156.

[54] Mats Alvesson and Kaj Skoldberg, *Reflexive Methodology*, 162 -163; Raymond A. Morrow and David D. Brown, *Critical Theory and Methodology: Contemporary Social Theory, Volume 3* (London: Sage Publications, 1994).

[55] Alvesson and Skoldberg, *Reflexive Methodology,* 160.

[56] Ibid., 162-163.

ethnocentrism is not easy to achieve."[57] It has been a struggle for me, many times in the past, to find a pathway to this research which is not broken by my own struggle to speak a truth that I hold. I have found myself silenced by resistance to criticism, which seems to me, to be a blockage in the self-reflection of the leadership and main thought processes of the UCC. I have often felt the "push" to conform to the established patterns of thought and blocked from "opening up lines of thinking bearing new potentialities . . ."[58]

Since I did not use interviews but rather engaged archival data, I relied heavily on critical theory to ask the questions of how racism is involved, who has power and who does not and overall, a 'hermeneutics of suspicion'[59]. As stated in Alvesonn and Sklodberg:

> Research should promote critical reflection and emancipation from frozen social and ideational patterns. This applies not least to the researchers themselves. According to critical theory, the process of research must include self-reflection. The natural tendency to interpret existing social reality from a taken-for-granted cultural stance must be counteracted. It is a question of learning to maintain restraint in regarding social conditions and dominant modes of thought as natural, neutral and rational.[60]

This process of critical theory encompasses "the critical interpretation of unconscious processes, ideologies, power relations and other expressions of dominance that entail the privileging of certain interests over others, within the forms of understanding which

[57] Alvesson and Skolderg, *Reflexive Methodology,* 164.

[58] Ibid., 166.

[59] David Kaplan, *Ricoeur's Critical Theory* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2003), 21–36; David Pellauer, *Ricoeur: A Guide for the Perplexed* (London: Continum International Publishing Group, 2007), 46-47, 58-59, 78, 85, 110.; Paul Ricoeur, *Hermeneutics and Human Science: Essays on Language, Action and Interpretation* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981)

[60] Alvesson and Skoldberg, *Reflexive Methodology*, 175.

appear to be spontaneously generated."[61] This was important to my research as I sought to uncover what appeared to be unquestioning of the social order during the residential school era and what might be learned by challenging "the reproduction and/or reinforcement of [that] existing social order. . . ."[62] What was most difficult for me was the directive that "Researchers should also avoid pandering to established thinking and dominating interests."[63] The critical-political dimension in this research needed to "be discernable in the research context."[64]

Long before I had any realization of the history of residential schools, I was introduced to my first understanding that there was something very wrong in our relationship to First Nations Peoples. *The Unjust Society* by Harold Cardinal was my first glimpse at the anger and determination of these peoples to address the wrongs that had long been a part of their history. Later, I had the privilege of taking a course from Howard Adams that pushed me deeper into a search to understand. I will always remember his anger and also his compassion. I was sometimes confronted by my mostly Aboriginal classmates in the pain and anger that they carried from a history and experience that I knew nothing of. There was a day when Professor Adams stood with his hand on my shoulder and the shoulder of a Cree woman classmate who was explaining that violence was the only answer while I naively expressed my Christian ideals of peaceful resolutions to all problems. I was expressing that I did not want my son and hers to be in a situation of violence. Her response was, "My son is constantly faced with violence and death,

[61] Alvesson and Skoldberg, *Reflexive Methodology*, 175-176.

[62] Ibid., 176.

[63] Ibid.

[64] Ibid.

yours is not." It was a moment that I will never forget. These were my first introductions to colonialism, racism, white supremacy and arrogance.

I critically examined the UCC in relation to postcolonial feminist theology in the work of Kwok Pui Lan (2000, 2005, 2010) and critical race theory in the writings of: Himani Bannerji (2000); Joseph Barndt (2007) and to a lesser degree the editorial work of Sherene Razack, Sunera Thobani and Malinda Smith (2010) and Sherene H. Razack (2002). I was particularly informed by Eva Mackey's (1999) writing on Canadian national identity. David Coleman (2009) contributed to my understanding of the connections to our spirituality as we read and think. The writing of Taiaiake Alfred (1999); Leanne Simpson (2010, 2011); Patricia Monture (2009); Bonita Lawrence (2009); along with my early learnings from Harold Cardinal (1969) and Howard Adams (1975,1995) helped me understand the experience of First Nations Peoples and have contributed to my hope for a transformed and liberated future for all of us.

Analyzing the Data

The data that I sought to analyze was wholly from the archival research and the review of letters, notes and reports from the UCC files. This is the story of the Edmonton Residential School and the specific case of abuse that had haunted me for years. My analysis was dependent on me, as I interpreted it as the researcher, and ultimately on the reader who reads my analysis.[65] It is always a symbiotic relationship which does not seek to come to a definitive answer, but rather allows for the possibilities of meaning which lies in the story. This involves:

[65] Moules, "Hermeneutic Inquiry."

> careful and detailed reading and rereading of all the text, allowing for the bringing forth of general impressions, something that catches the regard of the reader and lingers, perturbing and distinctive resonances, familiarities, differences, newness, and echoes. Each re-reading of the text is an attempt to listen for echoes of something that might expand possibilities of understanding.[66]

I was not seeking repetition to authenticate my interpretation, but rather, to further the possibilities of what this story might teach us about our past and the possibilities for being *different* in the future. As I entered the hermeneutic circle I was bringing all of who I am into my interpretation which must be acknowledged and "in the end determines what can be received and brought forth as understanding."[67] This required me to be "reflective, insightful, sensitive to language, and constantly open to experience."[68] My own biases and assumptions were part of my interpretation and my own experience related to this story that I interpreted.[69] To this end I used a reflective journal to assist me in my interpretation. I was compelled by my responsibility to this story to "deepen understanding" and thereby transform myself and this story into meaning which made a difference to me in the present and the future and hopefully offers the UCC the same possibility.[70] As I worked within the circle I engaged the whole and the part of the data in a process in which reading, reflective writing and interpretations moved to a critical point building on the last critical point and calling on the first.[71] Accordingly, my process of data analysis involved "a focus on recognizing the particular, isolating understandings,

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[66] Moules, "Hermeneutic Inquiry," 14.

[67] Ibid., 15.

[68] Laverty, "Hermeneutic Phenomenology and Phenomenology," 28.

[69] Ibid.

[70] Moules, "Hermeneutic Inquiry."

[71] Alvesson and Skoldberg, *Reflexive Methodology;* Laverty, "Hermeneutic Phenomenology and Phenomenology"; Moules, "Hermeneutic Inquiry."

dialoguing with others about interpretations, making explicit the implicit and eventually finding language to describe language."[72] The dialogue occurred primarily with my Project Dissertation Committee.

> The interpretation of understanding has also become increasingly linked to *empathy:* understanding calls for living (thinking, feeling) oneself into the situation of the acting (writing, . . .) person. With the help of imagination one tries to put oneself in the agent's (author's, . . .) place, in order to understand the meaning of the act (the written . . . word) more clearly. . . In so far as this empathy is complemented by the interpreter's broader or at least different stock of knowledge, it is even possible – and this constitutes one of the main themes of hermeneutics – for interpreters to understand agents better than the agents understand themselves.[73]

I placed the text in its socio-historic and cultural context, the revelation of the results of abuse at residential schools, and what that meant for the reconciliation process now underway. I was constantly aware that this new context was unheard of in the past. This was an unknown history until Aboriginal Peoples began to tell their truth. This was my dialogue with the text, asking questions of it and listening to it. Questions came from preunderstanding and were developed or transformed during the process. I both respected and entered into the text. "We glide back and forth between" old understandings and new. "Questions directed at the whole also alternate with questions directed at the parts, and the two kinds can cross-fertilize each other."[74]

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[72] Moules, "Hermeneutic Inquiry," 15.

[73] Alvesson and Skoldberg, *Reflexive Methodology,* 93.

[74] Ibid., 101.

Affirming Rigour and Validity

My interpretation required credibility, transferability and dependability and could certainly be one of many interpretations. The reader will decide whether it "is believable and, in this decision, there is often a seemliness, fitness, or sense of appropriate character in the work which is recognizable."[75] I sought to take the reader "to a place that is recognizable, having either been there before, or in simply believing that it is possible."[76] As I sought dependability I was very attentive to the archival data and the documentation. I read and reread to surface patterns and subsequently made interpretations.[77] "The use of in-depth description of complexities of experiences and interactions needs to be embedded in the data and the final text."[78] By bringing in critical theory I sought to juxtapose my interpretation with those writers that I use so that it was informed by their writing. Being true to my grounding in the philosophy of Gadamer, I did not come to an absolute truth but rather expanded the possibility of surfacing new questions. As I looked for this harmony I sought:

> The fitting of difference onto itself; the combination of difference to make something else; the combination of part into a pleasing whole; the simultaneous sounding of different tones which is satisfying to the ear; and the blending and compromise of tension. . . . or the apparently miraculous transmutation of something into something better.[79]

The one thing that I could not escape in this research was the suffering that I was

[75] Moules, "Hermeneutic Inquiry," 16.

[76] Ibid., 17.

[77] Laverty, "Hermeneutic Phenomenology and Phenomenology"; Nancy J. Moules, "Hermeneutic Inquiry."

[78] Laverty, "Hermeneutic Phenomenology and Phenomenology," 31.

[79] Moules, "Hermeneutic Inquiry," 16.

interpreting and the suffering that I experienced as I undertook this research. They are forever tied and there can be no division between the two.

Adhering to Ethics

My archival research was guided by the policies of the UCC in regards to what I wrote and disclosed about individuals as I discovered this information in the archives. I sought the aid of the archivist to ensure that I was aware of the current regulations on archival research and privacy issues that were in place by both the UCC and government standards and regulations. I consulted with the Elders of the Tsimshian Nation to obtain their approval for this work and to ascertain an appropriate way to share my research results with the community of Lax Kw'alaams.

I was greatly influenced in my reflection on ethics by my reading of the experience of Paula Butler.[80] She, like me, is situated as an "insider" in the UCC and informs my thinking by her articulation of what is at stake for her in that position and how she is affected at a deep level both emotionally and professionally.

Her writing forced me to consider my ethical approach especially in how I intersected with colleagues and those in positions of power within the UCC. She reminded me that there would be times of pain for both me and others as I did this research and that I needed to be attentive and not shy away from that. I also found I needed a strong network of supporters and mentors to do this research well.[81]

I consider it a privilege that I was given the opportunity to study for my first degree in Native Studies here at the University of Saskatchewan. The ethics that I learned

[80] Paula Butler, "Shattering the Comfort Zone: Ethical and Political Aspects of Anti-Racism Research in Churches," in *Critical Issues in Anti-Racist Methodologies*, eds. G. J. Dei and G.S. Johal (New York: Peter Lang, 2005), 125-143.

[81] Ibid.

in those years of study have stayed with me. I was also privileged in those years to have the opportunity to study under Marie Campbell and Howard Adams, both who were born and raised in Saskatchewan. It grounded me in my own history. Although I realize that some of the perspectives that they taught me are not now universally accepted, I nevertheless find that I cannot and will not give them up. Paramount was the lesson that I as a non-Aboriginal person must be very attentive to never appropriating the voice of Aboriginal Peoples. This is why I have not undertaken to research and tell the stories of the survivors of sexual abuse by Clarence Ludford at the Edmonton Residential School. I sincerely hope that if they wish to tell their stories that they will be able to do so and will find a way to write them down so that they are accessible to a wide readership. Their documentation of what happened to them at that school could help to further the understanding of the UCC of how it could have allowed the abuse to happen and how it failed to respond when, in particular, Ludford's sexual abuse was exposed.

The next chapter turns to an explanation of my own spirituality and my grounding in the work of Sally McFague, a feminist theologian. I articulate how I integrate my faith beliefs with my continuing search for justice, within myself, my UCC and the world in which I live and have my being.

Chapter Two: The Maze, My Theology and Sense of Justice

The Maze

There is a maze that stretches over all of life,
The opening broad and bright to welcome in,
And then the lengths and depths are hidden there,
Some broad, some narrow, some tangled in the way.
The way goes light and swift with encircling green to guide,
Some with life, some with lingering barbs and blades.
And on one goes with blocks and blinds, swift at times,
At others slowed to an agonizing pace.
Lost and found with hope and with despair,
The turns and twists that hide, then show the way.
And over all, the dome of bright and brilliant hue,
The light so bright and true there is no pain.
Sometimes to disappear in the dim confusion of the way
And then to shine again the path that lies ahead,
And still with grace and love to hold one close,
The way is shimmered with the stars of guiding light
Behind the clouds but never completely gone.
To the end with longing gaze to backward glance
To know through all the distant way
The ONE was steady by the side.
For now, for ever,
Through the maze that stretches over all of life.[82]

My mind has gone back and forth searching for the image or metaphor that would define my own journey of faith through a lifetime and eighteen years of paid accountable ministry. The image of the maze seemed to keep coming back to me, especially in the early morning moments when I was coming out of deep sleep. The dictionary defines maze as, "something intricately or confusingly elaborate or complicated."[83] That seems to be accurate as I reflect on what faith and ministry have been for me over the years. The poem above is my attempt to express this history in an artistic way. It has been a

[82] I wrote this poem at a time when I was struggling to obtain a deep understanding of the theology of Sally McFague. This was in the summer of 2012.

[83] Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 10th ed., s.v. "Maze."

challenging, interesting, sometimes confusing, but always a wonder-filled journey. It is the story of my answer to the call from God that I perceived well into my adult life. The call that changed my life and which continues to challenge, interest, confuse and fill me with the wonder of God's presence in this journey of faith. In this chapter, I document my personal journey of faith and ministry from the distant past to the present; share the wisdom I have learned from my spiritual mentor, Sally McFague; and discuss my evolving sense of justice.

My Personal Journey

My spiritual journey has, from birth, been rooted in The United Church of Canada.[84] My maternal grandparents and great-grandparents were dedicated to church involvement both in Scotland and England and when they came to Canada. As a child, I heard the stories of the difficult transition that my ancestors had from the traditional Presbyterian Church to this "newfangled" United Church. By the time of my mother's generation, UCC was home and I grew up as a child feeling it as a place in which I belonged. I have vivid memories of my Sunday school days in the basement of the manse, and my sense of awe when I was allowed the rare opportunity of entering the sanctuary. I also have wonderful memories of warm Sunday mornings in the rural UCC, built on the corner of my grandfather's quarter section, which he donated for the building of this church. Here the children were allowed to sit quietly alongside the adults under the careful watch of our rather stern grandfather. Our family's social and spiritual life revolved around the UCC as my parents were active participants at the leadership level. I

[84] When I refer to The United Church of Canada in a personal way I shall refer to it as Church. At other times I will use the abbreviation UCC.

have childhood memories of fridge notices, which still bring a smile to my face, listing the latest boycotted products. This UCC has given me a richness of memory and tradition that has sustained me. It has been that welcoming bright opening to the maze of my faith journey.

There was wonderful folklore on the paternal side of my family which tells of a dramatic escape from Russia within the Dukhobor Sect, for my Jewish grandparents. Later in life, a Jewish friend explained to me how our Jewish heritage was lost as my grandmother only had sons and the maternal link to the past was broken. Here, I believe, was the first pull to my continued fascination with history and how it impacted our current lives. This rich and mystic kind of history has always given me a connection to the Hebrew Bible and a sense of seeking out a knowing of what was lost for my family in the early 1900s. I remember the lifelong fear my grandmother carried as a result of fleeing the pogroms during her childhood. In her long life of seventy-eight years she never had the courage to explore our Jewish roots. In fact it was only on her death bed that she shared this story with my eldest brother.

I grew up in the sixties in a United Church which was, as the churches of that time, full of activity and energy. It was there that I learned about justice seeking, and activism, and was nurtured by a family that lived what the UCC taught. My image of myself as minister and compassionate justice seeker is grounded in this history and feels so much a part of myself that it is my very being.

My parents, especially my mother, taught and modeled for me an open and accepting theology that allowed me to explore my faith without judgement. I remember as a pre-teen attempting to read through the Bible, becoming discouraged, and being

reassured by my mother that I had a lifetime to accomplish this task. I developed a strong sense of Jesus as friend and teacher. Jesus was my mediator with God, the one who is my human partner in all my struggles to know and serve God. My childhood images of Jesus have been very traditional and are engrained in me. To know Jesus as fully divine has always been, for me, the most comfortable. And yet the sense of openness to exploring faith that was given to me in my formative years has also allowed me not to stay rigid in my beliefs and understandings. My nature is non-judgmental and that allows me to be open to other understandings and interpretations. My determination in my faith journey always concerns seeking justice and right relationship. This grounding has provided me with a sense of connection to Jesus and his life more than a connection to a somewhat distant God.

God is more removed, more awe inspiring and more wrapped in the mystery of life. For me, God is transcendent and present - far removed and yet near at hand.
I have another childhood memory that has sustained this belief for me. There was a day as a pre-teen when I was emotionally upset about something. I do not remember the specific event, but I do remember lying in my bed that night, crying and praying. I reached out my arm and challenged God that if God really existed then I should be able to feel God reaching down and touching my hand. It was a shocking sensation for me to actually feel that touch. I had a sense of wonder that God could respond to one small human child in need. Maybe it was a childhood illusion but it has stayed with me. I thought my childhood crisis must have been very small and insignificant for God and yet there was a response. This childhood connection has been the embodied presence of God in my life. For me, this was an amazing realization that in some mystical way, far beyond

our human understanding, God was concerned with one seemingly insignificant human life in a global world. This was the God that I believed we learned about in our UCC and who was connected to us in our lives.

My grandparents, both maternal and paternal, were significant influences in my early life. In my later years when I was immersed in Native Studies, I often thought about the contradictory messages that they had given me. I was aware from an early age that my paternal grandmother was very much afraid of the "Indians" who lived all around her. I have a memory of a day when an elderly man came to my grandmother's door asking if he could take water from her outside tap. She lived directly across from the hospital and the people from the reserve often camped on the lawn of the hospital when they had family hospitalized. I remember Grandma sending this man away. She shouted at him through the locked door while shielding me behind her. I also remember telling my father about this incident and the way he laughed and dismissed my grandmother's reaction. I was puzzled by the fact that even though there were Aboriginal People all around, we had very little contact with them.

The memory of the lesson that my maternal grandfather taught me on that long ago summer Saturday night circle of friends has stayed with me for a life time. I learned about the value of all human beings being equal and that it was always wrong to make judgements of others based on anything other than our mutual humanity and the love that God has for all of us. I have tried to live this value and although I may fail at times, it is foundational to who I am.

My parents, unlike the contradictory messages from grandparents, consistently taught a message of equality of all people. My brothers and I learned a commitment to

faith, and to our UCC, with an acute awareness of social justice. We were encouraged to stand up to and against anything that did not uphold those ideals. Lifelong learning and educational achievement were highly valued as a way to seek the answers to life questions and dilemmas that always come in the human journey. To seek understanding was very important and meant to be a way to make sense of our relationships and our life experience. We were taught that determination and hard work were very important to a life well lived. This was to be a corner stone of my work as a minister within this much loved and respected UCC. We were always allowed to question but never to give up on the values and lessons and commitment to one's life work and one's faith journey. Here the maze was open and welcoming and in these early memories were the images of the living "green" which surrounds the journey further into the maze. In childhood memories and lessons there was the sense of wellness and growth and life which nurtures and enfolds. The "going" was easy.

As I became a young adult, like most young people, I drifted away from any church involvement. Although that was the norm for me and my peers at university, I also vividly remember those Sunday mornings that drew me quietly and secretively to worship somewhere. There was a deep call within me that I believe is there for every human being. We are created by God and there is always that pull to seek out and understand the nature of our relationship to God. That call required a response and while many could easily dismiss it or choose to lose the opportunity, in our overwhelming technological and wired world, for me that never happened. As a young parent I was once again immersed in an active church life, leading Canadian Girls In Training and being involved at the local board and Presbytery level. Further into the maze, the "green"

enfolding was still strong and full of life and possibility. The way was straight and clear ahead.

Beginning My Ministry

In early adulthood I lived in Saskatoon, going to university, training at the hospital as a laboratory technologist, marrying and raising a young family. After many years of working in the medical world, I felt a call to ministry that was strongly focused in community. I was involved at many levels with justice work, justice groups and I was a frequent attendant at Naramata, the UCC learning centre in the beautiful Okanogan. It seemed that wherever I was, I was being encouraged to at least explore the possibility of ministry as vocation. Part of that preparation and decision making was to take a class in my local area to demonstrate my ability. The only class available was in Native Studies and so, by what I thought was chance, I began a study that would lead me five years later to my degrees. I had no intention of going in that direction but was confronted with some profound new insights. I know now that it was the guidance of the Creator that brought me to those two studies, and I know my study and passion for theology and justice to be firmly connected to my passion for the study of the history and justice for the Aboriginal Peoples of this land and of our churches.

As I stated earlier, my first ministry was with the Tsimshian People on the North West Coast of BC, in an isolated village called Lax Kw'alaams. On an almost daily basis I was confronted by the effects that residential school had imparted. It was a difficult time to be a minister of the UCC, as we began to learn about the lawsuits of survivors that were beginning to take place. I was personally shaken in my own faith as I tried to

minister to people who I felt had every right to question my presence and my role as a representative of a church which had caused them so much pain over such a long period of time.

I still strongly feel the guilt, as my own personal health issues required me leaving the village. I had valued the support and encouragement that the people offered me during my illness. I hope I never forget all the things they taught me about caring relationships and courage and determination. I have remained committed to the promise I made to them at my farewell feast. When my own courage and determination falters, I recall the lessons they taught me and find myself strengthened.

The painful memories of conflict with my colleagues in that Presbytery caused me to question a UCC that felt to me to be misogynist, patriarchal and even abusive at times. The memories of a UCC bureaucracy that would not or could not address the problems that were causing so much pain and dysfunction confounded me. Despite what seemed to me to be obvious bullying and abuse of power, the Conference leadership was ineffective and did not ask for accountability. Loyalty to allegiances seemed more important than addressing harmful behaviour. This was not the UCC I had known and loved and I floundered in my disillusionment. I left my ministry in the village in 1999, and was still confronted by a broken relationship with a Conference staff person and Presbytery leadership that persisted to 2001. Eventually, I laid a formal charge against a Conference staff member which alleged, "[failure] to meet his responsibility to me and abuse of power . . . as well as to function within Presbytery in a way which contributed to an ongoing systemic brokenness."[85] This was, of course, a very difficult letter for a very new

[85] Donna Wilson, letter to General Council, General Secretary, June 12, 2001.

practising ministry person to write. The response, which follows, was the first sign of hope that allowed me to feel once again that my UCC was indeed a place that I understood.

> There is acknowledgement that systemic issues in Prince Rupert Presbytery must be addressed and a commitment by the Conference to do this. . . . This is as a result of the Presbytery failing to provide you with basic needs, such as heating costs and that the paperwork for your call was incomplete and inappropriately administered. . . . It is our hope that by addressing the systemic issues you raise and holding staff accountable through formal lines of supervision will result in the prevention of this situation repeating itself with others. Thank you again for your willingness to participate so honestly in this process.[86]

This encounter with my UCC was certainly a time of confusion and personal pain for me. The UCC of my childhood and educational experience seemed to disappear into the unknown realms of the maze. The way was blocked by the "barbs and blades" and what felt like the death of the life giving "green". The response I received from General Council raised hope and the blocks in the maze opened up once again. This theme of what felt like deep dysfunction in my UCC was not to disappear entirely though, and has been a continuing part of the journey through the maze, sometimes blocking the way and often confusing and disorientating me in the UCC.

The national leadership continued to struggle with the way forward in the face of the lawsuits. More and more, I and others were becoming aware of the consequences of what adversarial court cases were doing to survivors. The leadership was blaming the lawyers in saying that their hands were tied and they were bound to follow legal advice. It was a shameful period for the UCC. I continued to ask myself if what I was experiencing in my role as a woman in this UCC had any connections to how my UCC had made decisions around residential schools. Was there some deeply imbedded

[86] Dilys Watanabe, General Council Human Resources, letter to author, July 30, 2001.

"brokenness" in our polity? I continued to wonder about the connections to what I had experienced from colleagues and from a hierarchy that was sympathetic to my situation but seemed unable to change it. The UCC I had radically changed my life for sometimes felt like a horrific disappointment to me.

During the early 2000s, there had been some recognition that there were "problems" in how the UCC leadership related to its staff and ministers. Numerous stories of a dysfunctional relationship surfaced. In Ontario there was a movement for ministry personnel to join the Canadian Auto Workers Union because of what some felt was the inability for the UCC to address these situations. In 2002 there was a complete breakdown in the relationships of staff and leadership at the General Council level. This resulted in a report of a commission entitled, *A Call to the Table*.[87] It became apparent that the UCC could no longer ignore or dismiss the serious internal problems. Private consulting companies began working with employee assistance programs to address these issues.

During this time it was challenging to be a minister in a pastoral charge. Some members of my congregation expressed concerns about what was happening in the wider UCC, and looked to me as their minister to assure them that all was well. There were frequent discussions with colleagues and many different views on whether the UCC was approaching these problems in the right way. My own style of ministry had always been to help my congregations to feel that they were not individual and isolated, but rather part of a much wider national denomination. I remember one particular Sunday when I read a

[87] Peter Bishop, Elizabeth Eberhart-Moffat, and Hugh Stansfield, "A Call to the Table: Executive Summary of the Report of the Commission on Leadership" The United Church of Canada, http://www.united-church.ca/ucc/commission.htm (accessed October 17, 2002).

letter from our then moderator, Peter Short, and although my congregation was not having difficulties, they related to the concerns he raised. As I returned to the pulpit, I was surprised to hear them applauding in affirmation. As a minister, it was a very special moment and I felt a deep sense of pride in this congregation and for the wider community of UCC.

I have sometimes asked myself if my attachment to my UCC was a naïve approach. I am not certain of the answer to that question, but my years in ministry have shown me that it is not unusual. Members of my congregations over the years have exhibited the same kind of attachment and loyalty that I have felt. Congregational members want to believe that their church is what they "believe" it to be. They are slow to criticize and quick to justify behaviours or, at the least, distance themselves from difficult questions or situations. Indeed I think that denominational faith communities rely on this to some extent. We want our members to trust and believe in our particular denomination and we do expect them to be loyal to us. It is a theme that permeates our history and the history of residential schools, to some extent, in how congregations related to their existence.

The UCC continues to focus on restoring right relationship and encouraging congregations to learn about the past and to build relationships with Aboriginal Peoples with whom they have had little contact. The UCC is less likely to send a Non Aboriginal minister to villages or reserves. There has been a focus on offering healing programs in our learning centers. We have developed a program in Manitoba where Aboriginal candidates for ministry can train within a culturally sensitive framework. The Vancouver School of Theology offers an Aboriginal Summer Institute to further education and

relationship. The UCC has encouraged the use of a publication from Kairos entitled *In Peace & Friendship: A New Relationship with Aboriginal Peoples*.[88] The UCC has also developed a resource to use as an educational tool within congregations entitled, *Toward Justice and Right Relationship: A Beginning; A Study Guide for Congregations and Church Groups as They Explore the Legacy of Indian Residential Schools and Forge New Relationships with First Nations Peoples*.[89] There have also been various developments to help congregations and individuals learn about the history of residential schools and how we might all move into a future which will speak of our desire to live together in right relationship. The Living Into Right Relations Task Group has been active with Right Relations Home Group members across the country. This group, the one I belong to, has been especially active in encouraging non-Aboriginal participation in The Truth and Reconciliation Commission's regional and national gatherings. These initiatives offer me a sense of wellbeing and the journey deep within the maze seems more like a positive adventure then a struggle. The way is not always clear, but there is a determined effort to keep going and find the right path. There may be wrong turns and blocks along the way, but that is just part of the adventure of finding one's way through this complex journey. This is not an easy time to be in ministry. The greatest efforts seem often to lead to confusion and pain for both ministers and congregations. Engaging in conversation with colleagues sometimes means hearing stories of confusion and pain. As one colleague said to me, "We all know something is wrong, we just haven't got a clue what it is or where to

[88] Kairos Canada, *In Peace & Friendship: A New Relationship with Aboriginal Peoples, 2nd ed.*, (Toronto: Kairos: Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives, 2011).

[89] The United Church of Canada, *Toward Justice and Right Relationship: A Beginning; A Study Guide for Congregations and Church Groups as They Explore the Legacy of Indian Residential Schools and Forge New Relationships with First Nations Peoples*, (Toronto: Justice, Global, and Ecumenical Relations Unit, 2003).

start to fix it."[90] Undoubtedly this is overstated but still with some truth. Ada Diaz expresses the human conditions as, "La vida es la lucha - life is struggle."[91] I resonate with this, as it is an expression of my concerns for myself, for my UCC and for the people I serve in ministry.

The questions of theology are complex. How is it that we can speak of God and understand God's relationship to humans and to all of creation? How is it that we can speak of these many complex issues and history of Christian thought in a way that will be meaningful and helpful to those in our congregations? This is the work of ministry for me. The longer that I am in the practice of ministry, the more convinced I am that my own understanding of God and how I relate to God, others and creation is not something that is static, but is rather a continual and lifelong evolution.

God with us, in our human life, is essential for our spiritual wellbeing and for our ability to live out our Christian faith in a life-giving and affirming way. In a society which often ignores and even denies the existence of God, the UCC has an overwhelming task to show the world around that there is "something" to this idea of faith in God; that faith does in fact offer us a way of life that can make a difference to the complexities of modern human life. God is not us and we must seek a deeper understanding of that and the relationship that we have with God. The existence of our creation, and our wellbeing as the human occupants of creation, may well hang in the balance.

My faith developed with an understanding of a justice-seeking UCC, which was for me relational and like family. It fed my justice-seeking soul. When I entered ministry as a vocation at midlife, it was as a way of expressing a deeper meaning of my faith and

[90] Personal conversation with author, no permission to reveal name, Summer of 2008.

[91] Ada Maria Isasi Diaz, M*ujerista Theology* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1996), 21.

of my service to God and to my UCC. I continue to seek understanding and meaning in my ongoing life experience of the UCC. In more than eighteen years of ministry, I have experienced more difficulty and instability of relationships then I ever did in twenty-five years of working in the medical field. I wonder why that should be. I am passionate in my seeking to understand my UCC in past and present relationship to First Nations Peoples, and in particular, in my seeking to understand the complex issues of residential schools. I believe that we have the opportunity for a deeper understanding of God in the world, as we walk with First Nations Peoples as they heal, and as we work to recognize our own need for healing within the UCC.

I know that for me that there is this "dome of bright and brilliant hue" over this journey through the maze of my faith journey. I also know that for me there is the ONE who is "steady" by my side. That is the source of my ability to keep on the journey. That is the source that helps me find my way and to keep going when the "green" seems to disappear and the "barbs and blades" cut deep into my faith and to my courage. This ONE guides me through the narrow ways where I am lost and shows the way with freely given grace and love.

My Spiritual Mentor, Sallie McFague

I am challenged by the words of Karen Baker-Fletcher when she says, "The task of theology is not to focus on the existential context alone, but rather to clarify the relationship between God and the world. . . . to understand the divine creativity that makes existence possible and to understand divine response to creaturely existence."[92]

[92] Karen Baker-Fletcher, *Dancing with God: The Trinity from a Womanist Perspective* (St. Louis, Missouri: Chalice Press, 2006), 40.

Baker-Fletcher further says:

> Victims of . . . rape, hate crimes, and other forms of extreme violence require a faith that is filled with courage. . . . In the presence of extreme violence, faith is sorely tested. When faith survives and thrives to the point of being a source of healing for others, it manifests itself as a form of courage. If all that is created comes from God, then courage must come from God. But how does one attain this courage in a world of violated relationships? . . . In a world of crucifixion, how might human creatures find courage to receive the promise of healed, whole relationships with one another, the rest of creation, and with God?[93]

To deepen my understanding of this text, I turned to the work of the theologian Sallie McFague. I did so to grasp the teaching that to understand one theologian's perspective was helpful in sorting out the many voices and complex issues of theology. Reading Sallie McFague allowed me to evolve a new understanding of justice. This justice encompasses both human relationships and the human's relationship to God, and God's relationship to all of creation and all creatures. I explore McFague's reasons for why theology is important and her understanding of God's relationship to the world by addressing the issue of God as radical immanence and radical transcendence. This is an understanding of God as both/and NOT either/or. I also explore McFague's understanding of who Jesus Christ is. Lastly, I explore the question of justice in human relationship in the face of the reality of suffering and evil. I found that as I delved deeply into McFague's theology I was saying a resounding "yes" to the questions that I had about the UCC's actions and relationship to Aboriginal Peoples and in particular to the children who were sexually abused by Ludford. It was McFague's voice that was helping me to understand from a theological standpoint what the brokenness of the UCC was in all of these questions. We in the church speak often of "brokenness" in a way that articulates our relationship to God. I am aware that for us in the church the word "brokenness" is not

[93] Baker-Fletcher, *Dancing with God*, 1.

a word that is without redemption and our tradition is to name it so that it can be mended. We speak of the "breaking of bread"; "the broken body of Christ"; "the broken world" in the Eucharist, not as something unredeemable but as acknowledgement that "mending" of our relationship to God and each other needs our focus. I have tried to be careful not to impose this world on Aboriginal Peoples or those outside the church. Aboriginal Peoples in particular are not "broken" and do not need us within the church to "mend them." Being true to what I have been taught about the wisdom of using one theologian's voice I begin with telling who Sallie McFague is.

Sallie McFague was born on May 25, 1933 in Quincy Massachusetts. She earned a BA in English Literature in 1955 from Smith College and a BD from Yale Divinity School in 1959. Both degrees were earned with the distinction of magna cum laude. She received an MA in 1960 and a PHD in 1964. McFague has been influenced by her background in literature and the work of Karl Barth and one of her teachers, H. Richard Niebuhr. She taught at Vanderbilt Divinity School for 30 years and is listed on the Vancouver School of Theology website as the Distinguished Theologian in Residence. For Sallie McFague, theology is carried out in the service of helping people to hear God's word and needs to be constantly renewed to avoid idolatry and irrelevance.[94] She self identifies as "a Christian, feminist, ecological theologian."[95]

In the book, *Life Abundant,* Sallie McFague begins:

. . . I am very interested in people who try to live their faith, who have what I

[94] Wesley J. Wildman, *Boston Collaborative Encyclopedia of Western Theology* (1988). http://people.bu.edu/wwildman/bce/mwt_themes_909_mcfague.htm (accessed August 2012); Vancouver School of Theology, "home page-faculty," http://www.vst.edu/main/about/people/faculty (accessed August 29, 2012).

[95] Sallie, McFague, *The Body of God: An Ecological Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 14.

> would call a 'working theology,' a set of deeply held beliefs that actually function in their personal and public lives. Augustine, John Woolman, Sojourner Truth, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Dorothy Day, and Martin Luther King Jr. are a few of these people.[96]

Most of these people are ones that I too have admired and sought to learn from about this task of living a life which is meaningful and helpful in Christian community. I would add Mahatma Ghandi to this list as well, as I have tried to understand the deep commitment that allowed him to confront colonialism the way he did in his life. Although McFague is a brilliant and prolific writer of theology, I connect with her belief that understanding our relationship to God is meant to make a difference in how we live and how we experience God and each other, and how these intersect and influence each other. I cannot help but wonder what a different history we might have had in our UCC if our leaders, in the time of residential schools, had adhered to her theology. McFague states:

> The goal is not refinements on the doctrine of God or Christology for their own sake, although these doctrines, . . . are very important, for they help us love the world rightly. We do theology, we think as well and carefully as we can about God and the world, *in order to* live better in the world. Theology is a mundane, not a religious activity. Theology, then, is a functional activity-its goal is practical and pragmatic.[97]

McFague also explores new ways of doing theology because of her deep concern for the future of the planet and of the human and other creatures that live in this God created world. In an earlier work, *Models of God,* McFague speaks about the work of theology to address the danger of the extinction of life as we know it, because of the threats of a nuclear age and our human failure to take seriously our responsibility for the wellbeing of creation. Theology then, is not just a "verbal game" but requires "the role of

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[96] Sallie McFague, *Life Abundant: Rethinking Theology and Economy for a Planet in Peril* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001), 3.

[97] Ibid., *32.*

imagination" to "make a difference in what we understand reality to be and how we conduct our lives in relation to other beings, both human and non-human."[98] In this book, McFague explores new models of God as: Mother, Lover and Friend that:

> conveniently fell into the categories of creator, savior, and sustainer, thus taking the place, as it were, of the most ancient and hallowed names of the Trinitarian God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit [as] . . . a deliberate attempt to unseat those names as descriptions of God which will allow no supplements or alternatives.[99]

This then is one of McFague's perspectives on doing Christian theology in which a:

> new sensibility is required, one characterized by the felt awareness of our intrinsic interdependence with all that lives, a holistic, evolutionary, ecological vision that overcomes ancient and oppressive dualisms and hierarchies, that encourages change and novelty, and that promotes an ethic of justice and care; one characterized as well by a profound acceptance of human responsibility for the fate of the earth, especially in view of a possible nuclear holocaust, and therefore by the willingness to think differently, to think in metaphors and models that support a unified, interdependent understanding of God-world and human-world relationships; and finally, one characterized by the recognition that although all constructive thought is metaphorical and hence necessarily risky, partial, and uncertain, implying an end to dogmatism and absolutism, it is not thereby fantasy, illusion, or play.[100]

McFague believes that "North American middle-class Christians need to *live differently* in order to love nature, and to live differently we need to think differently-especially about ourselves and who we are in the scheme of things."[101] For McFague, theology is critical and "since theology, ethics, and spirituality are a unit, every Christian is called to be a theologian."[102] Each of us then is about "discerning God's will, [and then

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[98] Sallie McFague, *Models of God: Theology for an Ecological, Nuclear Age* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), 27-28.

[99] Ibid., 181.

[100] Ibid., 27.

[101] McFague, *Life Abundant, xi.*

[102] Ibid., 25.

we will know that] . . . thinking, doing, and praying belong together."[103] We do this work of theology as a "reflection on experiences of God's liberating love from various contexts and within the Christian community."[104] This connects me to my understanding that theology, speaking of God, is important in our faith communities and needs to be relevant to those with whom we do the task of ministry. It reinforces my own commitment when I read McFague's obvious commitment to her own personal praxis theology, and encourages the will to strive for an introspective, lived-out faith. McFague encourages me in her understanding of how we might live out our Christian faith in community when she says:

> First, experience is the place where Christian faith is manifested; it is the channel, but not the substance. Second, the content of Christian faith comes into our experience as a revelation, a central and commanding insight into God's love. Third, this insight is not limited to the individual's wellbeing-it is an insight concerning the relationship of God and the world, one of such significance that one's orientation and behaviour must change.[105]

Although this "new" way, grounded in ecological theology, is not the only theology that I connect to, it is one that offers me an opportunity to explore a deeper understanding of God: a God who is both other than us, while at the same time being with us in our struggle of life and lived out faith.

God as Radical Immanence, Radical Transcendence

In the book, *Life Abundant,* McFague draws liberally from centuries of Christian

[103] McFague, *Life Abundant, 25*.

[104] Ibid., *40.*

[105] Ibid., *52.*

thought while she unabashedly states she is sharing her "theological journey"[106] and her "vision of theology."[107] She shares her personal journey and personal credo, which constellates around a God who is "radically transcendent and radically immanent."[108] McFague describes her "four 'conversions', four experiences of such importance that they changed [her] thinking about God and [her] behaviour."[109] These experiences concern: the wonder at being alive; God's name as primary in the awesome presence of God in nature; a form of activism in embodying a way of being in the world that supports the flourishing of all life; and lastly, becoming acquainted with God. This led McFague to a deep understanding of God as "the source and sustainer of everything."[110]

My own learning curve is very steep in relation to the many issues that are connected to ecology. In this analysis of McFague's understanding of God as both radically transcendent and radically immanent, I see the possibility of a new understanding of how justice seeking might impact me in a significantly altered way if I integrate some of what Sallie McFague presents in her book, *The Body of God.* The title of this book encompasses something entirely new for me. I am challenged to think of this creation in which we live as "The Body of God". Throughout the book, McFague develops this idea that *all* of creation *is* the body of God. This is both a radical immanence and a radical transcendence. This radical transcendence is God who is not us but who is present in all that God has created. This is an understanding of God as

[106] McFague, *Life Abundant,* xii.

[107] Ibid., xiii.

[108] Ibid., 23.

[109] Ibid., 4.

[110] Ibid., 6-9, 9.

both/and NOT either/or. The world is God's body but not reduced to simply nature. McFague merges the agential and the organic model of God. God is an agent whose intentions and purposes are realized in history, especially human history. The actions of God are one with the cosmic processes and therefore it is difficult to separate God from the evolutionary process. McFague joins this with the organic model, "for either alone is lacking in light."[111] In other words, she sees the world or universe as the body of God, God as the spirit of the body. The agential model preserves transcendence, while the organic model underscores immanence. God is related to the world as spirit is to body. [112]

McFague believes that we are indeed connected to all of creation, and therefore our salvation is tied intimately to the care and salvation of the world. Salvation is really living in right relationship with all of creation and living in God's presence. We are all part of the body, thus this is a radical interconnected and interdependent relationship with the whole. McFague calls this the "wide and long view"[113] which involves everything and everybody, in and through the concrete activities of our daily lives. For McFague this planet is our home, and God is the spirit of life bodied forth in the universe, the breath of creation and the source of renewed life all by inclusive love. In the light of this inclusive love, McFague defines injustice as "living a lie, living contrary to reality, pretending that all the space or the best space belongs to some so that they can live in lavish comfort and affluence, while others are denied even the barest necessities for physical existence."[114] She defines living a lie as "living out of proper relations with God, self, and other beings.

[111] McFague, *Body of God,* 140.

[112] Ibid., 139-157.

[113] Ibid., 116.

[114] Ibid.

. . . Sin is, therefore, thinking, feeling, and acting in ways contrary to reality, contrary to the proper, right relations among the beings and entities that constitute reality."[115] She says, "Until we rectify gross injustices among human beings, in other words, begin our ecological work at home, we will have little chance of success abroad, that is, in relation to other species and the planet as a whole."[116] She believes that the human being as species can contribute by living:

> a focus on gratitude for the gift of life rather than a longing for eternal life; an end to dualistic hierarchies, including human beings over nature; an appreciation for the individuality of all things rather than the glorification of human individualism; a sense of radical interrelatedness and interdependence with all that exists; the acceptance of responsibility for other forms of life and the ecosystem, as guardians and partners of the planet; the acknowledgment that salvation is physical as well as spiritual and hence, that sharing the basics of existence is necessity; and finally, the recognition that sin is the refusal to stay in our proper place – sin is, as it always has been understood in the Jewish and Christian traditions, living a lie.[117]

McFague defines her understanding of God as being pantheist as she quotes Raymond Keith Williamson, "God is not exhausted by finite beings, not even all finite beings, yet God is *in* all finite creatures and apart from God there is nothing; nor is God 'apart' from anything."[118] McFague sums this up as, "Everything that is *in* God and God is *in* all things and yet God is not identical with the universe, for the universe is dependent on God in a way that God is not dependent on the universe."[119] McFague believes that this model of God is most compatible with interpretations of Christian faith.

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[115] McFague, *The Body of God*, 114.

[116] Ibid., 117.

[117] Ibid., 110.

[118] Ibid., 149.

[119] Ibid.

In her book, *The Body of God* she connects this thinking of God to her commitment to a lived-out Christian faith when she states:

> It helps us to be *whole* people within our faith and within our contemporary world. Moreover, the model does not reduce God to the world nor relegate God to another world; on the contrary, it radicalizes both divine immanence (God is the breath of each and every creature) and divine transcendence (God is the energy empowering the entire universe). Finally, it underscores our bodiliness, our concrete physical existence and experience that we share with all other creatures: it is a model on the side of the well-being of the planet, for it raises the issue of ethical regard toward all bodies as all are interrelated and interdependent.[120]

Christology

As I said earlier, Sallie McFague self-identifies as a Christian. One might then presume that the person of Christ is paramount in her understanding of God in relation to the world. Her perspective though, is grounded in a reality that recognizes that as Christ is important to those who call themselves followers, it is a "scandal of uniqueness" for Christians to claim "that God is embodied in one place and one place only: in the man Jesus of Nazareth."[121] McFague recognizes that while it is important for Christians to understand God embodied in Christ, what matters is "both the concrete, physical availability of God's presence . . . and the likeness to ourselves, [in] a human being".[122] She recognizes that within other religions and even within Christianity itself, there are many variations of how to understand divine immanence. Therefore Christ is important for lived-out Christian faith, although the traditional understanding of Christ as the only way to know God is "offensive to the integrity and value of other religions, [and] indeed,

[120] McFague, *The Body of God,* 150.

[121] Ibid., 159.

[122] Ibid., 160.

absurd, in light of postmodern cosmology. It is not remotely compatible with our current picture of the universe."[123] It is important though to "gain some sense of the forms or patterns with which Christians might understand divine immanence"[124] in the stories of Jesus and his followers.

In the book, *The Body of God,* McFague asserts that it is in the stories of Jesus' life, in his teachings and in his death, that we can see God's inclusive love:

> for *all* of creation and especially for the oppressed, needy creatures. Within a Christic framework, the body of God encompasses all of creation in a particular salvific direction, toward the liberation, healing, and fulfillment of all bodies. Thus, we can speak of the 'cosmic' Christ, a metaphor for the scope of the Body of God within a Christian framework . . . from the standpoint of faith . . . we wager the hope that the inclusive love of God is unlimited.[125]

For McFague, this is the distinctive, but not the only perspective on the embodiment of God.

The distinctiveness of Christianity on the inclusion of the oppressed and neglected allows for the inclusion of all humans and other creatures, as well as the planet itself in the saving work of Christ. Here McFague sees nature as the "new poor"[126] that is in need of being liberated and healed. This need is as a result of the fact that the human creature, because of its failure to recognize the intrinsic value of all aspects of creation, has used and misused other parts of God's body for its own purposes. In the parables with the healing and eating stories of Jesus' ministry we can "gain hints and clues about divine

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[123] McFague, *The Body of God,* 159.

[124] Ibid., 160.

[125] Ibid., 160-161.

[126] Ibid., 165.

concern" for the fact that "bodies count."[127] McFague suggests:

> . . . redemption should be enlarged to salvation: redemption means to 'buy back' or 'repay' through, for instance, a sacrifice, whereas salvation means healing or preserving from destruction. The first applies only to human beings who have offended (sinned) and hence need to be rescued through a substitutionary act of reconciliation, while the second can include the natural order, which, along with human beings, needs to be healed and preserved.[128]

Jesus' activities and message, according to this interpretation, are "embarrassingly bodily."[129] Within this Christic paradigm, humans can choose to recognize the "interrelationships and interconnections among all form of life" and accept the teachings of Christ. Humans can stand in solidarity with *all* the oppressed parts of creation and suffer with God and ourselves and find here that "liberation and suffering, the cross and resurrection . . . are central to an embodiment theology."[130] McFague sees the faith that Christians have in the resurrection of the body as proof that "the spirit that empowers the universe and all its living forms is working with us, in life and in death, to bring about the well-being and fulfillment of all the bodies in creation." [131]

In a latter book, *Life Abundant,* McFague further develops her understanding of Christology. She affirms her rejection of traditional Christology as bad theology because of its individualism and spiritualism which, "limits God and excuses us."[132] McFague believes that the question of who is Jesus, must be answered "differently in every age."[133]

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[127] McFague, *The Body of God,* 168.

[128] Ibid.

[129] Ibid., 170.

[130] Ibid., 173.

[131] Ibid., 174.

[132] McFague, *Life Abundant,* 159.

[133] Ibid., 162.

In this book, she lifts up several typologies: prophetic, wisdom, sacramental, eschatological, process and liberation and discusses the ecological assets and limitations of each. Prophetic allows for "extending *rights* to other life-forms" but is limited by the "total emphasis on the rights of particular animals rather than focus on the well-being of an entire ecosystem."[134] Wisdom is valued because of its "turn to the earth, a turn that contemporary Christians profoundly need" but it is limited because "it says little about the cross that is integral to Christian faith."[135] Sacramental, with its emphasis on immanence and the incarnation of God in Jesus, upholds divine presence but is limited. Despite its "verbal affirmation of the body,– bread and wine as the body and blood of Christ, the resurrection of the body, the church as the body of Christ - has not resulted in appreciation for bodies (especially the female body), or until recently, great concern for starving, tortured, or raped human bodies."[136] Eschatological underscores "renewal and hope" and speaks to the despair of worrying about a "resurrected creation."[137] "Process thinking offers a contemporary way to speak of the subjecthood or intrinsic work of *all* life-forms."[138] Finally, liberation contributes by its "connection between all forms of oppression, and especially between that of poor people and degraded nature."[139]

McFague unites all these different views of Christology into what she calls "an ecological economic Christology" summarized with one phrase, "God with us" which

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[134] McFague, *Life Abundant,* 163.

[135] Ibid.

[136] Ibid., 164.

[137] Ibid., 164 - 165.

[138] Ibid., 165.

[139] Ibid.

"focuses on the ministry of Jesus of Nazareth for the content of our praxis toward oppressed people and deteriorating nature and on the incarnation and resurrection for its range and promise."[140] For McFague, Jesus' ministry to the oppressed is extended throughout time to include all oppressed and in our time to include oppressed nature. Jesus' ministry led to his death on the cross and this solidarity with the oppressed continues to result in a "cruciform reality"[141] for past and present followers of Christ. McFague believes that Christians now must hear the call of the World Council of Churches, "to redefine the abundant life in terms that recognize the limits of our planet, that encourages sustainable communities, that embraces a philosophy of 'enoughness."[142] McFague states, "For Affluent Christians this should mean a different understanding of abundance, one that embraces the contradiction of the cross: giving up one's life to find it, limitation and diminishment, sharing, and giving-indeed, sacrifice."[143] McFague then joins this with an understanding of sacramental Christology which "underscores that it is *God* with whom we are dealing (and who is dealing with us) and that this *God* cares for the entire creation. And since God is with us, we need not despair of the outcome. We are then concerned here with the incarnation and the resurrection, with the embodiment of God in creation as well as the hope of a new creation."[144] In this, nature and not just Jesus, is the sacrament of God. Embodiment means the Spirit of God dwells not only in humans but in all the parts of creation. God wills for nature and for human beings a

[140] McFague, *Life Abundant,* 166 - 167.

[141] Ibid., 168.

[142] Ibid.

[143] Ibid.

[144] Ibid., 169.

"well-being in body and spirit."[145] Jesus is then ". . . the lens through whom we see God. Hope for our world lies not only in what Jesus tells us to do, but also, and more deeply, in Christian belief that God is with us as we attempt to do it."[146]

McFague believes that the Trinitarian view of God is important in this model in order "to preserve for an agential theism both radical immanence and radical transcendence."[147] McFague's model of God as both "agential (God as a transcendent superperson external to creation) [and] organic (God as the immanent power within natural processes). . . . God as the spirit of the body, the life or breath within the entire universe [is] what is needed in our time."[148] Retaining the Trinitarian formulae of a transcendent God allows us to explore new models of God while acknowledging it "does not describe the face of God."[149] McFague suggests rather than using the traditional terms of the trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, "we consider the following; the mystery of God (the invisible face or first person), the physicality of God, (the visible body or second person), and the mediation of the invisible and the visible (the spirit or third person)."[150] This, she suggests, would mediate the exclusive gender and lack of focus on radical transcendence which gets lost in the familial metaphor. The problem that she identifies in this is the ambiguity of what "mediating" means in relation to Spirit. For McFague, in this understanding of trinity, we see how "divine transcendence and

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[145] McFague, *Life Abumdant*, 169.

[146] Ibid., 171.

[147] McFague, *The Body of God*, 192.

[148] Ibid.

[149] Ibid., 193.

[150] Ibid.

immanence join: in the body of Christ, the cosmic Christ."[151] We are then able to see God present in the joining with Christ "when and where the oppressed are liberated, the sick are healed, the outcasts are invited in."[152]

The Reality of Suffering and Evil

Sallie McFague thinks deeply about theology, the world in relationship to God, and God in relationship to the world, because she believes that it matters to how we live and relate to each other and to creation. She says, "working for an alternative world is a prime directive for Christian living."[153] Even if we do not know it or acknowledge it, we humans and all of creation with its "panoply of mind-boggling diversity . . . make up the body of God" and we therefore live a reality in which we are all interrelated and interdependent . . . "with one another and with God."[154] Sin is "*living a lie* . . . turning away from the ground of our being and our hope for happiness . . . sin and evil are a denial of reality in their false belief that we can live from and for ourselves."[155] As Christians "Following Jesus is not principally a moral imperative, but a statement of *who we are."*[156] McFague says:

> . . . we were created to be with God: creation is the pouring out of divine love toward that end; the incarnation in Christ is the reaffirmation and deepening of

[151] McFague, *The Body of God,* 194.

[152] Ibid., 195.

[153] McFague, *Life Abundant,* 11.

[154] Ibid., 183.

[155] Ibid., 183-184.

[156] Ibid., 184-185.

> that love; the cross is the manifestation of the suffering that will occur, given sin and evil, if all creatures, especially the most vulnerable, are to flourish; and the resurrection is God's Yes that, in spite of the overwhelming forces of sin and evil, this shall be so. We will, all of us, be one with God and with each other.[157]

McFague believes that sin and evil are taken very seriously when we see them, not so much as acts of individuals in need of Christ's redemptive power, but rather as all the forces - individual, systemic, institutional –" that keep creation from flourishing."[158] The implication of this is "becoming like the incarnate God . . . making the body of God healthier and more fulfilled. Salvation is worldly work. Human existence 'in the Spirit' means working 'in the body' so that it may flourish."[159]

In an earlier book, *The Body of God*, McFague discusses natural evil and human sin. She says, "If Christian discipleship is shaped by solidarity with the needy, including nature as the new poor, then natural evil is not limited to what happens to me and mine, and sin becomes the limitation of one's horizon to the self."[160] She believes that we need a "wider vision, painful and difficult as that is to achieve . . . ."[161] In the matter of human suffering and pain, McFague's model of the world as God's body, sees God suffering with all who suffer within the body. God is not the cause of human or planetary suffering, "but God is with us in the consequences."[162] McFague believes that natural evil, the random and horrible things that happen to creatures, both human and non-human "is not

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[157] McFague, *Life Abundant,* 185.

[158] Ibid., 186.

[159] Ibid., 186.

[160] McFague, *The Body of God*, 174.

[161] Ibid., 175.

[162] Ibid., 176.

the principal kind of evil that endangers our planet" but rather it is human sin and "what *we do* to others of our own species, to other species, and to the planet itself."[163] She believes that the "real ecological problem [is] human selfishness and greed [which is] gender, race and class specific: it applies most appropriately to first-world people with power."[164] She further states that natural evil and sin are "inextricably joined . . . for natural evils seldom occur in our time without human complicity. And it is the latter for which we are responsible and that lies within our power to change."[165]

McFague believes that first-world people have the power to alleviate systemic evils because we are the privileged. The most important response from a Christian perspective for McFague is to "fight with all our intelligence, power, and imagination for the inclusion of all, especially those presently excluded in our particular time and place."[166] This is our first and active response to evil and sin which allows us as followers of Christ to "derive our models of God (and ourselves) as mother, father, judge, lover, liberator, healer, friend – all the active, interpersonal models of solidarity with the oppressed."[167] The secondary passive response is a call "to suffer with those who suffer . . . [and it is] inescapable."[168] In the issues of human sin and natural evil, "one must accept the inevitability of intense and massive suffering."[169]

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[163] McFague, *The Body of God*, 177.

[164] Ibid.

[165] Ibid.

[166] Ibid., 178.

[167] Ibid.

[168] Ibid.

[169] Ibid.

This seems a position without hope, but McFague does not leave us there. She believes that we can have a new vision, "both prophetic and alluring from which we can judge what is wrong with the paradigm that has created the present crises on our planet."[170] The new vision as described in the book, *The Body of God*, is one of both interdependence and independence where we recognize "unity and unimaginable diversity, radicalizing and appreciating both."[171] It is where we learn to live appropriately within the scheme of things, where we "share the space and live in proper relations with others . . . [and] realize that we belong here."[172] It is a recognition that salvation is working to meet the physical needs in a bodily context for all earth's creatures, it is a recognition that we must be in solidarity with the oppressed "not only individual human beings . . . not only oppressed groups of human beings, but for the entire creation."[173] Finally, it means that humans have a special vocation and are "responsible for taking evolution to its next step, one in which we will consciously bond with other human beings and other life-forms in ways that will create a sustainable, wholesome existence for the rich variety of beings on our planet."[174] McFague calls us to a way of "*thinking differently* so that we might *behave differently."*[175]

Lastly, the place of the church in all of this, for McFague, is to be more than the

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[170] McFague, *The Body of God*, 198-199.

[171] Ibid., 199.

[172] Ibid., 200.

[173] Ibid., 201.

[174] Ibid.

[175] Ibid., 202.

"body of Christ,"[176] to be an "embodiment as the basis of our common life, linking us in deep, permanent, and intricate ways, not only with all other human beings, but also with all other life-forms and, more specially, with God, the source of all embodied life."[177] She states:

> Where the new vision of the liberating, healing, inclusive love of the embodied God in the Christic paradigm occurs, *there* is the church. The church as institution is called to live out the new creation *in its body,* and, in this sense, the embodiment model is central to its nature and vocation.[178]

The Christian church is not the only way, but has a special contribution to make.

> Christianity can offer its basic belief in divine enfleshment, its theology of embodiment in which God, human beings, and everything else in the cosmos are knit together, [and] its vision of the liberation, healing, and inclusion of the oppressed, and in our day that must include vulnerable nature.[179]

My Theological Framework for Just Relationship

To read Sallie McFague is to recognize that theology is clearly about praxis and commitment to a lived-out faith and way of being in the world, and in relationship to God and to all of creation. She shares liberally from her own experience and her own journey of discovery and change through many years of doing the work of talking, thinking and writing about God. She invests *herself* in her writing and thereby moves the reader to do the same. Although she is, of course, brilliant in her skill, she works hard to help readers understand her perspectives and grow in their own ability to be theologians, especially as Christians. She believes that this is important work, for all of us, in order to ensure the

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[176] McFague, *The Body of God,* 205.

[177] Ibid., 205-206.

[178] Ibid., 206.

[179] Ibid., 207.

wellbeing of God's creation and if all parts of it are to be sustained. Clearly her writing expresses a deep concern and a conviction that change must occur. She believes that humans, in particular North Americans, must come to a different way of being and thinking and she makes important theological demands on the Christian community that remind us of our calling to practice God within the world, and that in the living out of this calling, all are exposed to the abundance of God. You cannot read Sallie McFague and miss the fact that she has a deep commitment, passion and love, both for God and for the world.

McFague has reminded me that my own faith journey is grounded in my experience and that my experience, although often full of contradiction and confusion, is lived out in the revealing knowledge of God's love. This love is not just about my own personal wellbeing, but is rather expanded to be about God's relationship with all of creation. I have struggled over recent years to develop a deeper understanding of ecological concerns, and McFague has opened a pathway for me to embody this in my own faith journey and understanding of God.

At first reading of my analysis of McFague, I thought that, although McFague had allowed me to explore life-giving theology for the planet, I found I wanted more clarity on how I could integrate this and not lose my focus on justice seeking and a commitment to liberation and feminist theology. I found I had a tendency, sometimes, in reading McFague to lose grounding in my justice seeking soul. This I believed was because her overwhelming concern for creation had a tendency to lose sight of other important ways of thinking about *human* experience in relation to God. Although this reminded me to put some emphasis on these concerns in my role as a minister who preaches, I found that as I

read and re-read her I was actually strengthened in my commitment to justice and how she resonates with my own theology. She so skillfully ties the concerns of ecology and justice that I began to understand more the connections of all of us to each other and to our earth than I had ever before. Her concern for the planet and creation is not separate, but an integral part of justice for the whole. Our human responsibility is to recognize those connections and change what is damaging to that whole.

Justice Through Right Relationship

One of the main themes in my research is the theme of relationship. It is about my own relationship to God, creation and to others and how I live that out in the UCC. It is also about how Aboriginal Peoples experience God and relationship to others, and in particular to the UCC. I am concerned about the breaking of, and wrong relationship that we as a "settler church" have to First Nations Peoples. Clearly there is something wrong in the history of the residential school experience that I explore, so it is important for me to have some understanding of what relationship means from an Aboriginal worldview.

Shawn Wilson, although recognizing the wide variance in Indigenous Peoples around the world, states that, "an integral part of Indigenous identity for many Indigenous people includes a distinct way of viewing the world and of `being'."[180] One of the important points in this is that

> everything needs to be seen within the context of the relationship it represents.[181] It is the knowing and respectful reinforcement that all things are related and connected.[182] . . . It is not just interpersonal relationships, . . . but it is a relationship with all of creation. It is with the cosmos, it is with the animals, with

[180] Wilson, *Research Is Ceremony,* 15.

[181] Ibid., 43.

[182] Ibid., 61.

> the plants, with the earth that we share . . . It's not the realities in and of themselves that are important; it is the relationship that I share with reality.[183]

Wilson believes that spirituality "is not separate but is an integral, infused part of the whole in the Indigenous worldview . . . For many Indigenous people, having a healthy sense of spirituality is just as important as other aspects of mental, emotional and physical health."[184] Wilson distinguishes spirituality from religion by the fact that "religion is (or at least, should be) the external manifestation of spirituality."[185]

Leroy Little Bear identifies the differences in worldview between Aboriginal People and Eurocentric worldviews as creating "oppression and discrimination." [186] Little Bear states that "Aboriginal values flow from an Aboriginal worldview" [and] "Aboriginal traditions, laws, and customs are the practical application of the philosophy and values of the group."[187] The many relationships between individuals, bands, tribes, nations, and confederations bound by kinship and/or religious and social communities form "a 'spider web' of relations. "Wholeness is like a flower with four petals. When it opens, one discovers strength, sharing, honesty, and kindness . . . Wholeness works in the same interconnected way."[188] Other values in this interconnectedness are strength, sharing and honesty based on "being aware that every being is animate and has an

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[183] Wilson, *Research is Ceremony,* 74.

[184] Ibid., 89.

[185] Ibid., 91.

[186] Leroy Little Bear, "Jagged Worldviews Colliding," *in Reclaiming Indigenous Voice and Vision*, ed. Marie Battiste (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2000), 77.

[187] Ibid., 79.

[188] Ibid.

awareness that seeks to understand the constant flux according to its own capabilities."[189] To connect this to McFague's understanding that sin is living a lie, the Aboriginal worldview would say that "Lies result in chaos and establish false understanding. . . . The message is, 'if you want to be part of the spider web of relations, speak the truth."[190]

In Aboriginal worldview,

> . . . education and socialization are achieved through praise, reward, recognition, and renewal ceremonies and by example, actual experience, and storytelling. Children are greatly valued and are considered gifts from the Creator. From the moment of birth, children are the objects of love and kindness from a large circle of relatives and friends. They are strictly trained but in a "sea" of love and kindness. As they grow, children are given praise and recognition for their achievements both by the extended family and by the group as a whole. Group recognition manifests itself in public ceremonies performed for a child, giveaways in a child's honour, and songs created and sung in a child's honour. Children are seldom physically punished, but they are sternly lectured about the implications of wrongful and unacceptable behaviour.[191]

There is much in the above Indigenous worldview that can be connected to the theology of Sallie McFague such as the interdependence of all of creation. God is with us in this interdependence and when we break that relationship then God suffers with us. Since God cares for and is a part of all of the creation equally, God does not take sides in our brokenness but rather suffers with all, the oppressor and the oppressed. Certainly in the brokenness that was created by residential schools between the child and their Indigenous culture, God suffers. The United Church is part of the brokenness of our Canadian history as settlers took possession of the land and alienated Aboriginal Peoples. Certainly, the UCC is part of the intent to assimilate Aboriginal Peoples to Eurocentric

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[189] Little Bear, "Jagged Worlds Colliding," 80.

[190] Ibid.

[191] Ibid., 81.

ways of being by the removal of the children from their homes, families and cultures. As Little Bear states, the Eurocentric idea that there is only "one true god, one true answer and one right way"[192] contributed to the brokenness between the two peoples. The Eurocentric settler society, of which the United Church was a part, could not or would not recognize that other ways of being had any validity. Since the UCC was part of colonization it contributed to creating a

> . . . fragmentary worldview among Aboriginal peoples. By force, terror, and educational policy, it attempted to destroy the Aboriginal worldview – but failed. Instead colonization left a heritage of jagged worldviews among Indigenous peoples. They no longer had an Aboriginal worldview, nor did they adopt a Eurocentric worldview. Their consciousness became a random puzzle, a jigsaw puzzle that each person has to attempt to understand. Many collective views of the world competed for control of their behaviour and since none was dominant modern Aboriginal consciousness became a site of overlapping, contentious, fragmented, competing desires and values.[193]

This will be part of the work that the UCC must engage in to build right relationships in to the future. As Little Bear says,

> No one has a pure worldview that is 100 percent Indigenous or Eurocentric; rather, everyone has an integrated mind, a fluxing and ambidextrous consciousness, a precolonized consciousness that flows into a colonized consciousness and back again. It is this clash of worldviews that is at the heart of many current difficulties with effective means of social control in postcolonial North America. It is also this clash that suppresses diversity in choices and denies Aboriginal people harmony in their daily lives.[194]

Relationship Through God and Christology

I have always been aware that, in my faith journey, I am much more comfortable with a relationship grounded in Jesus than in a deep understanding of God. It has always

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[192] Little Bear, "Jagged Worldviews Colliding," 82.

[193] Ibid., 84-85.

[194] Ibid., 85.

been easiest for me to think of God in the human incarnation of Jesus. In the practice of ministry, and in particular, in the role of preacher, I have focused most predominantly on the questions of Jesus' life and teaching and what that means for us in our lived out faith. The question of a God, who is transcendent and "other" has frankly been given limited scope in my thinking. Although I am aware that in my own practice of prayer, I turn to a God who is more powerful than we humans, I have failed to develop that concretely. I often ask for God's help and presence without exploring how a transcendent God actually *does that*. McFague opens up a new pathway for me to explore God's relationship to the world in an expanded way. I have always liked the idea of a God who is both radically transcendent and radically immanent, because it makes clearer for me both my human responsibility and my limited ability as a human, to do that on my own. Certainly, I have never thought of God as being removed from or unmoved by our human condition but I also have not thought of a God who ultimately holds the wellbeing of creation and humans in God's own transcendent power. I am much more comfortable with the thinking that God needs us in order to accomplish God's continuing and ongoing creation and just and right relationships within that creation. This may well be my own overdeveloped sense that seeking for justice is a human responsibility lived out in faith and action and lacking in a deeper relationship and understanding of a God who is truly "other." McFague's expression of God as both "the breath of every creature . . . and the energy empowering the entire universe,"[195] allows me the possibility to transcend the sense of despair that I sometimes feel in the reality of how little justice there seems to be in the world, in our relationships and in our ability to live productive and God-focused lives.

[195] McFague, *The Body of God*, 150.

How I think of and perceive God, offers me an understanding of how relationships and justice must both be part of how we live in the world. How I think about God can offer me insight into what is wrong in how I am living. If, as McFague says, that sin is "living a lie" then I am compelled to address that in my own life and in the life of my UCC. McFague believes that sin and evil are taken very seriously when we see them not so much as acts of individuals in need of Christ's redemptive power but rather as all the forces – individual, systemic, institutional – "that keep creation from flourishing."[196] Critical theory can give us insight into what interferes with the living out of justice and right relationship. The leadership of the UCC needs to understand that how it functions in the world is more than acts of the individual, and that it is caught up in this systemic and institutional sin. We, as members of the UCC, need to ask of ourselves and of our UCC; how it is we get caught up in the lies that we tell ourselves about who we really are. We can become so blinded by who we think we are and want to be as justice seekers and peacekeepers, that we fail to see how we are not "like the incarnate God . . . making the body of God healthier and more fulfilled. Salvation is worldly work. Human existence 'in the spirit' means working 'in the body' so that it may flourish."[197] This is part of the "concealment" that I wanted to uncover in my methodology of hermeneutic inquiry.

For me, this "living a lie" is apparent in the broken relationship that we have in the history of residential schools. If we are to have a new vision as McFague suggests, it must be "both prophetic and alluring from which we can judge what is wrong."[198] This is

[196] McFague, *Life Abundant*, 186.

[197] Ibid..

[198] McFague, *The Body of God*. 198..

dangerous territory. Our focus in the UCC is now on building right relationship with Aboriginal Peoples, using all the techniques and tools that we can muster. If I, in particular, am calling for a deeper reflection on our involvement "in living the lie" of our past, then I believe it is important that I am willing to work through the process, as others come to their own unconcealment and resistance dissipates. There may even be a call for crucifixion. I will need to use all of my pastoral skills in order to present this research in such a way that it opens up the possibility of what McFague calls "a wide and long view."[199]

McFague attests, if this relationship of God to the world is "of such significance [then] one's orientation and behaviour must change."[200] She states that we are all "interrelated and interdependent"[201] and that our primary task as Christians is to "fight with all our intelligence, power, and imagination for the inclusion of all, especially those presently excluded in our particular time and place."[202] She rejects traditional Christology because it "limits God and excuses us."[203]This, in my experience, has been a large problem in the UCC. We are quick to excuse ourselves, as if that makes it all right when we are confronted with the ways in which we fail each other, ourselves, and God in our actions. McFague upholds that if we think differently "we might behave differently."[204] She also offers the hope that indeed we do have the power to change. I remember a

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[199] McFague, *The Body of God,* 116.

[200] McFague, *Life Abundant,* 52.

[201] Ibid., 183.

[202] McFague, *The Body of God*, 178.

[203] McFague, *Life Abundant,* 159

[204] McFague, *The Body of God*, 202.

conversation that I had with a colleague, many years ago now, in which he stated, "We are sick and tired of you women coming in and trying to change everything."[205] McFague's perspective gives me courage to continue to work *to change everything.*

As previously mentioned, I believe firmly that our faith must always evolve and transform us and the world. I want to integrate and embody fully the sense that, as McFague says, ". . . the trust that God is able to bring about, through our willingness and work . . . life as it should be as we, God's helpers, should make it be."[206] Vaclav Havel in his poem *It Is I Who Must Begin* writes:

It is I who must begin.
Once I begin, once I try-
here and now,
right where I am,
not excusing myself
by saying that things
would be easier elsewhere,
without grand speeches and
ostentations gestures.
but all the more persistently
-to live in harmony
with the "voice of Being" as I
understand it within myself
-as soon as I begin that,
I suddenly discover,
to my surprise, that
I am neither the only one,
nor the most important one
to have set out
upon that road.

Whether all is really lost
or not depends entirely on
whether or not I am lost.[207]

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[205] Conversation with a colleague, no permission to reveal name, June, 1999.

[206] McFague, *Life Abundant*, 202.

[207] Vaclav Havel, "From the Director*",* Robert Hetzel, *AES News* (April 2004). http://aes.ac.in/news/apr/04/director.htm (accessed June 2008).

It is a struggle to understand ourselves in relationship to God and to all that is our experience of life and lived-out faith. I am challenged to "live more persistently" and even more so, to *learn more persistently* what it means to "live in harmony" with this "voice of Being" even as I realize how "lost" I sometimes find myself.

Seeking Justice and Right Relationship

When I was being interviewed for ordination I was asked which biblical passage was most important to my faith journey. Although that was more than nineteen years ago it has not changed. "He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?"[208] The difficulty for me has always been to discern and understand what it means to "do justice." I have a lawyer friend who said to me, "The longer I practise law the less I know about justice."[209] I can readily agree with that, as I have a deep seated scepticism as to whether justice is ever found in the adversarial legal courts, even here in Canada, which claims to have one of the best legal systems in the world.

Reinhold Niebuhr, in his early writing states, "…[in] the simplest of all moral principles, that of equal justice . . . it is fairly clear that a religion which holds love to be the final law of life stultifies itself if it does not support equal justice as a political and economic approximation of the ideal of love."[210] And speaking of the church he states:

> Prophetic religion would not only be able to deal more adequately with immediate situations if it were more sympathetic to the function of reason in solving

[208] Mic. 6: 8 (New Revised Standard Version).

[209] Phil Lister to the author, personal conversation, 1992.

[210] Reinhold Niebuhr, *An Interpretation of Christian Ethics* (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1935), 131.

> problems of justice. . . if it allowed rational discrimination to relate the two forces of its faith, gratitude and contrition, to each human situation according to its requirements. Gratitude for the goodness of life and contrition for its evil, the force of piety and that of spirituality, of optimism and pessimism, must be held in balance if prophetic religion is not to atrophy. They cannot be held in balance by some abstract principle. The balance is possible only if each is related to every historic situation with some degree of discrimination. The lack of this discrimination has led the church at times to thank God for the order established by government when it should have resisted tyranny; and at other times to express contrition for sins which resulted in injustice, when it should have moved to change the institutions which generated the injustice.[211]

Neibuhr was writing this at the time when the government and the churches were deeply involved together in the operation of residential schools. I have found nothing in his writings that address this issue concretely but the thoughts above can certainly be applied.

Karen Lebacqz in her book*, Six Theories of Justice,* details six theories: John Stuart Mill, classical utilitarian; John Rawls, "justice as fairness"; Robert Nozick's, an entitlement alternative; a Catholic response, The National Conference of Catholic Bishops; a protestant alternative, Reinhold Neibuhr; and lastly; Jose Porfirio Miranda's liberation challenge. Lebacqz states:

> These six were chosen as representatives of different schools of thought. Though three of the fragments are forms of liberalism and three are forms of Christian theology, each offers a distinctive approach to justice. , , , But above all, they were chosen in the conviction that each raises fundamental issues for other theories of justice.[212]

All of these theories above, which Lebacqz describes as being more accurately "windows" . . . [which] "provides a frame and gives a view" offer perspective. "However, it also requires viewing through a glass and entails the inevitable distortions of that

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[211] Niebuhr, *An Interpretation,* 165.

[212] Karen Lebacqz, *Six Theories of Justice: Perspectives from Philosophical and Theological Ethics* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1996), 10.

glass."[213] All of these theories of justice look to examine what justice is, and when justice issues arise, and each requires the other five to correct its weaknesses. In brief summary, Lebacqz describes utilitarian's as having "a vision of good that transcends and yet incorporates individual rights" . . . [which] includes a fundamental sense of equality." Rawls theory states that the "common good . . . must be tempered by a distributive principle that benefits the least advantaged." For Nozick "it is freedom not equality that constitutes the core of justice." The Bishops believe that justice is "based on the notion that human dignity is achieved only in community and that the resources of the earth 'belong' ultimately to God". For Neibuhr, justice "is a constant process of compromise with the realities of sin and injustice." And finally for Miranda, "only those who suffer injustice and are involved in the struggle for justice can know what justice is."[214] Justice seeking, must be by necessity, a dialogue with these and possibly many other theories of justice. It is not a simple task.

Karen Lebacqz in her book, *Justice: in an Unjust World*, states:

> I begin with the realities of injustice. . . . If justice begins with the correction of injustices, then the most important tools for understanding justice will be the stories of injustice as experienced by the oppressed and the tools of social and historical analysis that help to illumine the process by which those historical injustices arose and the meaning of them in the lives of the victims. A theory of justice will therefore not be primarily dependent upon philosophical reasoning.
>
> . . . This means that justice begins with stories of injustice. Justice takes a narrative form. Narratives are what give meaning to disparate events and relate them into patterns. Justice therefore is not so much a concept as a story. It is an invitation, not a program. Injustice is like a parable: a story that invites the question, "What's wrong with this picture?" Justice is the answer to the question.[215]

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[213] Lebacqz, *Six Theories of Justice*, 14.

[214] Ibid., 116-117.

[215] Karen Lebacqz, *Justice in an Unjust World: Foundations for a Christian Approach to Justice*

This approach is my answer to the fundamental question of how it is we can seek to understand injustice and then begin to change it. This is what I believe is happening in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada that is moving across our county. The stories of the residential school era are being told by those who experienced it. Canadians are listening and learning. Silence is no longer holding all of us captive to the injustices of this shameful history for our country and for our churches.

Karen Lebacqz articulates the path when she says:

> Because justice emerges in protest against injustice, the task of justice is different for the oppressed than it is for the oppressor. The victim of injustice must resist, rage, and attempt to bring the injustice to the fore and expose it for the injustice that it is. The perpetrator of injustice must make reparations or redress – attempting to correct the injustice and set things right again. Distinguishing the task of oppressed and oppressor is supported in Scripture. God's word to each is different, and the appropriate response of each is different.[216]

It is one thing to think of justice in the broad term of the word, and quite another to seek justice for a particular act of injustice; especially so, when the injustice lasted over a very long time in history, as did the injustice of residential schools. I agree with Karen Lebacqz in her understanding that seeking justice must begin with the stories of injustice experienced by the oppressed so that they can bring it to the consciousness of the oppressor and expose it. Aboriginal Peoples across Canada have been doing this as they have participated in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and in the many books and accounts that have been written in the years since the truth was exposed. I have read many of these books. I have also experienced firsthand the stories, as friends and acquaintances have told me their personal stories, and as I have attended the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and followed it on the web. All of these sources have

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(Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1987), 150-151.

[216] Ibid., 152.

been heartbreaking to take into my own consciousness. Especially, the first hand stories that were told to me affected me greatly. It was not abstract or distant as I could see for myself the pain and anguish of those who shared their stories. All were experiences that challenged me and my view of my UCC. I also agree with Karen Lebacqz that my role as a member of the oppressor society has a different role in seeking right relationship. It is not my role to tell the stories, but to be changed by them. This is why it has been important to me in this writing not to tell the stories of the victims. Aboriginal Peoples must do that and they must work to heal from what they experienced. Leanne Simpson says, "We need to be able to articulate in a clear manner our visions for the future, for living as Indigenous Peoples in contemporary times . . . We need to do this on our own terms, without the sanction, permission or engagement of the state, western theory or the opinions of Canadians."[217] Residential School survivors and their descendants do not need me to participate in their healing, but only to stand by and support both as an individual and as a member of the UCC as they do this hard work. They do need me to be part of a restorative justice system "where the abusers must face the full impact of their actions."[218] It is my belief that Aboriginal Peoples are working hard at their own healing to the best of their ability, and that we in the church have barely begun to face and address our own participation and story as the oppressor, let alone *our* own healing.

The journey through the maze of my story and the story of my faith continues as I now enter into the dark recesses of the maze where the story of the Edmonton Residential School exists.

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[217] Leanne Simpson, *Dancing on Our Turtle's Back: Stories of Nishnaabeg Re-Creation, Resurgence and a New Emergence* (Winnipeg: Arbeiter Ring Publishing, 2010), 17.

[218] Simpson, *Dancing on Our Turtle's Back*, 23.

Chapter Three: The Archives, the Story of the Edmonton Residential School

The concept of residential schools began very early in the history of contact, with the arrival of missionaries to the shores of what we now call Canada. In 1883, Sir John A. Macdonald, both Prime Minister and Minister of Indian Affairs, passed a measure through his cabinet to establish three residential schools in the west. These were first called industrial schools. In 1879, Nicholas Flood Davin investigated residential schools in the United States, and recommended to the Federal Government to establish a partnership with Canadian churches to operate four industrial schools. He had two reasons for this. First, it would insure the extinction of Aboriginal spirituality and replace it with Christianity. Second, it would be economical for the Government, since religious men and women would be attracted to this initiative, even if the pay was substandard. Thus began the partnership of Government and churches and the era of residential schools which would span over 100 years. [219]

My archival work was conducted in three locations. My initial archival work began in the National Archives in Ottawa. I spent one day there, specifically searching for any information on Earle Stotesbury, the UCC minister from Saskatchewan responsible for exposing Clarence Ludford's sexual abuse of children at the Edmonton Residential School. I was able to find a pamphlet he had published. However, there was one letter he wrote to the Government that was unavailable until 2013 due to outside storage during renovations.

The archival work at the UCC Archives began on May 28, 2012, and I spent a

[219] Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, *They Came for the Children: Canada, Aboriginal Peoples, and Residential Schools* (Winnipeg:The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2012), http://www.myrobust.com/websites/trcinstitution/File/2039_T+R_eng_web(1).pdf (accessed June 3, 2015).

total of 16 days there. Since I had never done archival work to this extent, I relied heavily on the staff and the Archivist, Nichole Vonk, to guide me and they offered exceptional assistance. Ms. Vonk was not only helpful, but encouraged my research, since she had done work on the Edmonton Residential School for The Truth and Reconciliation Commission. She was able to guide me to the exact boxes and files that I needed. Her title is General Council Archivist. It was reassuring to me that the UCC policy of free and open access to anything concerning residential schools was indeed being implemented in such an encouraging way. Ms. Vonk and I had several conversations about the findings and the ethics of what I could do with those findings. Where there was doubt as to whether I could see certain files, she assisted me in contacting the lawyers of the Legal/Judicial Counsel of the UCC, and permission was granted, including permission to photocopy relevant documentation.

The archival work was slow and laborious because much of what I found required transcription. Excessive photocopying was discouraged because of the harm that may occur to the documents. Never the less, anything that I asked to be photocopied was readily done. The cost was prohibitive at $1.00 per page.

The final archival work was done in the archives in Saskatchewan. In particular, I was searching for more information on Earle Stotesbury. I did find a large amount of documentation on his ministry in Saskatchewan and in particular his work with Aboriginal People. In the end, I decided that the scope of my writing precluded me from using most of this. It did offer me some insights into him as a minister though, and had me pondering about the possibility of future work.

All transcription was done by hand into a note book or on to my personal lap top

computer. The work on the computer was then backed up on two external memory sticks, and these and the note book are stored in my home and church office in locked desk drawers. On completion of this dissertation, I will remove the data from my lap top computer to flash drives. All of this data will be kept secured and retained for a period of seven years, after which it will be destroyed.

My path through the archival data that follows, begins with the early history of the school and continues through the time just before it is closed. Each section specifies the actors involved in the story and is followed by the dialogue which occurred in the written word.[220] I caution you, the reader, that my focus continued to be on how the UCC responded to the events, and not on the stories of the survivors of Edmonton Residential School. Further, I use the present tense as much as possible to engage you and I in the story. In so doing, I believe the opportunity to see the factors at play surfaces.

Early History of the School

The Actors in this section:

> Dr. Joseph Francis Woodsworth ……principal of Edmonton Indian School (also referred to as Rev.)
>
> M. C. Macdonald ..…….authority at The Home Mission Office, it is unclear of his role at this time in the office, but he will become the secretary of BHM in 1954.
>
> R. B. Cochrane …….. secretary of the BHM 1929-1945
>
> Rev. E. J. Staley …….. replaces Dr. Woodsworth as principal
>
> Dr. Dorey …… secretary of the BHM as of 1946
>
> Harold Woodsworth …… son of Dr. Woodsworth
>
> Bob Woodsworth ……. son of Dr. Woodsworth

[220] The text is presented as found. This includes all abbreviations and title headings.

Miss McDonald…… long time matron at the school

The Edmonton Residential School, located near St. Albert, approximately 10 miles northwest of downtown Edmonton, Alberta , opened in 1923 and closed in 1966.The administration of the school is the Board of Home Missions (BHM). [221] The BHM was constituted in 1926 and had responsibility for supervising and administering all the mission work of the UCC, including that of the residential schools. The BHM is composed of a Chairman, a Secretary, and Associate Secretaries who were all members of the executive. There is also a Chairman of the Home Mission Committees of each Conference. In addition, there are elected delegates from the Women's Missionary Society, and ordained and lay representatives from the membership of the Church. There are also Superintendents who serve as corresponding members. The Secretaries are: R. B. Cochrane, 1929 -1945; George Dorey, 1946 -1953; M. C. Macdonald, 1954 -1968; and H.M. Bailey, 1969 -1971. The BHM is subsequently incorporated into the new Division of Missions in Canada in 1972.[222]

Dr. Joseph Francis Woodsworth is the Principal of the Indian Residential School, Edmonton, as it is called in the early years. He is listed as being there from 1925 to 1946 and was "formerly" Methodist. He retired from the school and is listed as "retired, Edmonton" from 1947 to 1961. He died April 7, 1962.[223]

Although this project does not consider in depth the school administration during Dr. Woodworth's years as principal, it is informative to read key correspondence of his

[221] The United Church of Canada Archives, "General Council Archives Guide to Holdings Related to Residential Schools" (Toronto: The United Church of Canada, nd.), 6.

[222] Ibid., 15.

[223] Douglas Walkington, *Ministers of The United Church of Canada*, BX.9883 A1 N34, 1983.Vol 1, Reference. The United Church of Canada Archives, Toronto.

later years and at the end of his tenure. A memo contained in Alberta Conference files pertaining to the Edmonton Residential School, dated May 24, 1938 says:

> The Farm – The Commission had something to say about this. (p.42 sec 2) Mr. Woodsworth said that the Indian parents were rather critical of the regimes. They wanted the children in school all day. As a matter of fact, they wanted them educated as the white children. In that connection Mr. Woodsworth said that every child was in school all day for the first year or two so that he could get a mastery of English. If these children are to be educated for the life they are going to live then the claims of the parents seem rather ridiculous.
> . . . . . .
>
> It would seem to me that knowledge of the rudiments of the 3 R's would be adequate for the life to which these children will return. What would seem to be more important would be knowledge of how to farm or otherwise make a living on the Reserve. Paramount is the task of supplying a motive that will lead them to work in order to assure for themselves a more abundant life.[224]

There is a letter from Rev. J. F. Woodsworth dated Nov 11th, 1938 addressed to Dr. Cochrane which states in part:

> We have now about 123 in attendance. There will be others in later but the Government agents are very lax in their efforts to get the children in. My impression is that most of them regard the schools as a necessary evil, and do only what is necessary. However, we keep going.[225]

This file contains many letters in regards to the condition of the school in 1946. The school is in "bad repair" and the finances are also confused in regards to the farm. It appears that Dr. Woodsworth is in control of all the finances from the farm, and he is suggesting that some be used to supplement his salary into retirement. Dr. Woodsworth's health is failing as well. There is an ongoing dispute with the Government as to who is

[224] Memo re Edmonton Residential School, May 24, 1938, Fonds 509: United Church of Canada Board of Home Missions Fonds. - - 1907-1983, predominant 1926 -1971, Series 2/Section 2: Records Relating to Institutions and Block Grants 1907 -1972, Alberta Conference: Drumheller and Edmonton Presbyteries: Edmonton Residential School, 83.050C Box 112 File 16, The United Church of Canada Archives, Toronto.

[225] Woodsworth to Cochrane, November 11, 1938, Alberta Conference: Drumheller and Edmonton Presbyteries: Edmonton Residential School, 83.050C Box 112 File 16. The United Church of Canada Archives, Toronto.

responsible for making the necessary repairs to the School. In an unsigned letter to M.C. Macdonald, The Home Mission Office in Toronto, there is a comment on "how well he did" in reference to how Dr. Woodsworth is handling the various problems at the School and states:

> Added to this, there was the fact that it was well-nigh impossible to get the Government to do any repairs, re decoration or attend to any items of replacement that were necessary in the School.[226]

Dr. Woodsworth writes on May 23, 1946, submitting his resignation as Principal of the Indian Residential School, Edmonton, effective August 31, 1946. The reason for this action is ill health. Dr. Woodsworth has been in the service of the Board of Home Missions as Principal of an Indian School since 1912, at which date he was appointed as Principal of the Red Deer Indian School. "With regard to a successor to Dr. Woodsworth, it is expected that the Executive of the Board will nominate to the Department – Rev. E. J. Staley of Morley."[227]

There are numerous items of correspondence between Mr. Staley and Dr. Dorey in regards to the conditions in the School and complaints in regards to the condition of the students. I found no documentation of these complaints. In a letter dated August 27, 1946, Staley states:

> No child should be taken into that school until a thorough cleaning, repairing and re-decorating has been at least well started on. I would not ask an Indian to send a child into that place as it is, the place is in miserable shape.
> . . . . .

[226] Unsigned to M.C. Macdonald, Alberta Conference: Drumheller and Edmonton Presbyteries: Edmonton Residential School, 83.050C Box 112 File 16, The United Church of Canada Archives, Toronto.

[227] Memorandum by M.C. Macdonald, Fonds 509: United Church of Canada Board of Home Missions Fonds. - - 1907-1983, predominant 1926 -1971, Series 2/Section 1: Correspondence Files of the General Secretary, Indian Work: Morley IRS, Edmonton IRS, 83.050C. Box 28 File 474, The United Church of Canada Archives, Toronto.

School used as sweat shop for the farm.[228]

In a letter dated Sept. 7, 1946 Dr. Dorey, writes to Dr. Woodsworth:

> It would not be the first time that Indian children had either itch or lice without the school being in any way responsible, but I do think that if the parents and the Agent make complaints, then the complaints should be sent to the Principal just as soon as possible.
> . . . . .
>
> A Principal must be allowed to carry on as he judges right, but I am not going to turn any money back to the Government – not for one single solitary minute, unless I am forced by circumstances which are entirely beyond my control. You have deservedly enjoyed the confidence of both Ottawa and this office all through the years, and you will always continue to enjoy it, and I hope that nothing will mar the relations which have existed between us. I have always tried to be fair to every man or woman who serves the Board of Home Missions and so far as you are concerned, you could have continued to carry on at Edmonton for some time if your health had permitted it.
> . . . . .
>
> I can only express the feeling which I have – and that is that the Church is under a great debt of gratitude to you for your services at Edmonton, and so are the Indian people. They are not noted for being thankful - - I do not think that you expect them to be; but you do look for a different attitude from the Officers of the Board and I hope that is what you will find. [229]

It is clear that Dr. Woodsworth is not well at the end of his career. It appears that the school had fallen into severe disrepair, although the farm seems to continue to be financially sound. Mr. Staley is recruited by Dr. Dorey to leave his position in Morley and take the position of Principal in Edmonton. In Mr. Staley's biography, he is described by Denzil G. Ridout in an article entitled "Home Missionaries I Have Met" as "loved by the Indians" and "who has a personality which simply radiates cheerfulness and

[228] Staley to Dorey, August 27, 1946, Fonds 509: United Church of Canada Board of Home Missions Fonds. - - 1907-1983, predominant 1926 -1971, Series 2/Section 1: Correspondence Files of the General Secretary, Indian Work: Morley IRS, Edmonton IRS, 83.050C. Box 27 File 464, The United Church of Canada Archives, Toronto.

[229] Dorey to Woodsworth, September 7, 1946, Indian Work: Morley IRS, Edmonton IRS, 83.050C. Box 27 File 474, The United Church of Canada Archives, Toronto.

friendliness." Ridout quotes Staley as saying, "No Missionary can divorce one problem from another, for the physical welfare of the people determines their reaction in no small measure to the message of God that is presented."[230]

There is a letter from Dr. Woodsworth's son, Harold, to Dr. Dorey, dated October 3, 1946 describing the state of his father's health, in which he protests his father's treatment, which he describes as being "badly treated with false accusations."[231] This letter appears to be in response to his brother Bob's hand written, undated letter to himself in regards to the bad situation their father is in, and in which Bob states:

> At the present time he is fighting (and it is very obvious to us) the doubts and worries that arise when another man disrespects one's personal efforts. This man is Mr. Staley.
> . . . . .
>
> and the events that have transpired just recently are amazing - uncalled for and inhuman.
> . . . . .
>
> And he has even become abusive – entirely uncalled for in a Christian Gentleman.[232]

There is a large amount of correspondence back and forth between Mr. Staley and Dr. Dorey that indicates that Mr. Staley is pushing Dr. Woodsworth out of his position, and does indeed hold him responsible for the poor conditions in the School. There is an indication further, that the Government is requesting that the School be prepared to take in students at the regular time in September, while Mr. Staley is insisting that no students come to the School until repairs are begun, and supplies such as mattresses, bedding and

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[230] Denzil G. Ridout, "Home Missionaries I Have Met", The United Church Record, nd, 20-21.

[231] Harold Woodsworth to Dr. Dory, October 3, 1946, Indian Work: Morley and Edmonton IRS, 83.050C. Box 27 File 464, The United Church of Canada Archives, Toronto.

[232] Bob Woodsworth to Harold Woodsworth, nd, Indian Work: Morley and Edmonton IRS, 83.050C. Box 27 File 464, The United Church of Canada Archives, Toronto.

clothes have been put in place. Mr. Staley is also dealing with staffing problems in the School as Miss McDonald, the long-time matron, has resigned. Mr. Staley writes to Dr. Dorey on October 20, 1946 stating:

> We opened school on the ninth and have about seventy children. The hostility of the Indians is vocal, loud, prolonged and bitter. I have visited the reserves and have been told the same stories everywhere.
> . . . . .
>
> She [Miss McDonald] wanted no part in any changes. Wednesday of this last week, she presented her resignation and this was at once accepted. In view of her long services your consideration is requested to any pension scheme that may be presented that would take care of her. She deserves well of the church but she could not work with or under anyone else.[233]

Dr. Dorey responds to Mr. Staley on October 23, 1946 stating:

> . . . but you know that the Indians are "hostile, vocal and bitter." nearly everywhere. I doubt if there are any Reserves in Canada from which at some time or another we have not had complaints. I can only hope that the complaints to which you are listening have as little foundation as some of those to which I have listened and about which I have had correspondence from many parties.[234]

I found no archival records documenting these complaints.

The Years 1950 – 1960

The actors in this section:

John Pickersgill…… Minister of Citizenship and Immigration

Dr. Dorey……. secretary of the BHM

Oliver Bailey Strapp…… principal of the school as of 1955

James Clarence Ludford…….. chaplain of the school as of 1951

Rev. Elgie Joblin…….. Assistant Secretary of the BHM with

[233] Staley to Dorey, October 20, 1946, Indian Work: Morley and Edmonton IRS, 83.050C. Box 27 File 464, The United Church of Canada Archives, Toronto.

[234] Dorey to Staley, October 23, 1946, Indian Work: Morley and Edmonton IRS, 83.050C. Box 27 File 464, The United Church of Canada Archives, Toronto.

responsibility for the administration of Indian work of the BHM

Rev. M.C, Macdonald ……. Secretary of the BHM

Dr. Hart…… Superintendent of Home Missions

R. F. Davey……Superintendent of Education, Indian Affairs, Ottawa

Miss C.M. McDonald…… Matron at the school (this appears to be a different person than the one of the same name during Woodsworth's tenure

Rev. Earle Stotesbury…….UCC minister from Saskatchewan

Dr. Elson ……Chair of the Advisory Committee, Edmonton Presbytery

Rev. A.D. Stade……Chairman of the Home Mission Committee and Superintendent for Saskatchewan

Dr. Whiting, Mr. J. Murdoch, and Rev. C. Dwight Powell…. Members of the Advisory Committee, Edmonton Presbytery, Mr. Powell is also the Superintendent for Alberta

Mr. Caldwell……Principal who replaces Strapp[235]

I relied heavily on the files contained in boxes entitled: Alberta Conference: Drumheller and Edmonton Presbyteries: Edmonton Residential School 1920, 1938, 1934 -1944, 1946, 1955 -1957 (82.050C, Box 112 File 16) and 1958-1960 (82.050C, Box 112 File 17) and 1961-1962 (82.050C, Box 112 File 18) for this section. I also searched the minutes and correspondence records of the Executive and Sub Executive of the General Council as well as minutes and correspondence of the Board of Home Missions during the time frame. There was a large gap in the records of Alberta Conference during the years of 1946 to 1955. I could not find any explanation for this. Could it be that the records were lost, deliberately destroyed or misplaced? Perhaps there will never be a

[235] Throughout the archives I found a discrepancy in how people were addressed by title. Reverend was often replaced by Mr. and titles such as Dr. were sometimes not used.

clear answer to these questions, but I am left to wonder.

In correspondence of the General Council Executive and Sub Executive 1955 (Oct-Nov) there is a letter dated Nov14, 1955 to the Director of Indian Affairs Branch, Dept. of Citizenship and Immigration, in which the UCC is requesting a change in section 117 of the Indian Act so that children, with their parents consulted, would go to a specific denominational school, and that the particular school of that denomination would not be at the parent's choice. A further letter dated Nov 18, 1955 addressed to John Pickersgill, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, indicates that the UCC would like to send a delegation to Ottawa to discuss the matter. The UCC states, "[it] is responsible for the spiritual welfare of approx. 1/5 of the Canadian population."[236] There is a response to this request from J. W. Pickersgill, dated January 19, 1956 in which he states:

> You may be assured that I shall be pleased, at any time, to receive representation from the United Church, regarding the administration of this section of the Act or, indeed, of any other aspect of the administration of Indian Affairs, and that I am deeply appreciative of the devoted work being done by all those associated with the United Church schools for Indians.[237]

This could indicate an extraordinary relationship between the UCC and the Government. General Council seems to have the ability to talk directly to the highest officials in Ottawa on issues of importance to them.

By 1950, nine of the fifteen United Church Residential Schools had closed. In June of 1950, The Manitoba Conference adopted the following resolution:

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[236] Executive and Sub-Executive to Pickersgill, November 28,1955, Fonds 500: United Church of Canada Gerneral Council Fonds, - 1925-1990, Series3/Correspondence of The Executive and Sub-Executive –1925-1983, Includes: re, Indian residential schools; re. Change in the Indian Act re. residential schools, 82.001C Box 47 File 150, The United Church Archives, Toronto.

[237] Pickersgill to General Council, January 19, 1956, Includes: re, Indian residential schools; re. Change in the Indian Act re. residential schools, 82.001C Box 47 File 150, The United Church Archives, Toronto.

> We the members of the Manitoba Conference of The United Church of Canada, view with alarm the closing of the Indian Residential Schools that have been under the direction of our church. We are convinced that these schools have made a notable contribution to the development of our Indian peoples and can continue to do so if given the support of the Church and State. Further we would request the Board of Home Missions to urge the Indian Department to begin the reconstruction of the Norway House Residential School at the earliest possible date.[238]

At the annual meeting of the BHM on March 29 -31, 1950, Dr. Dorey reports that finances are better since the Dominion Government has increased the per capita grants, retroactive to April 1, 1948, and pupils have been maintained. At the Executive of the BHM on June 23, 1950, there is concern that the erection of Day Schools will seriously affect enrolment at the Edmonton Residential School, and the Secretaries request, and are granted permission, to take this up with the officials of the Indian Affairs Branch in Ottawa.[239]

There is a large "blank" in the records of the School from 1944 - 1955.

By 1955, Oliver Bailey Strapp is the principal of the School. He is listed in his personnel profile as having served as a Missionary in Ontario from 1923 - 1929 and then at Indian Residential Schools from 1929 -1955, first at Mt. Elgie, Muncey, Ontario and then Brandon, Manitoba. He came to Edmonton in 1955 and resigned December 31, 1960. There is a hand written notation alongside this last entry saying "retired".[240]

James Clarence Ludford is now on staff. He has served as lay supply in Saskatchewan from 1939 -1942, was ordained in 1946 in Toronto Conference, after

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[238] Resolution, June 1950, Fonds 509: United Church of Canada Board of Home Missions Fonds. – 1907-1983, predominant 1926-1971, Series1/Administrative Records. – 1926-1979, predominant 1926-1971, Minutes, Board, 83.050C, Box 4, The United Church of Canada Archives, Toronto.

[239] Minutes, June 23, 1950, Series1/Administrative Records. – 1926-1979, predominant 1926-1971, Minutes, Board, 83.050C, Box 4, The United Church of Canada Archives, Toronto.

[240] Personnel Profile, 92.164C Box 33 File 5, The United Church Archives, Toronto.

completing the short course at Victoria Emmanuel, and served in Saskatchewan from 1946 -1951 as a clergyman. In 1951, he came to Edmonton Presbytery, and worked in a pastoral charge and at the School where he remained until 1960. He then is listed as serving in Toronto Conference from 1960 -1978 at: Clute Island Falls; Assistant at Parry Sound, Parry Sound Indian; Christian Island; and finally Cedar Point. In his personnel file is a form he filled out in 1971. He states he has 17 years' experience in Indian work. The file indicates that he has never married.[241]

As of July 1, 1957, in the minutes of the General Council 1956-1958, Rev. Elgie Joblin, who is the Assistant Secretary of the BHM, is assigned responsibility for the administration of Indian Work of the BHM.[242]

The year1956 appears to be a turbulent year with many pieces of correspondence between: the Principal Strapp; Reverend M.C Macdonald, Secretary, BHM; Dr. Hart, Superintendent of Home Missions and R. F. Davey, Superintendent of Education, Indian Affairs, Ottawa. The main issues appear to be staffing problems, and the number of students in attendance. In a report, Strapp speaks of the problems with the numbers of students:

> The loss of pupilage is due largely to the change in emphasis from the Residential to the Day School in the province of Alberta.
> . . . . .
>
> It would appear that we are the 'overflow school' for the Alberni Residential School BC
> . . . . .

[241] Personnel File, Rev.1999.157C Box 30 File 1; Deceased ministry Personnel 92.164C Box 30 File 2, The United Church of Canada Archives, Toronto.

[242] Minutes, Fonds 500: United Church of Canada General Council Fonds. – 1925-1990, Series2/Minutes of the Executive and Sub-Executive. – 1925-1990, Minutes, official, Box 82.001C Box 28 File 1, The United Church of Canada Archives, Toronto.

> Just how soon the expansion program in BC will take care of these is problematic.
> . . . . .
>
> We are feeding and clothing the children to a price and not to a reasonable standard according to the pamphlets sent out to us by Indian Health Services, citrus fruit, tomato juice, cheese, honey, etc.[243]

Dr. Macdonald writes to Mr. Davey, expressing concern over the farm finances and the drop in student numbers. Dr. Hart writes on May 8, 1956 concerned that: the "atmosphere has changed since Staley was the minister"; that two senior girls have run away; that Mr. McIlwraith, a teacher of grade 7, 8, and 9 and a member of Friends of the Indians Organization, is "exerting an influence that is detrimental to the harmonious conduct of the school"; and that Mr. Strapp will leave if this teacher stays; that there are now meetings with the Presbytery committee, and there is good relationships with them and Mr. Strapp. Dr. Hart states:

> Mr. Strapp speaks very highly of the Rev. Jim Ludford and he doesn't know how he could carry on at the school without the work that Mr. Ludford is doing [244]

Dr. Macdonald replies:

> If Mcllwraith is creating trouble for Mr. Strapp and fails to co-operate it is my judgment that he should go[245]

Dr. Davey writes to Dr. Macdonald on July 10, 1956 stating:

> There is one other matter which I am most anxious to discuss with you, and that is the situation which is developing at the Edmonton Residential School. It seems to be following very much the same pattern as we experienced at

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[243] Report, Fonds 509: United Church of Canada Board of Home Missions Fonds. – 1907- 1983, predominant 1926-1971, Series2/ Section 2: Records Relating to Institutions and Block Grants, 1907-1972, Alberta Conference: Drumheller and Edmonton Presbyteries: Edmonton Residential School, 83.050C Box 112 File 16, The United Church of Canada Archives, Toronto.

[244] Hart to Macdonald, May 8, 1956, 83.050C, Box 112 File 16, The United Church of Canada Archives, Toronto.

[245] Macdonald to Hart, nd, 83.050C, Box 112 File 16, The United Church of Canada Archives, Toronto.

Brandon.[246]

On Aug 6, 1956, Mr. Strapp writes to Dr. Macdonald:

> "Friends of the Indians Society" has made a number of complaints and placed some affidavits in the hands of the Regional Office but I have not yet had any official information.
> . . . . .
>
> I have a feeling that the regional officials would like to get rid of the school if they possibly could on the ground that as far as Alberta is concerned it has served its day.[247]

Strapp speaks of various other problems: with the building, "dangerous stairs on the boy's side"; teachers rent goes to Ottawa instead of to the church; difficulties sharing the kitchen with teachers; cleaning problems with the floors; and states:

> I wonder what bright minds think up these funny ideas. They are the most impractical people and by their very ideas reveal their colossal ignorance of the conditions under which we work in our residential schools.
> . . . . .
>
> I would be glad if you would get a statement from Mr. Davey as to the charges which have been made against some of the members of my staff as they feel it is an injustice to allow Indians to make statements against them without the opportunity of making a reply. This was the case with Miss. McDonald who has spent about 37 years working with the Indian people and has now left us with, I am afraid, a not too friendly feeling.
> . . . . .
>
> I definitely will not have this man [McIlwraith] on the school premises as he will only stir up trouble again as he has done during this past several years.[248]

Apparently Mr. Davey visits the school while Mr. Strapp is away, and the staff report to

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[246] Davey to Macdonald, July 10, 1956, 83.050C Box 112 File 16, The United Church of Canada Archives, Toronto.

[247] Srapp to Macdonald, August 6, 1956, 83.050C Box 112 File 16, The United Church of Canada Archives, Toronto.

[248] Srapp to Macdonald, August 6, 1956, 83.050C Box 112 File 16, The United Church of Canada Archives, Toronto.

him that Mr. Davey was not happy with the conditions at the School. Mr. Strapp responds in this same letter saying:

> If conditions do not soon clear up we should take the matter over the heads of the department officials to the office of the Minister.[249]

On July 19, 1956, Miss McDonald wrote to Dr. Macdonald referring to a letter from two Indian girls who had made complaints suggesting the letter had been:

> copied or dictated … The girls would not have done that unless there was some one agitating them.

Miss McDonald suggests the problem lies with an alliance between a Mr. Barnes, Mr. McIlwraith, and his wife. Mr. McIlwraith had been promised the principalship, and his wife the matron's position, which was Miss McDonald's position. Miss McDonald states:

> [there is] full cooperation from all the staff but Mr. McIlwraith [who] spoke against the school and administration of the school.[250]

On August 20, 1956, Dr. Macdonald replies, upholding her and states:

> So far as we are concerned my recollection of you is of one who has served faithfully and conscientiously and one who had the best interests of the school at heart. You are aware of the policy followed, the Department appoints the Principal but the church has the privilege of making a nomination. I am sure the Department would not ignore the Church and go ahead and make an appointment arbitrarily.[251]

On August 29, 1956 Dr. Macdonald writes to Mr. Davey, marking the letter Personal. He states:

> I am pleased to note that there have been no formal complaints lodged.
> If this report is correct, I frankly doubt the advisability of having an instructor

[249] Srapp to Macdonald, August 6, 1956, 83.050C Box 112 File 16, The United Church of Canada Archives, Toronto.

[250] Miss McDonald to Macdonald, July 19, 1956, 83.050C Box 112 File 16, The United Church of Canada Archives, Toronto.

[251] Macdonald to Miss McDonald, August 20, 1956, 83.050C Box 112 File 16, The United Church of Canada Archives, Toronto.

> visit the school who is at variance with the Principal and one who it is apparent, created trouble for the former matron, a woman who had given 37 years of service to the Indian work
> . . . . .
>
> Frankly the impression I got was that these girls never phrased the letter themselves. It was such an unworthy kind of communication that I paid no attention to it.[252]

On August 9, 1956 Mr. Davey writes a rather scathing analysis of the Principal to Dr. Macdonald:

> In general, it is the feeling that the Principal is inclined to be concerned first with such matters as the operation of the farm, the condition of the principal's residence, the cost of operation of the school etc., rather than placing first in his thoughts the welfare and feelings of the pupils.
> . . . . .
>
> I can understand why children would be reluctant to attend such an institution and why it might be extremely difficult to secure the cooperation of the parents in having their children attend.
> . . . . .
>
> The Superintendent informs me that this particular point has not been discussed at length with the Principal, because he has been discouraged in his endeavors to secure the cooperation of the principal in effecting other needed improvements. He is finding Mr. Strapp most difficult to work with.[253]

He further states that field officials will make visits to the school and submit regular reports.

Edmonton Presbytery of UCC, at its meeting on January 30, 1957, passes several resolutions pertaining to the Edmonton Residential School. The first, asking the BHM to grant a rather large sum of money, $42,500, annually, and an additional per capita grant of $182 per pupil. A second resolution asks BHM to present to the Department of Indian

[252] Macdonald to Davey, August 29, 1956, 83.050C Box 112 File 16, The United Church of Canada Archives, Toronto.

[253] Davey to Macdonald, August 9, 1956, 83.050C Box 112 File 16, The United Church of Canada Archives, Toronto.

Affairs the need for a new classroom block and the need to make necessary repairs so that the School "will adequately serve the children and staff as home and recreation center.[254]

Dr. Macdonald visits the school from August 28 to Sept. 3, 1957 and reports that the buildings are in good condition while needing some renovations, except for the barns which will be torn down when the farm is discontinued. The majority of students are now from northern BC and students from Grade VII and up are attending school in Jasper, a suburb of Edmonton. He believes the school is still needed, especially for senior students from BC. He notes:

> Rev. [Jim] Ludford, assistant to Principal, is doing excellent work in C.E., crafts, sports, etc. High honors for crafts at Exhibition last year.[255]

Dr. Macdonald had written to the school earlier in June advising that the BHM would be providing a special grant of $2,000 for the 1956 portion of the school year.[256]

In May of 1958, Mr. Strapp prepares a special report for the BHM which upholds many of the requests that the Edmonton Presbytery suggested in their resolutions.
A case is made for the School to remain open, and to improve the experience for the students; needed repairs and new classroom block should be undertaken. He also suggests that, either the farm be discontinued, or that Indian Affairs take over its operation. At the very least, the operations should be removed from the responsibilities of the Principal, who should be focusing on education. On June 6, 1958, a committee formed by the Government to investigate the present and future roles of the Edmonton Residential

[254] Edmonton Presbytery Resolutions, January 30, 1957, 83.050C Box 112 File 16, The United Church of Canada Archives, Toronto.

[255] Macdonald visit to the school report, August 28 to September 3, 1957, 83.050C Box 112 File 16, The United Church of Canada Archives, Toronto.

[256] Macdonald to Edmonton Residential School, June,1957, 83.050C Box 112 File 16, The United Church of Canada Archives, Toronto.

School meets in Edmonton. Dr. Macdonald attends, along with local representatives from the department and the UCC. The recommendations from this meeting are that extensive renovations be done, so that students from BC could be served for an additional five years. Also, that the department and the UCC continue to study the situation and make plans if necessary for a "hostel accommodation for high school students, university students, vocational training students and possibly rehabilitation students."[257]

The School continues for the next two years, now meeting regularly with The Indian Work Committee of Edmonton Presbytery. In minutes of January 3, 1959, it is clarified that the Principal is accountable to the BHM and the BHM is accountable to the Department of Indian Affairs:

> . . . the church is asserting itself. . . . It is also understood that the superintendent of Home Missions is the Church's local representative for Indian School affairs and that he must consider himself equal in authority, for the Church, with the officers of the local establishment of the Department of Indian Affairs.
> ……
>
> There was also a discussion of the need for the Committee and with the support of Rev. Powell and Mr. Strapp it was decided to write to Mr. Joblin "asking him to try to set out what he considered the functions, powers and responsibilities of the Committee"
>
> . . . Mr. Strapp reported he is giving Mr. Ludford more and more of the responsibilities for running the school in the expectation that Mr. Ludford will become Principal in a year or two.[258]

The minutes of this committee are sporadic in the archival records, but by June of 1960, it appears that Mr. Ludford is now also attending the meetings. The minutes of June 18, 1960 include a discussion of:

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[257] Macdonald, Report, June 1958, 83.050C Box 112 File 16, The United Church of Canada Archives, Toronto.

[258] Minutes of the Indian Work Committee of the Edmonton Presbytery of the United Church of Canada, January3, 1959, 83.050C Box 112 File 16, The United Church of Canada Archives, Toronto..

> retarded children in light of the fact that quite a number in the lower grades had "D" standings in their Easter reports
> . . . . .
>
> It was agreed, however, that since we could not educate all white children, we could not expect perfections with red.
> . . . . .
>
> The Indians see that they must get an education so they can take a new place in the white man's world.[259]

Shortly after this meeting in June, the School is faced with the case of abuse by Ludford and chaos in its administration.

The Emergence of Ludford

What happens at the School in September, 1960 is not documented until December 5, 1960 when Dr. Joblin is writing to Mr. Caldwell to try and recruit him to take over the role of Principal. Although there were many pieces of correspondence between Mr. Strapp and Dr.Joblin discussing how to handle this crisis and the future of Mr. Strapp, this is the first documentation of the facts:

> I write because of the situation which has arisen at the Edmonton school. This was brought about by the necessity to remove Jim Ludford[260] from the school in September, and because of considerable criticism of the situation there and its effect upon Mr. Strapp. We had hoped that he would be able to remain until June but it is doubtful whether he can do so unless he has some very capable assistance.
> …….
>
> However, I am wondering about how the situation could be handled between now and June. It occurred to me that you might be able and willing to help us out. I have not asked Mr. Strapp's opinion of this nor that of the Committee, but it would be very helpful to know before the end of the week whether you would consider such a move for six months from January to June. I think it would involve being responsible for the management of the staff and students and having Mr. Strapp remain to handle the books and the business of the school. It might be

[259] Minutes of the Indian Work Committee of the Edmonton Presbytery of the United Church of Canada, June 18, 1960, 83.050C Box 112 File 16, The United Church of Canada Archives, Toronto.

[260] Mr. Ludford is known as both Jim and Clarence. His legal name is James Clarence Ludford.

necessary to give Mr. Strapp two or three weeks' vacation as soon as possible. Such an arrangement, of course, would depend upon Mr. Strapp's willingness to co-operate in this way and to let you work as associate principal.

While I am not in a position to say that such an arrangement would meet the situation or with the approval of the Committee, I should like to know how you would feel about such an arrangement. It may be difficult to secure a full-time replacement soon enough to straighten out the situation and the need is quite urgent. If there is any possibility of your being able to do such a thing I wish you would wire me immediately collect, so that I might have the information by Thursday if possible. If this is too big a change in your plans and you are not free to leave you should feel quite free to say so. If you are able to do this it might be a very good solution if the Committee has not been able to find a suitable principal.

Memorandum re. Rev. Earl Stotesbury and the Edmonton Residential School.

The following is an attempt to get at the truth of the crises which arose at the Edmonton School in September, 1960. The following persons have been interviewed: Rev. O. B. Strapp, Dr. Elson (chairman of the Advisory Committee), Dr. Whiting, Mr. J. Murdoch, Rev. A. D. Strade, and Rev. C. Dwight Powell and Rev. Earl Stotesbury.

The situation was made more serious because three events occurred concurrently. First, there was some tension resulting from the placement of Saskatchewan pupils in the Morley and Edmonton schools without proper authorization. Mr. Stotesbury arrived at the Edmonton school with some fourteen pupils in the middle of the week proceeding September 17th, having left some eighteen pupils at Morley. This action had not been properly cleared with the Ottawa and Regional officials and it created a difficult situation for both the principal and the officials in Edmonton.

Second, Mr. Stotesbury's visit at the school extended over several days during which time he claimed that he was received with some animosity by Mr. Ludford which apparently aroused his suspicions regarding conditions in the school. During this visit it is apparently true that Mr. Stotesbury made some derogatory remarks about the condition of the school and is to some extent responsible for tension between himself and the staff.

Third, these events transpired while the General Council was in session in Edmonton so that the principal was absent from the school during the day and when required it proved very difficult to get the Presbytery Committee together in order to deal with the situation promptly.

FACTS LEADING TO VIOLENCE

Mr. Stotesbury became suspicious of irregularities between Mr. Ludford and the boys of the school and proceeded to make enquiries from several of the senior boys. Affidavits were taken from these boys and Mr. Stotesbury felt that it was necessary to protect them from Mr. Ludford, and as a consequence several of them remained in the home of one of the staff members on the grounds. Their failure to appear in the dormitories was a matter of concern for Mr. Ludford who did not know where they were. In trying to locate them during the night his attempts were misinterpreted and the tension grew. Upon being convinced of the condition Mr. Stotesbury notified Mr. Stade, who is the Superintendent and who was in Edmonton. Mr. Stade got in touch with the Home Mission officers at the Council including Mr. Powell, the Superintendent for Alberta.

Mr. Stade was assured that the Presbytery Committee would go out to the school at 10a.m., Saturday to investigate and that they would assume responsibility for the situation. But in the meantime, Mr. Stotesbury had sought the advice of the police, one of whom he knew personally and apparently they advised him to let the Church officials be responsible but also to prevent Mr. Ludford from leaving the school.

Mr. Stotesbury insists that he had every intention of turning the matter over to the Committee when they arrived Saturday morning. Unfortunately, the Committee did not go to the school on Saturday due to the difficulty in getting the committee together at that time. Consequently Mr. Stotesbury waited at the school and no one appeared. He felt the responsibility to the children whom he had brought to the school and was not prepared to leave until the matter had been cleared up. He insisted that Mr. Ludford was preparing to leave having packed his bags in his room. While this could have been only preparations for an expected weekend trip, it was construed to mean that he was preparing to leave the school. Mr. Stotesbury and the two others felt obliged to detain him and when he was called into the room the violence occurred in which Mr. Ludford was struck by Mr. Stotesbury. It is at this point that it is most difficult to get a clear picture of responsibility. Mr. Stotesbury reports that Mr. Ludford became violent when confronted with the situation and that it was necessary both in self-defense and to detain him to use force. Mr. Strapp's version received from Mr. Ludford was to the effect that Mr. Stotesbury was the aggressor. In any case Mr. Ludford was subdued and became amenable to reason.

Since the committee did not appear Mr. Stotesbury got in touch with Rev. Mr. Macdonald of the Council Church who made arrangements for Mr. Ludford to be admitted to the psychiatric hospital for treatment. This was apparently done later in the day although the time is not certain. Apparently Mr. Strapp was advised Ludford had been removed and would no longer be able to mistreat the boys who had provided the information.

During Saturday both Dr. Darby and Dr. Waiting walked into the situation and advised Mr. Stotesbury to call in the police. Dr. Whiting's reaction to the situation

was mainly that Mr. Stotesbury should be commended for revealing the true situation and having the courage to precipitate some action. Mr. Stotesbury subsequently ran into some unpleasantness with Rev. Howard Strapp and with Rev. Noble Hatton who were incensed at the treatment given to both Mr. Strapp and Mr. Ludford. It is generally agreed that in several situations Mr. Stotesbury himself became somewhat violent and used abusive language. This gave rise to some feeling that Mr. Stotesbury himself was in need of psychiatric treatment. It should be remembered that almost everyone involved became quite emotional at some point and things were said and done which have been regretted by all concerned. There is one point at least that everyone has agreed upon, namely, that it was essential that the situation be exposed and cleared up and that we should be grateful to Mr. Stotesbury for doing this even though critical of his methods.

In fairness to Mr. Stotesbury it should be pointed out that the seriousness of the event was due in part to the failure of the local Committee to move into the situation promptly and that Mr. Stotesbury's action in this emergency is understandable in view of his complete dedication to the welfare of the pupils. In fairness to members of the Committee, it should be pointed out that no one probably realized fully the urgency of the situation and since general council was in session, made it difficult to get them together.

The school was eventually visited early on Sunday morning. It is important to note that Mr. Stade supports Mr. Stotesbury strongly because of his genuineness and his complete dedication to the cause of the Indians. He believes that in the circumstances Mr. Stotesbury should not be held entirely responsible for everything that happened. He regrets very sincerely the effect upon Mr. Strapp whom he wanted to spare in the situation. In not working through Mr. Strapp, Mr. Stotesbury was, of course, mistaken and while he believes that he was sparing him it is more likely that he had little confidence that his accusations would be believed or acted upon. Moreover, it is pointed out that Mr. Strapp was in attendance at the General Council in connection with an exhibit prepared by the school. This left Mr. Stotesbury and Mr. Ludford together in the situation.
In discussing the matter with Dr. Elson it was agreed that in the interests of all concerned it would be best to avoid further publicity. It was noted that the Edmonton Presbytery had a meeting and had not brought the matter up for discussion. All concerned regretted the manner in which the situation was handled and the responsibility must be shared by quite a number of persons. Those who know Mr. Stotesbury best, in particular Mr. Stade, are concerned that the incident should not affect Mr. Stotesbury's future work in the church, believing that he acted only out of his concern for the Indian pupils and in the best interests of the school.[261]

[261] Report, Joblin to Caldwell, December 5, 1960, Fonds 509: United Church of Canada Board of Home Missions Fonds. – 1907- 1983, predominant 1926-1971, Series2/ Section 2: Records Relating to Institutions and Block Grants, 1907-1972, Alberta Conference: Drumheller and Edmonton Presbyteries: Edmonton Residential School, 83.050C Box 112 File 17, The United Church of Canada Archives, Toronto.

This above letter was copied to Rev. Powell and Rev. Stade.

The Continuing Crisis

I enclose the entire documentation here, as there seems no appropriate way to summarize it. As I said earlier, there is a great deal of correspondence between Dr. Joblin and Mr. Strapp prior to the above letter. The correspondence is informative to the relationship between these two men, and their focus on handling the crisis. On September 22, 1960, in the first letter between them, Joblin states:

> I can appreciate how great a blow the recent events have been to you as well as to the staff. I had some indication of the situation when speaking to Dr. Macdonald on the telephone. Certainly you will need a replacement for Jim Ludford as soon as possible.
> . . . . .
>
> I went to Ottawa on Monday to discuss the matter of pupils from Saskatchewan. They have consented in the interest of the children to let them remain in the two schools in Alberta.
> . . . . .
>
> I regret very much that things have been done in such a manner as to make things very difficult for you and I hope that you will be sustained during these next few months when you will have to train someone to do the work which Jim was doing. This will add a great deal to your own responsibilities during the remainder of the year.[262]

The most pressing situation is to get someone to come to the school immediately to relieve the strain on Mr.Strapp. They are successful, and a young man who is on leave from university studies arrives and appears to do very well with the responsibility of the staff and students.

The crisis continues with a letter from Mr. Stade, Superintendent of Missions,

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[262] Joblin to Strapp, September 22, 1960, 83.050C Box 112 File 17, The United Church of Canada Archives, Toronto.

Saskatchewan, who writes to Mr. Powell, Superintendent of Missions, Alberta, on October 25, 1960:

> I hate to bother you with more problems regarding the operation of the Residential School. However, Rev. E. F. Stotesbury called at the manse yesterday with reference to Saskatchewan Conference Indian Committee meeting. During the evening's discussion he brought up a matter about which he was hesitant to say anything to anyone else, principally because of the way he had stuck his neck out regarding homosexual practices in the school. However, he showed us two letters (Dr. Hall was with us) written by girls to their mothers he had a third one which he had left in Grenfell. The girls in the letters were telling their mothers of how the boys got into the Girl's residence at night and slept with some of the girls. If necessary I can get copies of these letters.
>
> Obviously, a serious problem in matters of supervision still prevails. I thought you should know this. I'm sending a copy of this letter to Rev. Joblin. Between you you should know what action can be taken.
>
> What disturbs me in this is that linked up with other areas of failure we are losing the confidence of our Indian people in our church efforts and further we are fast becoming a laughing stock among our Roman Catholic friends. For them the shoe is on the other foot. The incompetence of staff in this situation seems beyond comprehension.
>
> I thought I should draw the above to your attention because it is now apparent that our Indian people knew of this situation long before the church was aware of it.[263]

Rev. Powell also writes to Dr. Joblin on November 25, 1960:

> I am afraid that I must give as my opinion that things are not too satisfactory at the Edmonton Indian Residential School. This opinion is shared at least by the Chairman of our Presbytery Committee on the School, Dr. D. J. C. Elson, and the Chairman of Presbytery, the Rev. Ian Macmillan, both of whom I have been consulting frequently this past week,
>
> You will remember, of course, the difficulty that the Rev. J. C. Ludford got himself into, and so he is not on staff any longer. Similar things have been said about a Mr. Thompson who was on the staff very recently but is not there any longer. Mr. Strapp feels that Mr. Thompson has been "framed" in these accusations but there certainly seems to us to be more to these things that are being said than just an effort to discredit someone wrongfully. You will recall also what Mr. Stade brought to our attention a few weeks ago, of stories from Indian

[263] Stade to Powell, November 8, 1960, 83.050C Box 112 File 17, The United Church of Canada Archives, Toronto.

girls from Saskatchewan that boys were getting into the girls' dormitories and sharing their beds; investigation by Mr. Strapp bears out that such has occurred, although Mr. Strapp feels that this happened because Mr. Hunter of the Department of Indian Affairs insisted that dormitory doors should not be locked as was being done. There seems to be a lack of harmony certainly among the staff at the School.

The Chairman of Presbytery and the Department of Indian Affairs have each been receiving reports of things not being as they should be. We are all afraid that some of these reports are going to come to the ears of the press and there will arise a nasty situation if the press should decide to make a public story of it.

We have the feeling that Mr. Strapp is not as aware as he should be of all that goes on. We are concerned that there seems to be little of love or charity in his attitude to the Indian children. We hear of corporal punishment being meted out with the buckle ends of belts, severe enough to raise welts on bodies; Mr. Strapp says that he has put a stop to that. But our feeling is that there is too much of slapping and physical force in punishments.

Our opinion is that the sooner Mr. Strapp leaves the School and leaves the supervision to someone else the better. We have suggested to him today that he take salary to the end of December, but leave as soon as seems convenient to him. However, he feels that he will not leave because of what he feels are veiled and unsubstantiated accusations, He feels that he should work until the end of June so that he might build his pension credit up by that extra amount. However, he did say that if we would give him three months leave of absence with pay from January Ist that he would be prepared to leave at the end of December. He had earlier informed us that he would stop at the end of December in any case if we had a replacement for him, but now he feels that to do so would admit failure. Would there be any possibility of making any such offer to him?
. . . .

We do not want to be unfair to Mr. Strapp , but our opinion is that he has passed his usefulness to this School, and we are anxious that there be a change at the earliest possible moment.[264]

Dr. Joblin replies to Mr. Powell on November 29, 1960:

I have received your letter of November 25th concerning the school at Edmonton, and have this morning received Mr. Strapp's letter requesting that he be relieved of the principalship as soon as possible. As both of you point out, there are some complications with regard to salary and pension if this is done. I have had no opportunity as yet to go into this aspect of the situation but without waiting to do

[264] Powell to Joblin, November 25, 1960, 83.050C Box 112 File 17, The United Church of Canada Archives, Toronto.

so I thought I might make the following suggestion.

There would be some difficulty involved in releasing Mr. Strapp by December 31st unless by that time we found a suitable replacement.
. . . .

Moreover, I have considerable sympathy for Mr. Strapp's position and the way in which such an action would reflect upon him at the close of his long term of service, if we rushed in the choice of principal; we could very well make a mistake also.

As an alternative to this abrupt termination of Mr. Strapp's principalship I would suggest doing what was done at Alberni two years ago. In this case Mr. Caldwell remained as principal but turned over to the assistant principal the management of the school including supervision of the staff and students. This responsibility could be delegated . . . by Mr. Strapp and I would suppose that this might be done immediately. . . .In the meantime, Mr. Strapp could continue to take care of the accounts and records of the school which is a considerable responsibility….. I am writing to Mr. Strapp to suggest this as an immediate measure and I suggest that such a step would at least give us a little longer in which to find the right man for the principalship.

This is not to suggest that I am questioning your assessment of the situation but on the other hand I am well aware how easy it is for criticism to become unfair and I must proceed with caution in order that an injustice may not be done to Mr. Strapp. If he is given an opportunity to delegate the responsibilities to his assistant as outlined above, this could be done without seriously affecting his position in the school. In fact he had already been handing over to Mr. Ludford an increased amount of responsibility as he approached his retirement.

In the meantime, I agree that we must step up our efforts to find the right man for the job and also look into the matter of what could be done in terms of salary if Mr. Strapp retires before June. . . . .[265]

During this time frame, Mr. Strapp is in correspondence with Dr. Joblin as well.

He responds to Dr. Joblin's solution positively and writes on December 1, 1960:

This matter will have to be carefully guarded in order that it will not develop into a "Witch Hunt" as was the case in the matter of Mr. Ludford. Rev. Dwight Powell has said that I have claimed that Mr. Ludford was "Framed". This is not correct. I have said that I do not believe that all the charges against him are correct and I base that claim on the statement of one of the boys who was interviewed in my

[265] Joblin to Powell, November 29, 1960, 83.050C Box 112 File 17, The United Church of Canada Archives, Toronto.

> presence by a corporal of the R.C. M. Police. This boy denied the statement that he was purported to have made to Mr. Stotesbury and which he signed, and the questioning of the policeman could not shake his denial. Also in the case at court the charge was laid specifically in the name of a boy who left for home in June and did not return to school in September, and so could not have given the statement to Mr. Stotesbury. I have no doubt in my mind that Mr. Ludford was guilty in some cases and he has admitted his guilt and as far as I am concerned there the matter rests.[266]

In a letter dated November 28, 1960, Mr. Strapp writes to Dr. Joblin:

> You will have received my application for relief or release from the position as principal of the school.
>
> At the meeting in Edmonton the allegation was to the effect that irregularities had been going on at the school but no definite charges were laid against me either for neglect of duty or any other fault. There was a veiled suggestion that if I did not agree to leave very soon the church would be in trouble as "someone had threatened publicity."
>
> I could not get anything definite either from the chairman of the presbytery Rev. Ian McMillan, who seemed definitely hostile, Dr. Elson or Rev. Dwight Powell. They evidently had been meeting together and were determined that I should go.
>
> I finally said that I would leave it up to the Board in Toronto and they said that would have to be done.
>
> This school certainly has been a trouble spot through the years, Dr. Woodsworth had to leave with his health nearly broken. A.J. Staley had a very unhappy experience and was taking pills for his ulcers for the latter part of his stay here, and now if I do not get out very soon I will be ill, so it is better to go as soon as possible.
>
> I think that this would be a very good time to put the pressure on Dwight Powell to give proper attention to this school and its needs on a regular basis and not just come up with censure when things go wrong. He has not been out to the school since the trouble at the time of General Council and so cannot be said to have been too concerned about conditions.
>
> During the conversation the remark was made that it might be a good thing to make "a clear sweep" and I asked whether that meant the staff as well. There was the feeling that too much had been said and there was silence for a moment. I then

[266] Strapp to Joblin, December 1, 1960, 83.050C Box 112 File 17, The United Church of Canada Archives, Toronto.

> took out the book of instructions and read the note of the instruction from the meeting of the Board in 1959 in which, or under which, no number of the staff can be dismissed by the principal without the consent of the Supt. Of Missions, if that member has been employed over three years. Dr. Elson turned to Mr. Powell and said "that makes it your responsibility."
>
> I also pointed out that although I had so many times reminded them that we required staff for the school only once had anyone been even suggested and then it proved to be a young woman who was having a lot of trouble in her own experience and brought more trouble to us as she only stayed three weeks, during which she was not able to get up in the mornings and be on duty where she was required.
>
> As soon as I have something definite I will try and arrange to have the auditors go over my books for the year, and have them ready for the new man.
>
> I am certainly sorry that after the years I have to leave the school under these conditions but perhaps this will point up once again the necessity for the Supt of Home Missions in any area really knowing the conditions under which the schools are operating.
> . . . . .
>
> I am marking the envelope personal. But leaving the letter open so that you may file it if you consider it wise so to do.[267]

It might be important to note that these later letters between Mr. Joblin and Mr. Strapp are addressed to each other by their first names rather than the more formal address in other letters. And in a letter the next day, dated November 29, 1960. Mr. Strapp writes to Mr. Joblin and states:

> This is a rather difficult letter to write at this time. I have just come from an interview with Rev. Dwight Powell, Dr. Elson, chairman of the school supervisory committee and the chairman of the Edmonton Presbytery.
>
> We have had an aftermath of the "Ludford" trouble and I have dealt with it but someone on the staff has apparently been talking outside the school and I was called in and it is very evident that Dwight Powell will be very happy if I will turn in my resignation.
> I have suggested that I will be willing to be relieved as soon as possible but if it is to be at the end of the calendar year I shall expect that I will either receive half

[267] Strapp to Joblin,November 28, 1960, 83.050C Box 112 File 17, The United Church of Canada Archives, Toronto.

> pay until the end of June or at least three months leave of absence with my cash salary pending my retirement.
>
> I believe that with the present feeling it would be well for me to leave as soon as possible, as I have little heart to be trying to carry on when I apparently do not have the full confidence of the Supt. of Missions.
>
> I have informed Dr. Elson and Rev. Powell that I will leave the matter in the hands of The Board.
>
> This is therefore my notification that I wish to be relieved as soon as possible.[268]

Dr. Joblin had expressed to Mr. Strapp in his letter of November 29, 1960 that:

> The Church owed you a great deal for your service through the years and I trust that we will be able to find a way to recognize what you have done as you approach retirement.[269]

It appears that it is not possible to make extraordinary measures to provide Mr. Strapp with financial compensation. Dr. Joblin states in a letter to Rev. Powell, dated December 1, 1960 after discussions with Dr. Macdonald:

> …..it would not be possible for us to provide several months' salary for Mr. Strapp in lieu of his continuance to the end of the year. I know that he has thought for some time that this should be done at the end of a long term of service but it is contrary to our Church regulations for even officers of the Church and we would not be able to do this although it would have been very helpful in compensating Mr. Strapp in the event of his withdrawing from the school at the end of December.. . . . . The whole problem is one in which the Indian Affairs Branch is very much involved as well as ours and I feel that I should discuss it with Mr. Davey in Ottawa. ….[270]

Dr. Joblin does go to extraordinary measures to assist Mr. Strapp, and secures another position for him, doing financial work in one of the Church's hospitals, and Mr. Strapp

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[268] Strapp to Joblin, November 29, 1960, 83.050C Box 112 File 17, The United Church of Canada Archives, Toronto.

[269] Joblin to Strapp, November 29, 1960, 83.050C Box 112 File 17, The United Church of Canada Archives, Toronto.

[270] Joblin to Powell, December 1, 1960, 83.050C Box 112 File 17, The United Church of Canada Archives, Toronto.

does in fact leave at the end of December, 1960. Mr. Caldwell arrives and the school continues on.

During this time frame, The Indian School Committee of the Edmonton Presbytery continues to meet, and in the minutes of October 27, 1960 it is noted:

> Mr. Ludford became ill and left the school in September.[271]

Following this, the minutes of November 24, 1960 indicate the school continues to function with a Mr. Garvock handling:

> the whole of the work with the staff and the pupils. For the time being Mr. Strapp will confine his activities to administration, bookkeeping, etc.

There is also a section entitled HARMFUL STORIES which states:

> All schools have suffered from exaggerated reports and false stories. The Edmonton School is suffering from recent events relating to Mr. Ludford. But not more than many other schools have suffered.[272]

But what of the two key players in this drama? Both Stotesbury and Ludford end their careers in Ontario. Stotesbury leaves Saskatchewan in 1963 and serves in both Toronto and Hamilton Conferences, retires in 1981 and dies on March 13, 2004. Ludford appears in 1961 in Toronto Conference, serves in several Native ministries, retires in 1978 and dies on May 27, 1990.[273] I searched the personnel files on both of them and Stotesbury's file contains very little. He is upheld for his work with Native People, and in particular, for the development of an amphitheater in one of his charges. Ludford's file does contain a letter from the Deputation secretary inviting him to do some deputation

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[271] Minutes of The Indian School Committee of the Edmonton Presbytery, October 27, 1960, 83.050C Box 112 File 17, The United Church of Canada Archives, Toronto.

[272] Minutes of The Indian School Committee of the Edmonton Presbytery, November 24, 1960, 83.050C Box 112 File 17, The United Church of Canada Archives, Toronto.

[273] Douglas Walkington, *Ministers of The United Church of Canada*, BX.9883 A1 N34, 1983.Vol 1, Reference. The United Church of Canada Archives, Toronto.

work "to tell something of your work amongst the Indian people."[274] Ludford is apparently searching for a call in 1971, and this file contains a letter from the Secretary Personnel Services who says in a letter dated December 21, 1971 "I know that your work is highly respected. . ."[275] This same file contains notations from Ludford himself in which he expresses his preference to work with Indian people, and is interested particularly in Indian children activities. The file also contains a form filled out by him which indicates he has never married. I was unable to find any documentation around his move to Ontario in 1961, directly following the incident in Edmonton. He did go directly into ministry in Toronto Conference at Cochrane.

The Legal Case Against Clarence Ludford

I did not find anything in the UCC Archives pertaining to what happened to Clarence Ludford after his removal from the school to an admission in a hospital. I contacted the Alberta Health Region and was told that, if indeed records still existed from 1961(which was doubtful), they would not be released except under a court order.

In the fall of 2012, I spent an afternoon in the legal library at the law school of the University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta. With the assistance of one of the staff, I did a computer search for any record of the legal case of Mr. Ludford. We found no record of the case. We did find a reference to the case as reported in The Canadian Press in regards to a settlement, out of court, by three aboriginal men who "alleged they were beaten, preyed upon by sexual predators, and then threatened into silence at a residential school

[274] Personnel Profile, Rev 1999. 157C Box 30 File 1, The United Church of Canada Archives, Toronto.

[275] Ibid.

in the 1950's. . . "[276] The article states, "Rev. Jim Ludford, the school chaplain from 1952 to 1960, pleaded guilty in 1960 to a count of indecent assault based in part on 44 sworn statements from students."[277] Probably most disturbing about this press release is the statement that "After a psychiatric assessment, [Ludford] appeared at a *secret court hearing* and pleaded guilty. No witnesses were called."[278] (My emphasis added) It is hard to understand what a *secret court hearing* would mean, since all court is to be held in a public forum. The press goes on to state that "Ludford was given a one-year suspended sentence, and then posted to a church job in Parry Sound, Ont."[279]

I was able to find two legal cases which cited information from the Ludford case. In M. (E.R.) v. Clarke (2000) the judge is ruling on the admission of documents and states, "That leaves only the so-called Ludford documents, . . . The Ludford documents concern an employee of an Indian residential school in Edmonton. . . . What they are is evidence of the knowledge of some or all of the defendants in the 1960s concerning the very real threat of sexual abuse in Indian residential schools. . ."[280]

The other case, Blackwater v. Plint (2001) states:

> Ian MacMillian . . . had become an ordained minister. In 1960 he was the Chairman of the Edmonton Presbytery of the United Church. He recalls being asked by Rev. Powell to assist in a situation at the Edmonton Residential School

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[276] The Canadian Press, "Three BC men settle in lawsuit against Edmonton residential school," (May 10, 2001) Canadian Press NewsWire, n/a-n/a http://login.ezproxy.library.ualberta.ca/login?url=http://search.proquest.com/docview/325881216?accountid14474 (accessed fall, 2012).

[277] Ibid.

[278] Ibid.

[279] Ibid.

[280] M. (E.R.) v. Clarke, BCSC 1689, [2001] L.V.I. 3169-1 (British Columbia Supreme Court, 2000), 11.

> where it was suggested there was a paedophile.[281] Rev. MacMillian went to the school and confronted the individual who admitted he had sexually touched a child. He was removed from the school and Rev. Powell took over. Rev MacMillian learned that the abuser had been put in psychiatric care. He does not know what further investigations were carried out.[282]
>
> …….
>
> There are references to five incidents of sexual abuse at residential schools in the documents produced: Kuper Island in 1939, Ludford in 1960 at the Edmonton Residential School, the 1963 Pooley incident at the Morley Indian Residential School and two others. Edmonton and Morley were affiliated with the United Church. Those incidents resulted in criminal convictions.[283]
>
> ……
>
> The documents show that on each of the five occasions where sexual abuse was reported, Canada took steps to investigate and eliminate the danger as well as bring in the police. Three of these reports involved actual incidents of abuse and two involved only rumours. The three incidents of 1939, 1960 and 1963 all resulted in police investigations.[284]

It is interesting that in this case, the judge is also hearing testimony from a person identified as Ms. M. J. who states:

> that when she turned 13 years of age she was selected to clean the apartment of then principal Caldwell who subsequently assaulted her. . . . She says Caldwell felt her breasts and vagina and then took his penis out and asked her to feel it . . . She says that the sexual assaults "happened several times after" this first incident. She testified that Caldwell raped her "quite often," . . . [285]

The judge dismisses her action saying:

> I do accept that Ms. M.J. holds an honest belief that the events that she described from so many years ago in fact occurred. I also recognize despite my findings of fact that one or more of the events may have actually occurred. I am also

[281] This is the only time that I found the term pedophile used in reference to Ludford. It is not possible to verify this. If he was indeed a pedophile this would be a concern since he has stated himself that he was very interested in working with "Indian" children.

[282] Blackwater v. Plint, BCSC 997,93 BCL.R. (3rd) 228, [2001] BCJ. No. 1446 (British Columbia Supreme Court), 28.

[283] Blackwater v. Plint, 29.

[284] Blackwater v. Plint, 29.

[285] Blackwater v. Plint, 11.

> cognisant of the possibility that one or more of the events that she has described not only occurred but that it might have caused or contributed to her inability to communicate what happened with sufficient clarity that would have enabled me to reach a different conclusion.
>
> However while I am aware of all of these factors, in the final analysis I am required to make findings of fact based on the evidence before me in accordance with the standard that the law requires. That analysis leads me to conclude that on all of the evidence I cannot find that it is more probable than not that these events occurred. In the result I have no alternative but to dismiss Ms. M. J.'s action.[286]

It is to be noted that the Caldwell named in this case, is the same person that is encouraged to come to the Edmonton Residential School following the resignation of Mr. Strapp. Mr. Caldwell is the principal at the school until 1962, at which time Mr. McBride assumes the position and remains as principal until 1966.

The Final Years

The Actors in this section:

> R. F. Davey……Chief, Education Division, Indian Affairs Branch of the Department of Citizenship and Immigration
>
> Rev. E. E. N. Joblin……..Assistant Secretary, Board of Home Missions
>
> C. D. Denney……..Chairman of Edmonton Presbytery Indian Work Committee 1964-1965

The school continues to operate, with what appears to be increased oversight by the federal government, through the Indian Affairs Branch of the Department of Citizenship and Immigration. In a letter from R. F. Davey, Chief, Education Division to Rev. E. E. N. Joblin, Assistant Secretary, Board of Home Missions, dated December 18, 1961 there is an attached report from the dietitian of the Indian Health Services. The report is very detailed and indicates that renovations have been made to the kitchen and

[286] Blackwater v. Plint, 13.

that the school is encouraged to meet the requirements for food services as set out by the government. It is also noted that Mr. Caldwell "felt that the money allotted for food was inadequate." The principles of sanitation were not being met and it was noted "There were a great number of flies in the kitchen." The dietician reported that:

> It was observed that a more healthy atmosphere pervaded amongst the children. The staff still have different meals than the children, which is not good practice. The staff do not appreciate what the children eat and the children do know what the staff have for meals because they help in the serving of the items.[287]

A review of the minutes of the Indian Work Committee of the Edmonton Presbytery of the United Church of Canada from March1, 1962 to June 21, 1962 indicates that the school has experienced some improvements including $300,000 renovations to the main building. The minutes indicate ongoing problems with a new group called Study Group on Family Welfare Services. The minutes of March 1, 1962, state the following:

> Presbytery had referred a letter dated February 14 from this Group to this Committee. The letter referred to rumors of homosexuality, theft and inefficient staffing that are alleged to be common gossip in the town of St. Albert. It mentioned that the United Church has been under considerable criticism in St. Albert because of seeming inefficiency with regard to the Indians.
>
> Members felt that more criticisms possibly are a carryover from the unhappy experiences of a couple of years ago while others may be as a result of the great confusion during re-construction. It is known that one of the staff recently had to be dismissed for several thefts. Mr. Caldwell suggested it might take so much as five years to live down the bad situation created a couple of years ago. In respect of insufficient staff, all the Committee is aware that insufficient money is provided to secure either adequate or efficient staff.[288]

The correspondence from C. D. Denney, Chairman of Edmonton Presbytery

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[287] Davey to Joblin, December 18, 1961, Fonds 509: United Church of Canada Board of Home Missions Fonds. – 1907- 1983, predominant 1926-1971, Series2/ Section 2: Records Relating to Institutions and Block Grants, 1907-1972, Alberta Conference: Drumheller and Edmonton Presbyteries: Edmonton Residential School, 82.050C Box 112 File 18, The United Church of Canada Archives, Toronto.

[288] Minutes, Indian Work Committee of the Edmonton Presbytery of the United Church of Canada, March 1. 1962, 82.050C Box 112 File 18, The United Church of Canada Archives, Toronto.

Indian Work Committee, from April 12, 1964 to March 11, 1965 seems to indicate a breakdown in the relationship between the government authorities and church authorities in regards to jurisdiction and responsibility for making decisions about the Edmonton Residential School. In a letter to Mr. Joblin from Mr. Denney dated Sept 13, 1964 he complains, ". . . I think it is time that in some way we let the Indian Affairs people know we are not to be ignored."[289] In a letter dated March 11, 1965 from C. D. Denney to Mr. Joblin, he states:

> I believe you told us when you were out here that the contract between the Church and the Government is due for renewal at an early date. Now I want to suggest that it shall NEVER be renewed, unless the whole operation of the project is given over entirely to the Church. Our only excuse for being involved is that we are able to make an effective Christian witness. This we certainly are not doing; and I doubt if we ever have. After many years on the Committee, I have come to the firm conviction that all we do is tarnish the image of the Church—and I don't mean just the United Church. So I urge you and the Board of Home Missions to get out of this unfortunate business as soon as possible. The United Church can surely make a better contribution from the outside.[290]

In the minutes of the Indian Work Committee of April 15, 1965 the following motion passed:

> be it resolved that this Presbytery recommends that the United Church of Canada, through the Board of Home Missions, withdraw completely and entirely from the administration of so-called Indian Residential Schools.[291]
>
> This motion was then adopted by the Edmonton Presbytery on May 11, 1965.

Following some negotiations for the possibility of the Anglican Church taking over the

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[289] Denny to Joblin, September 13, 1964, Fonds 509: United Church of Canada Board of Home Missions Fonds. – 1907- 1983, predominant 1926-1971, Series2/ Section 2: Records Relating to Institutions and Block Grants, 1907-1972, Alberta Conference: Drumheller and Edmonton Presbyteries: Edmonton Residential School, 82.050C Box 112 File 19, The United Church of Canada Archives, Toronto.

[290] Denny to Joblin, March 11, 1965, 82.050C Box 112 File 19, The United Church of Canada Archives, Toronto.

[291] Minutes.Indian Work Committee of the Edmonton Presbytery of the United Church of Canada, April 15, 1965, 82.050C Box 112 File 18, The United Church of Canada Archives, Toronto.

school, which subsequently failed, the Edmonton Presbytery passed the following motion April 7, 1966.

> (1) Approved the transfer of the Edmonton Indian Residential School to the Indian Affairs Branch, effective July 1st, 1966, and agreed that the terms with respect to our continuing responsibility for Christian Education and worship be negotiated with the Indian Affairs Branch in consultation with representatives of the Anglican Church.
>
> (2) Re the funds held by your Committee on behalf of the Board that $10,000 be transferred to the "Indian work Account" at the appropriate time and that the balance remain in trust with the Indian Work Committee of Edmonton Presbytery.[292]

This ended the United Church's involvement with the Edmonton Residential School. The long and often painful work of this school was, and is, a legacy which continues in the Church and in our Canadian society. The UCC, Canadians and Aboriginal Peoples are immersed in an attempt to unravel the truth of what happened in this school, and many other schools, over more than one hundred years. Indeed, the greatest pain of this history is born by the survivors and their descendants, who were victims of Canadian churches and government. It may be many more years before the effects of this history will be completely understood, if in fact, that is ever possible.

[292] Minutes, Edmonton Presbytery, April 7, 1966, 82.050C Box 112 file 19, The United Church of Canada Archives, Toronto.

Chapter Four: The Search for Understanding

Through the entire experience of living with the people of Lax Kw'alaams; the initial exposure to my learning of the Edmonton Residential School involvement; through my confusion of disbelief, anger, disappointment and disillusionment with my UCC; to the research and writing of this dissertation; I have primarily sought one thing – understanding. I sought understanding for myself, and for the Aboriginal people who were children of the school, and then parishioners of mine in my first ministry. I have always felt that having an understanding could bring some closure to their school experience, and some healing for them, for myself and even for my UCC. I am seeking to understand a history that seems beyond my understanding, but as Gadamer says, "We are not observers who look at history from a distance; rather, insofar as we are historical creatures, we are always on the inside of the history that we are striving to comprehend."[293] Georgia Warnke describes Gadamer's understanding of a historical event as being a

> fusion of horizons [where there is] the integration of one's understanding of a text or historical event with its relevance to one's own circumstances in such a way that an 'original' or 'intended' meaning cannot be differentiated from the meaning of the text or event for oneself. This fusion is part of all hermeneutic understanding . . . [and] we understand *only in relation to our own situation* and therefore in light of our own concerns.[294]

Catherine Zuckert, in discussing Gadamer says that for him, "'hermeneutics' describes the way in which human beings come to terms with themselves, each other, and the world

[293] Hans-Georg Gadamer, *The Beginning of Philosophy*, trans. Rod Coltman (New York: Continuum, 1998), 28.

[294] Georgia Warnke, *Gadamer: Hermeneutics, Tradition and Reason* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1987), 69.

in practice." [295] As we encounter the past, and all that we are because of it, and seek to expand our horizon, "we must not only identify the way in which things from the past are different; we also have to ask how they can be combined with or otherwise affect our current understanding. That is, in Gadamer's now famous terminology, we must ultimately seek to fuse horizons."[296]

Much of what I have written about in my archival research is not widely known by people in the present day, and has in fact, been hidden in the past by the Church. Although it is accessible today, it still remains mostly unknown by most United Church members. A large part of my intent is to bring this story out into the open. For Sally McFague this would be uncovering "the lie" that we tell ourselves or others. Gadamer, in speaking of Heidegger's understanding of *aletheia* (unconcealedness), explains that he spoke of a

> "haziness" of life [which is] not simply the clouding of one's vision; rather . . . the very movement of life itself.… Not only to strive toward clarity and to know, but also to conceal in darkness and to forget. . . . [but] that truth does not lie openly exposed and that concealedness must simply be ripped from it – as if it were some kind of loot. He meant moreover that truth was constantly in danger of receding back into darkness, that efforts at conceptualization must involve efforts to keep truth from receding back, and that even this receding back must be thought as an event of truth.[297]

As I engaged the archival research, I was seeking to understand the "thinking" and the "truth" for those who were involved, and how this contributes to an understanding that can influence our "thinking" and "truth" in the present. I am in

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[295] Catherine H. Zuckert, "Hermeneutics in Practice," in *The Cambridge Companion to Gadamer*. ed., Robert J. Dostal (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press. 2002). 205.

[296] Ibid., 206.

[297] Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Heidegger's Ways*. trans., John W. Stanley (New York: State University of New York Press, 1994), 63.

dialogue with the texts which means, according to Warnke's explanation of Gadamer's understanding "that it is precisely in confronting other beliefs and other presuppositions that we can both see the inadequacies of our own and transcend them."[298] As I do this, I believe I can achieve the ideal that Warnke refers to when she says, "Our historical situatedness does not only limit what we can know with certainty, it can also teach us how to remember and integrate what we must not forget."[299]

As I have engaged the archival data in a process of reading, re-reading, contemplation, writing and reading again, I am aware of how this process has offered me the opportunity time and again, to see something new, and to create my own meaning from these readings. My analysis, and the meaning that I derive from it, is entirely my own. It is the truth that I come to at this moment in my own "horizon". Others may read my analysis and come to different conclusions as their own "horizon" intersects with the text. There is no one final truth to the text or what it has to say to each of us as readers. One thing that is crucial for my own transformation is to seriously internalize the words of Catherine Zuckert in her discussion on Gadamer when she says:

> we need to be "brought up short" by a perception of the fact that other people at other times saw things fundamentally differently. Why? Were they right? Only by regarding the past in its own terms, as different from the present, and as representing a potentially truer understanding of things will we perceive the limitations of our own unavoidable present-mindedness and possibly, move beyond those limits to a wider, more encompassing view.[300]

I have engaged the archival data with all of my own experiences and my fore-knowledge or preunderstanding. As I do this, I engage in the hermeneutic circle, the basic

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[298] Warnke, *Gadamer: Hermeneutics, Tradition and Reason*, 172.

[299] Ibid., 174.

[300] Zuckert, "Hermeneutics in Practice," 205.

metaphor of hermeneutics:

> For at the very root of hermeneutics lies a circularity. And here the two hermeneutic circles coincide: the part-whole circle . . . and the preunderstanding-understanding circle. . . . Hermeneutics presupposes as a general preunderstanding a basic, harmonious unity in the parts of the work, a unity which expresses itself in every single part: the postulate of the absolute foundation in the shape of uniform meaning. This hidden, basic precondition will then express itself in the interpretation, and in our analysis we reach via a circular route what we had presupposed . . . namely the harmonious, basic wholeness. . . . Also the circle as symbol has traditionally always been seen as expressing qualities such as completeness, unity, harmony, wholeness. [301]

One of my leisure activities has always been to do picture puzzles. I have enjoyed the exercise of searching for a specific piece to fit, and then seeing how the parts come together in the whole of the picture. As I do this, I have always propped up the box with the completed picture in front of the pieces. In some way, this seems to be what I am about in the hermeneutic circle. I am intentionally searching the myriad of pieces, fitting them together, carrying along my historical tradition, my preunderstandings and all my experiences, as I put the pieces together to create my own meaning and understanding of the archival data. Unlike a picture puzzle, which has only one way of fitting the pieces together, my own meaning and understanding is not the *right* way. Rather, it invites other readers into the dialogue, with the text and with me, to reach their own new understandings and new horizon. It is all about the dialogue!

This process in the hermeneutic circle is non-linear. The circle can be entered at any point. I have attempted to follow Nancy Moules when she says:

> Being in the circle is disciplined yet creative, rigorous yet expansive. There is an inherent process of immersion in, and dynamic and evolving interaction with, the data as a whole and the data in part, through extensive reading, re-readings, reflection, and writing. In this process there is a focus on recognizing the particular, isolating understandings, . . . [and] making explicit the implicit, and,

[301] Alvesson and Skoldberg, *Reflexive Methodology*, 138-139.

eventually finding language to describe language.[302]

I begin my own journey of understanding from Sallie McFague's position that injustice is "living a lie."[303] I, as a member of the UCC, have always been proud of the fact that my Church proclaims that it *speaks truth to power*. It may be my own preference that justice seeking must be grounded in a *fight* that allows me to gravitate to this statement so easily. The reality is that I have found, in my years in ministry, that speaking truth to those in the UCC that have power is not readily accepted, or conducive to acceptance of that truth. In my experience it has been just the opposite. The *fight* is on if those in power do not like the truth spoken. In fact, again in my experience, the response is not only dismissive, but often leads to retaliation and bullying. How can that be in a UCC that prides itself in *speaking truth to power*? I am not necessarily speaking of those in the highest positions of power within the church, but rather, the sense that it is the culture that we live in that allows an abuse of power through the structures of our polity. How is it that my Church cannot and does not appear to recognize this about ourselves? How is it that we cannot even engage the possibility that we are living a lie and how has this culture contributed to the history of residential schools as we lived it?

As I journey, I am concurrently looking through a lens of critical theory. I bring other voices and theories that I have read, and that are part of my horizon, into juxtaposition with the archival data. I do this, especially, as I analyze the UCC and the government's response to what was happening in the Edmonton Residential School over the years of UCC involvement, and particularly in the specific case of abuse. I am asking

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[302] Nancy J. Moules, "Hermeneutic Inquiry," 15.

[303] McFague, *The Body of God*, 116.

what that might mean for going forward in our time. Postcolonial feminist theology, critical race theory, Canadian national identity, the experience of Aboriginal Peoples, theology and our own spirituality, all have something to say about the possibility of "enlightenment, emancipation and transformation, including self-transformation." [304] Richard J. Bernstein, in his discussion of methodologies of critical theory and deconstruction in relation to hermeneutics states, "Although we should not play down the differences and conflicts among these orientations, nevertheless each of them takes on a more poignant significance when we view them as forming a new constellation with both affinities and differences, attractions, and repulsions."[305] He further says that given that "The basic imperative of philosophical hermeneutics is to articulate and evaluate the claim to truth that traditions make upon us, to seek for a fusion of horizons in which we expand and deepen our own horizon. In this sense, all hermeneutical understanding involves a *critical* appropriation."[306]

With both my hermeneutic circle and my critical theory interpretation, I found certain factors at play which spoke to me as I engaged the process of reading, rereading, reflection and writing. The factors at play are: patriarchy/sexism, colonialism/settler mentality, racism, and government/church relations. I discuss these factors in terms of a question to the archival text for as Bernstein says:

> We come to understand a text by learning how to question it and how it poses questions to us. "The hermeneutic phenomenon . . . implies the primacy of

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[304] Piet Strydom, *Contemporary Critical Theory and Methodology (New York: Routledge, 2011),* 9

[305] Richard J. Bernstein, "The Constellation of Hermeneutics, Critical Theory and Deconstruction," in *The Cambridge Companion to Gadamer,* ed., Robert J. Dostal (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press. 2002), 281.

[306] Ibid., 273.

> dialogue and the structure of question and answer. That a historical text is made the object of interpretation means that it puts a question to the interpreter" (TM 369). The idea that a historical text . . . can "speak" to us, can pose a "question" to us, can make a "claim to truth" upon us is a crucial presupposition for Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics. And yet, we must pause and insist that "strictly speaking," a text, . . . or tradition does not literally *speak* to us. Unlike a living conversation, we are not confronting a dialogical partner who can speak for herself. Rather it is *we* as interpreters that speak on behalf of a mute text. It is *we* who interpret a text as posing a question to us. Unlike a real-life dialogue, the dialogue, with texts is a 'one-sided" monological dialogue in which we are *both* questioning a text and answering for it.[307]

Although I agree with this statement to some extent, I ask another question. By interpreting the historical text with all of who we are in our own time, are we not allowing the text to ask us what we have learned from it? As our *horizon* meets the *horizon* of the text, is the text not asking something of us? Can the present and the future not be transformed by this encounter?

The reader should note that in reality, these factors at play are inextricably intertwined and full of overlaps. When I am quoting the archival data in this chapter, the text appears in italics. For clarity, I have engaged with the data by asking and answering four questions that are based on each of the four factors. The first question is:

Are there indications of patriarchy and sexism in the archival data?

The dictionary defines patriarchy as "control by men of a disproportionately large share of power" and "a society or institutions organized according to the principles or practices of patriarchy."[308] Sexism is defined as "behavior, conditions, or attitudes that foster stereotypes of social roles based on sex."[309] I begin with patriarchy, because it has been with the dominant society from the time of Plato and Aristotle, through the Middle

[307] Bernstein, "The Constellation of Hermeneutics," 278.

[308] Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 10th ed., s.v. "Patriarchy."

[309] Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 10th ed., s.v. "Sexism."

Ages, and the Reformation.[310] Rosemary Radford Ruether furthers the understanding of patriarchy in her definition, "we mean not only the subordination of females to males, but the whole structure of Father-ruled society: aristocracy over serfs, masters over slaves, king over subjects, racial overlords over colonized people."[311]

Throughout the history of the Edmonton Residential School, the hierarchy of the administration of church, school and government was exclusively the realm of men. The letters I read were all between men. The principals of the school were all men. The bureaucratic structure of the UCC and the government was conducted by men. The engagement of the case of abuse was between men. It was not until the formation of the Presbytery Committee to oversee the functioning of the school that women appeared to be involved in decision making for the school. Clearly the power was in the hands of men.

The relationship of the BHM to the principals was supportive. In a letter from Dr. Dorey to Dr. Woodsworth in 1946 he says, *A principal must be allowed to carry on as he judges right* and Dr. Woodsworth has *deservedly enjoyed the confidence of both Ottawa and this office all through the years, and you will always continue to enjoy it, and I hope that nothing will mar the relations which have existed between us.* He further expresses the Church *is under a great debt of gratitude to you for your services at Edmonton* and though the Indian people do not seem to have the same feeling of *thankfulness,* Dr. Woodsworth would not expect that but would *look for a different attitude from the*

[310] Johanna Martina Wood, "Patriarchy, Feminism and Mary Daly: A Systematic-Theology Enquiry Into Daly's Engagement With Gender Issues In Christian Theology" (doctoral diss., University of South Africa, nd.), 2.

[311] Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Sexism and God-Talk: Toward a Feminist Theology* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1983), 61.

Officers of the Board and I hope that is what you will find. This appears to be the attitude through the years and when trouble arises at the school in 1956, Dr. MacDonald advises the government department that *I frankly doubt the advisability of having an instructor visit the school who is at variance with the Principal and one who it is apparent, created trouble.* Mr. Davey has a different perspective in that the principal *is inclined to be concerned first with such matters as the operation of the farm, the condition of the principal's residence, the cost of operation of the school etc., rather than placing first in his thoughts the welfare and feelings of the pupils and* that Mr. Strapp *is most difficult to work with* according to the Superintendent.

The support for Mr. Strapp is extraordinary even after the incident of Mr. Ludford being exposed with Dr. Joblin stating *I can appreciate how great a blow the recent events have been to you as well as the staff.* In the same correspondence, he says *I regret very much that things have been done in such a manner as to make things very difficult for you and I hope that you will be sustained during these next few months.* It seems apparent that despite the *facts* (my emphasis) that have been exposed about Clarence Ludford, the concern is for the *principal* (my emphasis)**,** with absolutely no concern expressed for the student victims.

It is evident that at times, there are disputes between the men responsible for the school, as indicated in 1946, when the new principal, Mr. Staley, is critical of Dr. Woodsworth and his long years and efforts at the school. Dr. Woodsworth's family becomes involved, feeling that he has been *badly treated with false accusations.* One of his sons protests Mr. Staley's actions as ones which *disrespect one's personal efforts, are amazing – uncalled for and inhuman, and even abusive – entirely uncalled for in a*

Christian Gentleman. Nevertheless, Staley does become the principal, and I found no response to the family's concerns. The BHM is true to a patriarchal protection of men in positions of authority. This is evident in the disputes between Mr. Strapp and Mr. McIlwraith, when complaints and concerns about the students' wellbeing are ignored in favour of the principal.

In 1956, when the committee of Presbytery seems to be functioning, it is apparent that they support Mr. Strapp, and they too, think that McIlwraith's *influence is detrimental to the harmonious conduct of the school.* Again, complaints are ignored in favour of those in power. Knowing what transpires later, it is shocking to read in the minutes of the committee, *Mr. Strapp speaks very highly of the Rev. Jim Ludford and he doesn't know how he could carry on at the school without the work that Mr. Ludford is doing.* One must wonder what Mr. Strapp knew, or did not know, about Ludford's actions. In the documentation of the violence that occurred when Ludford was exposed by Stotesbury, *Mr. Strapp's version received from Mr. Ludford was to the effect that Mr. Stotesbury was the aggressor.*

In retrospect, I know from personal encounters with one of Ludford's victims, that he was abusing small boys from his early days of working at the school. Did Mr. Strapp, given all the complaints, know, have suspicions, or did he not care? Is it possible that Mr. Strapp was involved in abuse as well? There may be hints to that in the aftermath of Ludford's departure when the committee of Presbytery is advising that Strapp should leave the school as soon as possible but *he feels that he will not leave because of what he feels are veiled and unsubstantiated accusations* and that to leave too soon *would admit failure.* Mr. Strapp states, in a letter to Dr. Joblin on November 28, 1960, *At the meeting*

in Edmonton the allegation was to the effect that irregularities had been going on at the school but no definite charges were laid against me either for neglect of duty or any other fault. He also states that *I could not get anything definite either from the chairman of the presbytery Rev. Ian McMillan, who seemed definitely hostile, Dr. Elson or Rev. Dwight Powell. They evidently had been meeting together and were determined that I should go.*

Given all the difficulty that the committee seems to have with Strapp remaining at the school they maintain, *We do not want to be unfair to Mr. Strapp,* and they have made suggestions to the BHM that extra financial considerations be given to him for pension credit or paid leave. This turns out not to be possible, as Dr. Joblin indicates on December 1, 1960 that is *contrary to our Church regulations for even officers of the Church.* Even the "highest officials" in the church cannot access extra pay, which for me, is a statement of just how this hierarchy works. Dr. Joblin does secure another position for Mr. Strapp, and he leaves the school at the end of December, 1960. Dr. Joblin's assessment of Mr. Strapp, in a letter of November 29, 1960, is that *The Church owed you a great deal for your service through the years and I trust that we will be able to find a way to recognize what you have done as your approach retirement.*

It is apparent that throughout this long history of the school, that ignoring complaints, denying, deflecting responsibility and protecting those in authority was the normal way of administering the school. The "men" were praised for their service, and when there was difficulty, there was deflection of responsibility, such as when Strapp states *this would be a very good time to put the pressure on Dwight Powell to give proper attention to this school and its needs on a regular basis and not just come up with censure when things go wrong. He has not been out to the school since the trouble at the*

time of General Council and so cannot be said to have been too concerned about conditions.

The Presbytery committee also is clearly caught in this same tangle of deflection and "telling of lies". In the minutes of October 27, 1960, it is noted, *Mr. Ludford became ill and left the school in September.* Although it is true that Ludford was taken to a hospital, it is also clear that the committee knew what had happened at the school. At the very least, the "men" knew as they were meeting frequently, and making *veiled accusations* to Mr. Strapp. In the minutes following in November, 1960, there is a section entitled HARMFULL STORIES which says, *All schools have suffered from exaggerated reports and false stories. The Edmonton School is suffering from recent events relating to Mr. Ludford. But not more than many other schools have suffered.* It is hard to imagine that this level of denial of truth could actually be recorded in official minutes. It is not until minutes of March 1, 1962, when the committee is dealing with a letter that *referred to rumors of homosexuality, theft and inefficient staffing,* that they are forced to acknowledge that *the United Church has been under considerable criticism in St. Albert because of seeming inefficiency with regard to the Indians.* There is also a statement that Mr. Caldwell, the principal who took Mr. Strapp's place, *suggested it might take so much as five years to live down the bad situation created a couple of years ago.*

What of Mr. Caldwell? He is the man who was so ardently recruited to come to Edmonton from the school in Port Alberni. There is a kind of desperation from the BHM to replace Strapp with this man, despite the fact that Dr. Joblin indicates there was some situation in Alberni two years prior when Mr. Caldwell *remained as principal but turned over to the assistant principal the management of the school including supervision of the*

staff and students. The specifics of the situation are not documented, but the case of abuse at Port Alberni is now well known. Further, the legal case I documented, indicates accusations of rape were made against Caldwell, although the judge ruled *that on all of the evidence I cannot find that it is more probable than not that these events occurred.* The judge dismissed the action of the Ms. M. J., who accused Mr. Caldwell of several incidents of sexual abuse and rape, beginning when she was 13 years old.

What happened to Mr. Ludford? I indicated earlier that he was tried in a *secret court, pleaded guilty to indecent assault based in part on 44 sworn statements from students and was sentenced to* a *one-year suspended sentence, then posted to a church job in Parry Sound, Ont.* I have done a careful search of the United Church Manuals[312] from this time, and it is clearly stated that a minister cannot be transferred from one Conference to another, unless he is found to be "of good moral standing". As previously mentioned, Mr. Ludford appears in 1961 in Toronto Conference. Clearly, he was indeed transferred from Alberta Conference to Toronto Conference in less than a year from the date that he was removed from the Edmonton Residential School. It is also clearly stated in The Manual that in matters of UCC discipline:

> If any member or Minister of the Church has knowledge or reliable information of an offence by a member, candidate for the ministry, or Minister, which is a proper ground of discipline, it shall be his duty to lay a charge, in writing, before the proper authority. No other person may institute charges. However, should a scandal arise within the jurisdiction of a Presbytery or a Session, respectively, and no charge is laid, the court concerned may appoint a committee to investigate the scandal. Should the investigation discover ground for a charge the Presbytery or Session may appoint one of its members to lay the charge and the trial will proceed as elsewhere provided.[313]

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[312] The United Church manual is produced each time General Council meets and makes decisions in regards to the polity of the church. It is in effect the rule book of how the church is required to function.

[313] The United Church Manuals, Saskatchewan Archives Board, A381 File X-7, 1950 to 1961, 127.

I could not find any documentation of Ludford's transfer, or how he met the requirement for "good moral standing." He had pleaded guilty to indecent assault. This, for me, is an important indication of just how patriarchy was functioning in the UCC. Despite rules to the contrary, including that others had a "duty", Ludford was protected by the UCC hierarchy, and allowed to not only go on with the vocation of minister, but also to live out his ministry with Aboriginal Peoples at Clute Island Falls from 1961-1963, and then again 1968 -1971 at Parry Sound, Indian and 1972 -1977 at Christian Island.

I have tried to be true to Heidegger's "unconcealedness", and find the truth of what happened in this story of abuse at The Edmonton Residential School. In my analysis, it is certainly a truth which "does not lie openly exposed," but slips back into darkness, and that is what I want to resist. If the truth that lies exposed here slips back, if it is not faced by the UCC, then there is another "concealed" truth in that. What happened through the history of this particular school, and this particular case of abuse, shows so clearly how the polity, hierarchy, and structure of action by authority normalized patriarchy to such a devastating extent that the consequences remain with us. With unconcealment and intention, this could change today. We, as the UCC, must face the illusion we live with, and the "lie" we tell ourselves about our involvement in residential schools. Here in this story of cover up, denial, and blindness to how we lived our past "horizon", may be our redemption now and into the future. Here in this story is the truth. Sherene Raczak calls this "repressed truth" [which] "gives rise to particular violence, but these strains of violence and the truths they repress operate to install White settlers both

as owners of the land and as dominant over all others."[314] And so, I turn to the next question that I must ask of the archival data.

Are there indications of colonialism/settler mentality in the archival data?

The dictionary definition of colonialism is "control by one power over a dependent area or people" and "a policy advocating or based on such control."[315] There are countless resources written on the issue of colonialism because it is, of course, much more complex than a simple definition. James Frideres describes seven elements of colonization: incursion into a geographical area by the colonizer, a destructive effect on the social and cultural structures of the indigenous group, external political control, economic dependency of the indigenous group, provision of low-quality social services in health and education, resulting conditions of racism with the attitude that there is a genetic superiority of the colonizer and the ultimate weakening of resistance by the indigenous group so that they are ultimately controlled.[316]

Colonialism had at its heart the "'myth of emptiness' . . . that a colonisable territory was empty of population, or was populated only by wandering nomads, people with no fixed abode and therefore no claim to territory, or lacked people with a concept of political sovereignty or economic property. . . ."[317] Susan McBroom discusses two foundational concepts that were underpinnings of colonization. The first was *Terra*

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[314] Sherene Razack, afterword, "Unmapping Canada: Starting with Bodies and Repressed Truths," in *Critical Inquiries: A Reader in Studies of Canada*. eds., Lynn Caldwell, Carrianne Leung and Darryl Leroux (Winnipeg: Fernwood Publishing, 2013). 206.

[315] Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 10th ed., s.v. "Colonialism."

[316] James S. Frideres, *Native Peoples in Canada*: *Contemporary Conflicts* (Scarborough: Prentice Hall Canada Inc., 1993), 3-8.

[317] J.M. Blaut, *The Colonizer's Model of the World: Geographical Diffusionism and Eurocentric History* (New York: The Guiford Press, 1993). 25.

nullius, the concept that a land was empty or void if it did not contain European laws, and was therefore open to be discovered and conquered. The second were the ancient papal bulls (1493), which enabled the *Doctrine of Discovery.* This allowed for a land to be discovered and exploited for its natural resources, if the people there did not adhere to Christianity.[318] McBroom, in explaining the doctrine, quotes S.T. Newcomb in *Pagans in the Promised Land: Decoding the Doctrine of Christian Discovery,* as defining the nature of the conqueror with an assumption of a divine ruler with representatives doing his/her bidding.

> In the morality system of the Conqueror model, coercion, terror, fear, and dread are considered the most effective means of winning and ensuring absolute and continued obedience to the conqueror's authority (think 'shock and awe'). No one is completely free except the conqueror, and *freedom* in this context refers to the conqueror being absolutely free to conquer, subdue, and establish and maintain a reign or state of domination.[319]

McBroom says, "There is no freedom within a system of domination, as the very nature of domination perhaps necessitates interference or the disruption of relationships."[320] McBroom makes the case that this doctrine continues to this day to affect Indigenous Peoples.

Colonialism had a somewhat unique expression in Canada, in contrast to that in other parts of the world. Canada's roots as a "white-settler society" had as its base, a dominant culture, values and institutions that mimicked the "mother" country.

> Britain privileged its white settler colonies in Canada, New Zealand and Australia by bestowing upon them the 'gifts' of liberal democratic government and relative political autonomy so that they might develop within a shared framework of

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[318] Susan McBroom, *Truth, Relationship, Responsibility and Reparations with Inuit* (unpublished manuscript, March 2015). 6-7.

[319] Ibid., 8.

[320] Ibid.

> civilization and moral and material standards. Hence, although Canada (and the other so-called 'white dominions') shared with the so-called 'dependent colonies' a peripheral position in the international political economy prior to the twentieth century, as a cultural, social and political entity, it was a chip off the metropolitan block.
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> > . . . those at the helm of the colonial, then dominion, states and those shaping civil society drew from British imperial and homegrown philosophies about the appropriate character, physical appearance, roles and behavior of settler women and men.[321]

Paulette Regan, in her book *Unsettling The Settler Within,* discusses extensively the tie of "white-settler society" phenomena to the history of residential schools. Canadian society sought to solve "Indian problems" while at the same time seeing themselves "as heroes on a mythical quest to save Indians."[322] Regan points to the

> "elegant violence" that Canadian society has inflicted on individuals, families, and communities. The inconsistencies in our national story – the real histories and lived experience of Indigenous peoples – mark the disjuncture between the peacemaker myth and the violence that actually forms the foundation of Indigenous-settler relations. There is perhaps no more compelling example of how colonialism's ongoing cycles of violence and deeply ingrained patterns of perpetrator/victim behavior and attitudes remain consistent from past to present, than in the IRS discourse of reconciliation.[323]

When Canadian society was confronted in the late 1990's with trials regarding residential school abuses, the focus was on "individual perpetrators, as the state engaged in protracted legal battles with churches over the apportionment of liability and challenged class-action lawsuits whose claims included harms such as cultural loss and

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[321] Daiva Stasiulis and Radha Jhappan, " The Fractious Politics of a Settler Society: Canada" in *Unsettling Settler Societies: Articulations of Gender, Race, Ethnicity and Class,* vol. 11 of *Sage Series on Race and Ethnic Relations,* eds. Daiva Stasiulis and Nira Yuval-Davis (London: Sage Publications, 1995), 97.

[322] Paulette Regan, *Unsettling The Settler Within: Indian Residential Schools, Truth Telling, and Reconciliation in Canada* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2010), 34.

[323] Ibid., 115.

intergenerational trauma." [324] This is very apparent in the story of abuse at the Edmonton Residential School. Clarence Ludford was not seen as a perpetrator during this time, but rather as a victim of *the difficulty that the Rev. J. C. Ludford got himself into, and so he is not on staff any longer.* Rather than recognizing Ludford as a perpetrator, he *became ill and left the school in September.*

It is clear that, throughout the history of the school, there was indeed an atmosphere of domination. Colonialism and settler mentality, along with patriarchy, appear to be intertwined in the relationship of the school to the children and to their parents. In a report of 1938, there was a statement reflecting this attitude. *It would seem to me that knowledge of the rudiments of the 3 R's would be adequate for the life to which these children will return.* The focus of the early school was really as a farm, with the children being used as *slave* labour. The children and their parents were clearly not equal to those who dominated their lives. The very fact that there was little focus put on the children and their care *at all* (my emphasis), clearly indicates the arrogance of the white men in control throughout the history of the school. Although there were indications of complaints throughout the history in the data, I found no actual documentation of these complaints made by students or parents. Is it possible they were intentionally concealed? They certainly appear to be dismissed and ignored, as not worthy of any attention. Complaints that were raised by Mr. Staley, when he took the principalship, did appear to get attention from both the UCC and the government.

Throughout the history of the Edmonton Residential School, it is clear that the UCC and government are providing substandard education and services concerning the feeding and care of the children. John Milloy, in his book *A National Crime* states:

[324] Regan, *Unsettling The Settler Within,* 36.

> The churches and the Department did not ensure, throughout the system, that children were well-fed and adequately clothed, safely housed, cherished, and provided with the education that was the fundamental justification for removing them from their parents and communities. Nor did they ensure that those who actually parented the children, the staff of the schools, were of the requisite quality for such a difficult task. . . . they had neither the necessary financial or administrative resources. But more seriously, they lacked, even by their own standards, moral resources, and thus neglect became a thoughtless habit, harsh discipline and excessive cruelty unexceptional events that were routinely excused or ignored.[325]

It is not until the 1960's, that the government appears to become concerned about the food that the children are being served. At this point, there appears to be a dietician employed by the government to oversee this aspect of their care.

The purpose of Aboriginal residential school as an instrument of assimilation is clearly stated. *The Indians see that they must get an education so they can take a new place in the white man's world.* Throughout the history of the Edmonton Residential School, the use of the phrase *our Indians* is clearly a statement and an indication of colonial possession of not only the land, but of the people of the land.

All the tenets of colonialism that I mentioned at the beginning of this section appear throughout the history of The Edmonton Residential School. The incursion into the land was followed by the residential schools' incursion into the lives of children and their families. They had no control over the children's attendance at the school. The fact that children were taken from the North West coast village of Lax Kw'alaams to the interior of Alberta is a testament to this fact. They and their parents were not given a choice. This resulted in the disruption of the cultural and social structures of their families, intended by the colonizers to cause complete destruction. The government and UCC dominated their lives, and as a result, they became economically dependent.

[325] Milloy, *A National Crime*, 111.

Despite resistance throughout the history of residential schools by Aboriginal Peoples, it would take years before the truth would be heard and some restitution made. Finally, the broken relationship between the settler society, which clearly has an attitude of superiority, and the Aboriginal Peoples has resulted in a reality that is only beginning to be addressed, and may be a challenge for many years to come.

The words of Sherene Razack resonate in my very soul when she states that for her "a pre-eminent challenge is to make *colonizers* visible and to explain why they do what they do *in order that they are held to account*, both at the individual and the collective levels."[326] She further states that "the challenge for me is to understand the violence of the colonial project and the colonial subjects it both requires and produces."[327] This is at the core of uncovering the lies that were so harmful to Aboriginal Peoples and to the UCC during the history of residential schools. This harm has continued to affect both throughout, and into the present, so that even the imagining of a new relationship is inconceivable, unless there can be some grounding in the truth of what happened, and why it happened, and then a concerted effort to be aware of what must be done to formulate a new relationship in the future.

Karen Baker-Fletcher writes that the parables of Jesus had the intent "to tell truth in a way that anyone of any age in a community can understand."[328] The stories of our life as a nation and as a people should do the same thing for all the generations. But do they? Eva Mackey, in her book *The House of Difference*, states:

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[326] Razack. afterword,"Unmapping Canada," 198.

[327] Ibid.

[328] Baker-Fletcher, *Dancing with God, 165*.

> There is no doubt that nationalist narratives of tolerance . . . misrepresent the encounter between cultures and the brutal history of conquest and cultural genocide that Canada is founded upon. However, although the official stories misrepresent the messy and controversial reality of history, they do not, at least overtly, erase the presence of Aboriginal people or deny the existence of cultural differences, within the nation. Aboriginal people are necessary players in nationalist myths: they are the colourful recipients of benevolence, the necessary 'others' who reflect back white Canada's self-image of tolerance.[329]

In early Canadian history, Aboriginal People were an essential part of the economic fabric of the fur trade. As settlement became more the focus, the Aboriginal People became less important to the advancement of the nation as an agricultural land, and were increasingly presented in "the near universal belief amongst whites that Native people, as they existed, were disappearing with the inevitable march of progress."[330] It became necessary to "push Native people aside as quickly as possible"[331] along with the "constructions of Aboriginal people as child-like, trusting, and ultimately friendly to their Canadian government invaders." [332] The Indian Act of 1876 "encouraged agricultural labour and Christianity and discouraged Aboriginal cultural practices.[333] "The Act paradoxically, sought to 'civilise' the Native peoples by assimilating them into dominant life and culture, yet at the same time segregated them onto reserves.[334] Canada's early need to differentiate itself and its development from the United States, promoted the idea

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329 Eva Mackey, *The House of Difference: Cultural Politics and National Identity in Canada*. (London: Routledge, 1999), 2.

330 Ibid., 29.

331 Ibid., 34.

[332] Ibid., *35.*

[333] Ibid., 36.

[334] Ibid.

that Canada "construct itself as gentle, tolerant, just and impartial," [335] despite the fact that the government, through the Indian Act, was inflicting a "cultural genocide on Native peoples."[336]

A 1964 "policy recommendation paper,"[337] in preparation for the 1967 centennial celebrations, recommended "treating Native people as a special group, based on the recognition of their poverty and marginalisation from mainstream society, and their inability to construct 'a world of their own'."[338] The report further affirmed "the importance of government intervention to assist Aboriginal People to develop 'European-style' organizational structure,[339] thus ensuring "state management of difference."[340] The State believed that "by defining and institutionalising cultural difference, and constructing Native people, as political clientele, not only manages the relationship between the state and potentially threatening minority populations, it legitimates itself as benevolent."[341]

The above time frame is of most interest to me, because it covers the era of the Edmonton Residential School; but of course, the relationship continued and impacts the thinking of Canadians today. In her book, *House of Difference*, Mackey discusses how the relationship between Aboriginal Peoples and the settler colonizing history has been

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[335] Mackey, *The House of Difference, 39.*

[336] Ibid., *36.*

[337] Ibid., *60.*

[338] Ibid., 61-62.

[339] Ibid., 62.

[340] Ibid., 62.

[341] Ibid., 62-63.

constructed in such a way as to link the two as stewards of the land to "play a central role in negotiating the rocky terrain of developing, within a settler nation, a narrative of progress that links colonisers to the specific topographical space, at the same time producing settler innocence regarding the colonial encounter." [342] This construction enables an illusion that Aboriginal Peoples should "forgive" the damages that they suffered due to the colonization. This also maintains the "constructing [of] a unified story of progressive nationhood that erases conflict."[343] Lynn Caldwell, in her analysis of the Saskatchewan Centennial, tells of a particular dance performed in which the dancers held up both bread and wheat as a depiction of a unified history and shared love of this place by all the people of its history. Caldwell states, "Bread and wheat are symbolic . . . and their production is deeply entwined with incursions on land and with the global structures of colonialism that support them . . . [including] the divisions and violence of race and racism . . . in legalized racism toward Aboriginal peoples, in policing, in schooling, in the theft of land and in other practices that constitute the place as Saskatchewan."[344] The erasure of this history of conflict, violence, injustice and racism in colonization may be the biggest lie of all.

Over time, Aboriginal Peoples' political strength became more visible, with an increasing presence and insistence of their place. As Mackey says:

> Suddenly, by letting Aboriginal people into 'our' institutions, as living and vibrant people - not simply uni-dimentional stereotypes, but whole, conflicted, 'hybrid' human beings – Canadians may think that it is time to celebrate the end of the

[342] Mackey, *The House of Difference*, 80

[343] Ibid., 80.

[344] Lynn Caldwell. "Unsettlling the Middle Ground: Could the World Use a More Questionable Saskatchewan?" In *Critical Inquiries: A Reader in Studies of Canada*, eds. Lynn Caldwell, Carrianne Leung and Darryl Leroux, (Winnipeg: Fernwood Publishing, 2013). 121.

> past and the beginning of the future. Canadian nationalism can appropriate Aboriginal people's hybridity and self-representation into its own redemption of its sins; in this redemption, crimes against Native people become conveniently located in the *past.* However, it is too soon to suggest that the past is over and the myth making done. This celebration of Canadian tolerance, and how far *Canada has come* by celebrating how far the nation has *let 'them' come*, erases the difficult question of how far the nation still needs to go in order to have genuine justice and equality for Aboriginal people.
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> > The logic suggests that even if Canadians were horrible in the past, the nation is now making up for it. Canadians can see themselves as good and honest and rational, not like those horrible people to the South. Aboriginal peoples' self-representation can produce a conception of a 'white Canadian' that perceives itself innocent of racism.[345]

This of course is also a lie.

Are there indications of racism in the archival data?

The dictionary defines racism as "a belief that race is the primary determinant of human traits and capacities, and that racial differences produce an inherent superiority of a particular race."[346] Fyre Jean Graveline, in her discussion of racism, quotes Godfrey Brandt from his 1986 book, *The Realization of Anti-Racist Teaching,* in his description of racism:

> as 'multi-faceted and dynamic'. It includes not only acts of 'prejudice, 'race-hatred,' bias, and ethnocentricity, but it must be critically analyzed in terms of power and the legacy of imperialism and colonialism. Racism exerts a powerful influence over people's lives that "ranges from the ideological to the material and from the institutional to the interactional. The elements of this racism could be either covert or overt, hidden or blatant, and can operate in very specific ways in specific institutions" [347]

Joseph Barndt expands this understanding when he states:

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[345] Mackey, *The House of Difference,* 87.

[346] Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, v.s. "Racism."

[347] Fyre Jean Graveline, *Circle Works: Transforming Eurocentric Consciousness* (Halifax: Fernwood Publishing, 1998), 97-98.

> Racism is at work when institutions such as the police, the schools, government, corporations, or churches are structured to function in ways that favor or benefit one racial group more than other racial groups. Racism is the collective power to enforce prejudice. More simply stated, racism is prejudice plus power.[348]

Andrew Sung Park adds:

> Christianity in general has been white in this society. In the name of Christ, white Christianity has seduced and deprived the souls of colored peoples. The name of Christ has been used to propagate the subtle message of white superiority. For such white Christians the cross of Jesus Christ symbolizes not their suffering with others but the suffering of others for them.[349]

There is no doubt in my mind that the entire system of residential schools was perpetrated on racism, and that Aboriginal People were viewed as inferior and treated with contempt. This is not a popular concept for Canadians who wish to view themselves as having a "Canadian liberal civility."[350] Canadians do not wish to be reminded "of the brutal histories that our fictive ethnicity would disavow", even as we "find ways to analyse the White supremacy that is so embedded in our history."[351] We must "unearth, rather than suppress, the history of White supremacy and colonial racism that are fundamental to the establishment of Canada as a nation."[352]

Himani Bannerji, in her book *The Dark Side of the Nation,* speaks of the reality of the "Canadian 'we' [as not residing]... in language, religion or other aspects of culture, but rather in the European/North American physical origin – in the body and the colour of

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[348] Joseph Barndt, *Understanding & Dismantling Racism: The Twenty-First Century Challenge to White America* (Minneapolis, Fortress Press, 2007), 60.

[349] Andrew Sung Park, *Racial Conflict and Healing: An Asian-American Theological Perspective* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1996), 21.

[350] Daniel Coleman, *White Civility: The Literary Project of English Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), 7-9.

[351] Ibid., 9.

[352] Ibid., 8.

skin [which] ...is elevated here beyond its contingent status and becomes an essential quality called whiteness, . . . The others outside of this moral and cultural whiteness are targets for either assimilation or toleration."[353] She further states that "The socio-economic and cultural disenfranchisement of indigenous peoples has been both genocidal and patriarchal."[354] Bannerji sees racism in Canada as "a hegemonic social and political culture and practice participated in by the police, the military, the other aspects of the state, the church, the educational system, and our everyday life, . . . "[355] This is observed in how Canada, which believes itself to be a liberal democracy, governs Aboriginal People differently then all others through the Indian Act, and the reserve system, which results in a Canada viewed through the Aboriginal Peoples to be "a state . . . based on class, gender, and race, [which] continues to administer these reserves as would a colonial state." [356] As Canada acknowledges Aboriginal Peoples, they "are like the Palestinians, who form a nation without a state and are subject to continual repression. The role that 'race' has played in the context of colonization is obvious. Subsequently, a dependent but imperialist capital has continued to organize an economy and a society based on 'race'."[357] Bannerji's counter to this reality lies with all those in Canadian society who have been excluded and racialized. She states:

> The possibilities for constructing a radically different Canada emerge only from those who have been "othered" as the insider-outsiders of the nation. It is their

[353] Himani Bannerji. *The Dark Side of the Nation: Essays on Multiculturalism, Nationalism and Gender* (Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press Inc, 2000), 42.

[354] Ibid., 68.

[355] Ibid., 72.

[356] Ibid., 75.

[357] Ibid., 75 -76.

> standpoints which, oppositionally politicized, can take us beyond the confines of gender and race and enable us to challenge class through a critical and liberating vision. In their lives, politics, and work, the "others" hold the possibility of being able to expose the hollowness of the liberal state and to provide us with an understanding of both the refined and crude constructions of "white power" behind "Canada's" national imaginary. They serve to remind us of the Canada that *could* exist.[358]

Sherene Razack speaks about her research into the violence against and deaths of Indigenous peoples and the persistent indifference to this reality as providing "settlers with a sense of themselves as modern and capable, and as legitimate owners of the land. Race and land come together in these moments of violence . . . in a structural privilege and systemic racism."[359] Razack, building on the scholarship of Leslie Thielen-Wilson, in her unpublished 2012 PhD thesis entitled *Indian Residential Schools and the Colonial Present: From Law Towards a Pedagogy of Recognition*, states:

> As Indigenous scholars emphasize repeatedly, the violence of IRS [Indian Residential Schools] was aimed at nothing less than eradicating as culture and a people. Once we appreciate that residential schools were central to the acquisition of land and resources, we can begin to see how Canada's response to Indigenous claims for IRS redress is also part of a continuing acquisition. The government's and the law's response to Indigenous demands re-assert colonial sovereignty *today* not only by disavowing colonization altogether but by casting Indigenous peoples as too damaged to become modern subjects, and thus not fit to be present owners of the land. Arguing that the *ongoing* colonial project is secured when courts refuse to recognize the violence of Indian residential schools, Thielen-Wilson demonstrates what she terms the triadic relationship of land, terror and White identity that structures settler colonialism.[360]

Canadian society is grappling with the terrible history of residential schools, and is, in my opinion, continuing to understand this history as an aberration of individuals' actions that caused them to abuse children. Although that cannot be ignored entirely, it seems clear

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[358] Himani Bannerji, *The Dark Side of the Nation*, 81.

[359] Sherene Razack. "Unmapping Canada," 199-200.

[360] Ibid., 203.

from the above, that deeper and more complex reasons contribute to the ongoing "living a lie", based in both colonial aspirations and racism. Razack asks a very important question, "What would interrupt the cycle of violence that begins with the theft of the land and continues with the persistent dehumanization of Indigenous peoples?"[361]

Throughout the time frames of the archival data I examined, there are examples of racism in both language and attitude. The assumptions of the inferiority of the Indian children, and of the life they are meant to live are evident. They are to be prepared for a life which is subordinate to the wider society. In the early years, when there are complaints about how much time is spent actually teaching the children, the response is: *They wanted the children in school all day. As a matter of fact, they wanted them educated as the white children. In that connection Mr. Woodsworth said that every child was in school all day for the first year or two so that he could get a mastery of English. If these children are to be educated for the life they are going to live then the claims of the parents seem rather ridiculous. Paramount is the task of supplying a motive that will lead them to work in order to assure for themselves a more abundant life.* It is apparent that in the early years, the school is functioning as a farm, and that the children are the labour. Even Mr. Staley, as he prepares to take over the principalship (1946), acknowledges that the *School* was *used as sweat shop for the farm.* As John Milloy states:

> The answer that schools often adopted to the persistent underfunding by the government and churches was school production of goods for consumption or sale. The children, under the direction of the principal or farm instructor, ran farming and dairying operations . . . And, of course, the children carried on the general housework of the school. . . . All the children, in fact, became drudges to their schools.[362]

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[361] Sherene Razack. "Unmapping Canada," 204.

[362] John Milloy, *A National Crime*, 120.

The inferiority of the children is further evident in statements about their cleanliness. The BHM authority at one point in 1946 states, *It would not be the first time that Indian children had either itch or lice without the school being in any way responsible.* Within this same time period, it is also noted by Mr. Staley that *the hostility of the Indians is vocal, loud, prolonged and bitter. I have visited the reserves and have been told the same stories everywhere.* Dr. Dorey agrees with this saying *but you know that the Indians are "hostile, vocal and bitter" nearly everywhere.* Dr. Dorey, in an earlier letter to Dr. Woodsworth, stated that the Indians not *noted for being thankful.* This is another statement that the children are just a product of the inferiority of their race.

By 1960, there is a Presbytery committee which has responsibility to oversee the Edmonton Residential School, and in their minutes there is a discussion of *retarded children* because some children *had "D" standings in their Easter reports. It was agreed, however, that since we could not educate all white children, we could not expect perfections with red.* Again, the language is derogatory, and the judgement is a comparison of "white" to "red". When the case of abuse involving Mr. Ludford arises, Mr. Strapp the principal, is acknowledged by the Presbytery committee as having *little of love or charity in his attitude to the Indian children.*

The issue of power is evident throughout the archival data. The Church authorities, the Edmonton Residential School staff, and the government all had power over the students and their parents. Complaints from the children and parents were dismissed and/or ignored. It is apparent in the early years, that the parents of the children were concerned about education for their children and the condition of the school. The very fact that I could not find documentation of these complaints is evidence of how little

attention was paid to them. Dr. Dorey, an official with the BHM, dismisses complaints saying, *I doubt if there are any Reserves in Canada from which at some time or another we have not had complaints. I can only hope that the complaints to which you are listening have as little foundation as some of those to which I have listened and about which I have had correspondence from many parties.* Again, I was not able to find documentation of correspondence about these complaints.

When Mr. McIlwraith, a teacher at the school in 1956 and a member of a group called Friends of the Indians Organization, raises concerns, the response is that he is *exerting an influence that is detrimental to the harmonious conduct of the school.* It is clear that complaints from students or parents are less important than running the school, and that if anyone raises complaints, they are to be resisted. In fact, Mr. Strapp threatens to leave if McIlwraith is not dismissed, and this is upheld by BHM's response that *If McIlwraith is creating trouble for Mr. Strapp and fails to co-operate it is my judgment that he should go.* These complaints from this Friends of the Indians Society[363] appear to have been given to the government regional office, and this is a concern for BHM and the principal Mr. Strapp. His attitude is that these complaints and charges are unfair to his staff *as they feel it is an injustice to allow Indians to make statements against them without the opportunity of making a reply.* In 1956, when two Indian girls make complaints, a staff member at the school, Miss McDonald, suggests that they are *copied or dictated. The girls would not have done that unless there was some one agitating them.* Dr. McDonald, in writing to the government department official, Mr. Davey, says, *Frankly the impression I got was that these girls never phrased the letter themselves. It*

[363] It appears in the archival data that this Friends of the Indians was sometimes named as an Organization and sometimes as a Society.

was such an unworthy kind of communication that I paid no attention to it. The power is clearly not in the hands of those who raise complaints, but in the ability of the staff and officials to dismiss them. John Milloy, in his book *A National Crime,* documents extensively how complaints were handled. He describes a collaboration in which church and state were "complicit" and often "aggressively, protected the system"... "despite their knowledge of the real conditions" [by] "focussing on the complainant . . . [as] the best defence", and not documenting complaints, but rather ignoring them, and even having complainants "warned off."[364]

As the case of abuse by Mr. Ludford comes to light, it is acknowledged that it is *now apparent that our Indian people knew of this situation long before the church was aware of it.* When another staff member, a Mr. Thompson, had similar things said about him as were said about Mr. Ludford, the principal's response was that he felt he was being *framed.* Rev. Powell from the Presbytery committee is concerned that things are not as *they should be* at the school, and that *We are all afraid that some of these reports are going to come to the ears of the press and there will arise a nasty situation if the press should decide to make a public story of it.* The concern here is clearly for the Church and the Edmonton Residential School, and not for what might have been happening to the students. The committee clearly wants Mr. Strapp to leave the school, but he *feels that he will not leave because of what he feels are veiled and unsubstantiated accusations.* The response from Dr. Joblin of BHM is: *This is not to suggest that I am questioning your assessment of the situation but on the other hand I am well aware how easy it is for criticism to become unfair and I must proceed with caution in order that an injustice may not be done to Mr. Strapp.* Again, the concern is for the "white" authority figure, and the

[364] Milloy, *A National Crime,* 149-151.

power rests in the hands of the Church to protect that.

Reading about this case, I was shocked by the absolute silence for the wellbeing of the abused children. There is no mention of the victims of abuse anywhere, except in Mr. Strapp's attempt to discount the testimony of one of the boys. *I have said that I do not believe that all the charges against him (Ludford) are correct and I base that claim on the statement of one of the boys who was interviewed in my presence by a corporal of the R.C.M.Police. This boy denied the statement that he was purported to have made to Mr. Stotesbury and which he signed, and the questioning of the policeman could not shake his denial.* Strapp denies that Ludford is *framed,* but he does state *that I do not believe that all the charges against him are correct.* In fact, he refers to the *"Witch Hunt" as was the case in the matter of Mr. Ludford.* Although it is apparent that this racism is connected to colonialism (which I discussed earlier), it is still a point that seems dumbfounding. After all, these men, in authority within the Edmonton Residential School, UCC and government, were undoubtedly fathers and grandfathers. I would have thought they would experience some "human" reaction to the harm done to children. It is difficult to discern whether the lack of any concern was because children, as a whole, had little significance, or whether it was because these were Aboriginal children. Certainly the racism present points to the latter.

As far as the UCC was concerned, I found myself questioning from a theological point of view, how it was possible for the leaders not to address this in some way. This must clearly be another point of "living a lie". I could find nothing in the archives that indicated that anything was done to follow up with students and their care. The imperative was the protection of men and their careers, and the absolute protection of the

UCC. As Mr. Strapp said, *There was a veiled suggestion that if I did not agree to leave very soon the church would be in trouble as "someone had threatened publicity."*

What was the relationship between the UCC and the Government?

Throughout the years of the Edmonton Residential School, there is an extraordinary relationship between the UCC and the Government. It appears to be one of mutual respect and cooperation, although, even in Woodsworth's time, there is indication that the Government is not committed to, or does not value, the work of the School. In 1938, Dr. Woodsworth criticizes the government for being *very lax in their efforts to get the children in.* There is a hint of an attitude of martyrdom by UCC workers, as Dr. Woodsworth says, *My impression is that most of them regard the schools as a necessary evil, and do only what is necessary. However we keep going.* There is an ongoing struggle to get repairs done to the building, and the Government is again criticized that it is *well-nigh impossible to get the Government to do any repairs, re decoration or attend to any items of replacement that were necessary in the School.* It appears that during these early years, the Government is content to leave the UCC to operate the School with little interference. It could even be seen as neglect by the Government to attend to their fiduciary responsibility to educate Aboriginal children.

The BHM nominates a principal, and the Government department then makes the appointment. Dr. Woodsworth, at the end of his tenure as principal, is upheld as having *deservedly enjoyed the confidence of both Ottawa and this office [BHM]*. There is some difficulty around financial responsibilities, as Dr. Dorey indicates *but I am not going to turn any money back to the government – not for one single solitary minute, unless I am forced by circumstances which are entirely beyond my control.* Mr. Staley, who replaces

Dr. Woodsworth as principal, indicates the focus of the UCC when he states, *No Missionary can divorce one problem from another, for the physical welfare of the people determines their reaction in no small measure to the message of God that is presented.* The UCC's role in assimilation was to Christianize the Aboriginal population.

During these early years, the School seems to function as an entity with a purpose of its own, such as the function of the farm. The children are almost without significance. The BHM appears to be quite removed from the actual running of the Edmonton Residential School, resulting in distancing itself even further from its relationship with the students. Their attention is focused on the governance of staff rather than on the welfare of students. Throughout the entire time, complaints by parents or students are mostly ignored or dismissed.

In the early years of the Edmonton Residential School, the UCC has a great deal of influence on the decision making of the Government. The relationship between the UCC and Government remains tightly connected into the 1950's, although there continues to be an increased sense of mistrust and conflict over responsibility and accountability, and these issues become more apparent and more difficult to resolve. It appears that the UCC and Government at the highest level of leadership enjoy and maintain this mutual relationship, whereas at the lower levels of leadership, the relationship becomes increasingly fractured. During this period, UCC officials are assured by J. W. Pickersgill, the highest level of authority in Ottawa, *I shall be pleased, at any time, to receive representation from the United Church.*

By 1950, nine of the fifteen United Church Residential Schools close and there is concern that day schools are becoming the focus. The Manitoba Conference expresses

their concern *that these schools have made a notable contribution to the development of our Indian peoples and can continue to do so if given the support of the Church and State.* Government financial support increases in the form of per capita grants and the number of students remains the same. The problem of the day schools is a concern for the Secretaries of the BHM and they request and are granted permission *to take this up with the officials of the Indian Affairs Branch in Ottawa.*

Mr. Strapp, as principal of the school, is concerned with staffing, and the number of students in attendance, as a result of the day schools. He expresses concern that *We are feeding and clothing the children to a price and not to a reasonable standard according to the pamphlets sent out to us by Indian Health Services, citrus fruit, tomato juice, cheese, honey, etc.*

During this time, there is more direct contact from the Government department in dealing with problems at the school. Mr. Davey writes to Dr. Macdonald expressing *There is one other matter which I am most anxious to discuss with you, and that is the situation which is developing at the Edmonton Residential School. It seems to be following very much the same pattern as we experienced at Brandon.* I was not able to discover what this problem was, but clearly the Government officials are more directly involved in the operation of the school. When the problem arises with the Friends of the Indians Society, they *made a number of complaints and placed some affidavits in the hands of the Regional Office.*[365] Mr. Strapp expresses his concern when he says; *I have a feeling that the regional officials would like to get rid of the school if they possibly could on the ground that as far as Alberta is concerned it has served its day.* Again, the UCC workers' attitude is expressed by Mr. Strapp, as he deals with problems with the building

[365] I assume that is the Alberta branch of Indian Affairs.

and financial problems, when he says *I wonder what bright minds think up these funny ideas. They are the most impractical people and by their very ideas reveal their colossal ignorance of the conditions under when we work in our residential schools. . . I would be glad if you would get a statement from Mr. Davey as to the charges which have been made against some of the members of my staff as they feel it is an injustice to allow Indians to make statements against them without the opportunity of making a reply.* Mr. Davey visits the school while Mr. Stapp is away, and is not happy with the conditions he finds. Mr. Strapp responds, *If conditions do not soon clear up we should take the matter over the heads of the department officials to the office of the Minister.* There is clearly friction between Mr. Davey and Mr. Strapp, and Mr. Davey gives a scathing analysis of the Principal to Dr. Macdonald that: *the principal is inclined to be concerned first with such matters as the operation of the farm, the condition of the principal's residence, the cost of operation of the school etc. rather than placing first in his thought the welfare and feelings of the pupils. . . . I can understand why children would be reluctant to attend such an institution and why it might be extremely difficult to secure the cooperation of the parents in having their children attend. The Superintendent has been discouraged in his endeavors to secure the cooperation of the Principal in effecting other needed improvements. He is finding Mr. Strapp most difficult to work with.* Clearly at this level, the relationship between UCC and Government is breaking down.

The collaboration of the UCC and the Government in the domination over Aboriginal Peoples is clear. In 1955, the UCC writes the Director of Indian Affairs Branch requesting a delegation from the UCC be received in Ottawa to discuss a change to the Indian Act section 117. As the letter points out, the UCC is responsible *"for the*

spiritual welfare of approx. 1/5 of the Canadian population. The response from J.W. Pickersgill states:

> *You may be assured that I shall be pleased, at any time, to receive representation from the United Church, regarding the administration of this section of the Act or, indeed, of any other aspect of the administration of Indian Affairs, and that I am deeply appreciative of the devoted work being done by all those associated with the United Church schools for Indians.*

It is extraordinary to imagine that a church delegation could actually be pivotal in changing legislation.

In 1957, the Edmonton Presbytery meets and passes several resolutions pertaining to the school. They ask for more money to support the students, and for the BHM to *present to the Department of Indian Affairs the need for a new classroom block and to make necessary repairs so the School will adequately serve the children and staff as home and recreation center.* On June 6, 1958, a Government committee, which is tasked with investigating the future role of the Edmonton Residential School, meets with Dr. Macdonald and local church and department officials to discuss the future of the school. The result included recommendations for: extensive renovations; serving children from BC for an additional five years; and the possibility that the school become a *hostel accommodation for high school students, university students, vocational training students and possibly rehabilitation students.*

As the years advanced, the structure of the BHM becomes more complex, as does its relationship to the governance of the Edmonton Residential School. In the early years, decisions seemed to be in the hands of a few. The Principal appeared to have full authority over all aspects of the operation of the School. Over time, there seems less authority vested in the few, and more complex relationships to attend to. Policies become

more important, with more emphasis on defining and articulating those policies and relationships. The School Committee of Edmonton Presbytery, now meeting regularly, clarifies that the *Principal is accountable to the BHM and the BHM is accountable to the Department of Indian Affairs*. This is seen as *the church asserting itself* and that *the superintendent of Home Missions is the Church's local representative for Indian School affairs and that he must consider himself equal in authority, for the Church, with the officers of the local establishment of the Department of Indian Affairs.*

When the crisis with Mr. Ludford at the school occurs in 1960, UCC officials are forced to recognize the seriousness of the situation. Dr. Joblin proceeds to Ottawa to discuss the situation with Government officials. Mr. Stade, the Superintendent of Missions, expresses *What disturbs me in this is that linked up with other areas of failure, we are losing the confidence of our Indian people in our church efforts and further we are fast becoming a laughing stock among our Roman Catholic friends. For them the shoe is on the other foot. The incompetence of staff in this situation seems beyond comprehension.* Even after Mr. Ludford is removed from the school, there are further accusations of other improprieties, and the blame is deflected to Mr. Hunter of the Department of Indian Affairs *who insisted that the dormitory doors should not be locked as was being done. . . . The Chairman of Presbytery and the Department of Indian Affairs have each been receiving reports of things not being as they should be.* Dr. Joblin is in close contact with Dr. Macdonald throughout the process of Mr. Strapp's withdrawing from the School and states, *The whole problem is one in which the Indian Affairs Branch is very much involved as well as ours and I feel that I should discuss it with Mr. Davey in Ottawa.* During this crisis, the Government is very involved in decision making

concerning the way forward.

As the Edmonton Residential School enters its final years, the Government is very involved through the Indian Affairs Branch of the Department of Citizenship and Immigration. There is a greater involvement of the Indian Health Services, and a dietician is overseeing the feeding of the children. Renovations appear to happen, and there is no longer a farm associated with the School. The new principal, Mr. Caldwell, still *felt that the money allotted for food was inadequate.* There is now a new group called the Study Group on Family Welfare Services that sends a letter to the Presbytery Committee referring to *rumors of homosexuality, theft and inefficient staffing that are alleged to be common gossip in the town of St. Albert. It mentioned that the United Church has been under considerable criticism in St. Albert because of seeming inefficiency with regard to the Indians.* The relationship between the UCC and Government authorities in regards to jurisdiction and responsibility for making decisions about the Edmonton Residential School is breaking down. Mr. Denney, Chairman of Edmonton Presbytery Indian Work Committee states *I think it is time that in some way we let the Indian Affairs people know we are not to be ignored.* In 1965, he states in a letter to Dr. Joblin, *I believe you told us when you were out here that the contract between the Church and the Government is due for renewal at an early date. Now I want to suggest that it shall NEVER be renewed, unless the whole operation of the project is given over entirely to the Church. Our only excuse for being involved is that we are able to make an effective Christian witness. This we certainly are not doing; and I doubt if we ever have. After many years on the Committee, I have come to the firm conviction that all we do is tarnish the image of the Church – and I don't mean just the United Church. So I urge you and the Board of Home*

Missions to get out of this unfortunate business as soon as possible. The United Church can surely make a better contribution from the outside.

The Committee passes a motion to this effect in April 15, 1965, which the Edmonton Presbytery adopts on May 11, 1965. The relationship of the UCC to the Government in administering and running the Edmonton Residential School comes to an end.

The relationship of UCC officials to the School principals in particular, does not change a great deal over time. The officials appear to recognize that the principals are loyal and committed to the UCC, and to the work of the School. In fact, complicit personal relationships result in an inability to analyze actual facts and situations. Both in Woodsworth's and Strapp's time, there is a sense of betrayal when UCC officials fail to meet the needs and requirements of staff at the School. Certainly in the time of Strapp, and the case with Ludford, this is apparent, and there is a strong element of "blame" of the Aboriginal people, the Government and the UCC. It seems that during Stotesbury's time, it is difficult to stand in opposition to those in authority. He seems to be "blamed" when he exposes the abuse. Allegiance to the personal relationship and loyalty to relationships is more important than concern for the students.

The disclosure of abuse is responded to in "crisis mode", and once the crisis is resolved, to whatever extent, there seems to be no reflection or analysis of the situation. The leadership of the UCC and Government return to their respective roles and concerns, which are dominated by the maintenance of structure and staff. There is no acknowledgement of the children affected by abuse. Their "voice" and presence is all but absent.

There is a lack of recognition about, and an absence of polity or procedure for dealing with issues of abuse. The emphasis lies with the Edmonton Residential School as an institution, and the relationship of the School to the structures of the UCC and the Government. As a result, there is an overwhelming culture of denial and diversion rather than addressing the abuse. The relationships that matter are those within the structure of the institution and “others” disappear.

Chapter Five: Looking Back – Looking Forward

We human beings do real harm. History could make a stone weep.[366]

Indeed, human beings do in fact do real harm. The harm done can, and does, go on for a very long time, as it has in the residential school era. Generations of Aboriginal Peoples have had to endure, and still must endure, the harm that was done by this history. As I engaged with the archival data, my mind often went back to my grounding in Sally McFague's theology, and I found myself once again reflecting on what she has taught me.

She has offered a way forward in her focus on right relationship in her belief that it matters because of the reality "of interrelationship and interdependence of all things with one another and with God."[367] Although her writing concentrates on her concern for ecological issues, following my lengthy journey with the archival data, I realized my grounding was affirmed in my own theology as learned from my parents and grandparents. I resonated completely with McFague's focus on living her Christian faith, her admiration for those who have a "set of deeply held beliefs that actually function in their personal and public lives,"[368] and her insistence that it is human sin that endangers all of creation, both human and non-human in "what *we do* to others of our own species, to other species, and to the planet itself."[369] This surely has a connection to the history I explored. The archival data, for me, surfaced a story of abuse that reflected a system of domination and injustice that was immersed in "living a lie". I saw clearly that

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[366] Marilynne, Robinson, *Gilead*: *A Novel* (n.p.: Harper Perennial, 2004), 190.

[367] McFague, *Life Abundant*, 183.

[368] Ibid., 3.

[369] McFague, *The Body of God*, 177.

throughout the history: the UCC administration, the Government, the UCC staff (predominately male), and the society that supported them, were "living contrary to reality, pretending that all the space or the best space belongs to some so that they can live in lavish comfort and affluence, while others are denied even the barest necessities for physical existence."[370]

McFague's concern focuses on the need for us, and especially those of us who are white, privileged, North Americans, "to rectify gross injustices among human beings."[371] McFague calls us as individuals to "fight with all our intelligence, power, and imagination for the inclusion of all"[372] as we take sin and evil very seriously, not as individual failings but as "all the forces – individual, systemic, institutional – that thwart the flourishing of God's creation."[373] This certainly resonates with my sense that the failure of residential schools was in a large part the focus on the fault and blame on individuals who somehow *got themselves in trouble*, rather than recognizing the impact and complicity of the entire system. This also seems pertinent for us at this very moment, as the issue of missing Aboriginal women and girls is so much in the forefront of the challenges we face as a society. Prime Minister Stephen Harper has held firm to the belief that the cause is criminal action by a few, as opposed to an issue in which we are all implicated. He is refusing to hear the voices, especially the voices of Aboriginal People, who are insisting that it is much more than "bad" people doing "bad" things. Susan McBroom discusses this in her writing *Do You Hear the Voices?: End the Exploitation*

[370] McFague, *The Body of God*, 116.

[371] Ibid., 117.

[372] Ibid., 178.

[373] McFague, *Life Abundant* , 185-186.

and Violence Against First Nations, Inuit and Métis Women and Children where she raises for me the question of whether The Prime Minister, or any of us, are hearing the voices.[374]

I am reinforced in my sense that Sally McFague has given me a strong theological grounding in which to seek understanding of what happened at the Edmonton Residential School. Her voice is not the only voice that has guided my way forward. I turn now to other voices that have something to say about how we might integrate wholly our ability to change, and as McFague says, help us to think differently so that "we might behave differently."[375]

Other Voices and the Practice of Ministry

I articulated in the previous chapter how the Edmonton Residential School exhibited all the factors at play: sexism and patriarchy, colonialism and settler mentality and racism. Andrea Smith states that:

> Native communities prior to colonization were not structured on the basis of hierarchy, oppression, or patriarchy. . . . However our understanding that it was possible to order society without structures of oppression in the past tells us that our current political and economic system is anything but natural and inevitable. If we lived differently before, we can live differently in the future. Thus, Native feminist liberation theologies can center less on representing Native women and more on calling all peoples to imagine and to help co-create a future based on the sovereignty and freedom of all peoples.[376]

This is certainly a voice which indicates hope for the future, in which we all might be

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[374] Susan McBroom, "Do You Hear the Voices?: End the Exploitation and Violence Against First Nations, Inuit and Metis Women and Children" (unpublished manuscript, November 2014).

[375] McFague *The Body of God,* 202.

[376] Andrea Smith, "Dismantling the Master's House with the Master's Tools: Native Feminist Liberation Theologies," in *Hope Abundant: Third World and Indigenous Women's Theology,* ed., Kwok Pui-lan (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2010), 82-83.

able to work together for a future different from the past. The problem is that we will be unable to do this work if we are unable to deeply accept the way the past history of colonialism and racism has affected all of us. It is not enough to offer apologies and move on. We must integrate into our very beings, the harm that colonialism and white settler mentality has done to our thinking, first by recognizing it in ourselves, and then by working as Smith says "together" to change it in ourselves and then the future. Susan McBroom quotes Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz (2014)when she says:

> Settler colonization, as an institution or system, requires violence or the threat of violence to attain its goals. People do not hand over their land, resources, children, and futures without a fight and that fight is met with violence. In employing the force necessary to accomplish its expansionist goals, a colonizing regime institutionalizes violence. The notion that settler-indigenous conflict is an inevitable product of cultural differences and misunderstandings, or that violence was committed equally by the colonized and the colonizer, blurs the nature of the historical processes. Euro-American colonialism, an aspect of the capitalist economic globalization, had from its beginnings a genocidal tendency.[377]

This is the harm that we must accept that we are all part of as white settlers.

Kwok Pui-lan offers an opening for the church to begin a future different from the past when she says:

> The church, steeped in male hierarchy and tradition, has to repent for its sexism before it can be a beacon of hope and an agent for change. . . . With passion and compassion, [Third World feminist theologians] continue to articulate a new theological voice full of hope and joy, with reverence for life and respect for all things.[378]

This voice speaks strongly to me as I consider the way forward, with the UCC's current emphasis on restoring right relationship with Aboriginal Peoples. The history of this case of sexual abuse, first requires repentance for the wrong that was inflicted, before there

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[377] McBroom, "*Do You Hear the Voices?"* 20-21.

[378] Kwok Pui-lan, *Postcolonial Imagination & Feminist Theology* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005), 166-167.

can be any movement toward reconciliation. Until the UCC is able to grapple deeply with the factors presented in the previous chapter, I do not see the possibility of reconciliation. Reconciliation begins with acceptance that we are all implicated, and that we all have a responsibility to change the future. Too often in my practice of ministry, I am confronted by the reality that most UCC members know nothing about this history. This fact motivates me in my endeavor to "unconcealedness". In this way, the hope that I carry is that we are taught "how to remember and integrate what we must not forget."[379]

I feel my own personal responsibility as a minister, because I have the obligation each week to speak to a gathered community through the scripture. This is for me both a blessing and a curse. I am more aware now that I, like every other "white settler", have been deeply and personally affected by all the factors that I have presented. Because I have a public voice, this reality is especially daunting. I know myself to be steeped in the tradition of a lifelong experience of the UCC. Because of my position as a privileged white woman, I have been mostly unaware of how the

> Bible as a Western book is bound to its imperialist history of subjugation and oppression. This imperialist history has constructed all of us, and its reality cannot be bracketed from our critical practice without perpetuating the history of unequal inclusion. . . . The challenge, therefore is to become decolonizing readers who seek to build true conversations of equal subjects in our post-colonial and multicultural world. [380]

These words of Muse Dube bring me to the stark realization of how personal this experience of being in the hermeneutic circle has been for me, and what it means for my

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[379] Warnke, *Gadamer: Hermeneutics, Tradition and Reason*, 174.

[380] Muse W. Dube, "Toward A Post –Colonial Feminist Interpretation of the Bible," in *Hope Abundant: Third World and Indigenous Women's Theology, ed.*, Kwok Pui-lan (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2010), 99-100.

continued journey as a minister. The hermeneutic circle has allowed me to change. Looking back, I am aware that I started this research journey with a lot of anger, which, although not gone, by the end has dissipated, as I unconcealed the truth of my complicity.

My Way Forward

This hermeneutic way of being with this archival data has profoundly changed me. It has pushed me into a place of personal depth that I did not anticipate, and to a level of responsibility that has overwhelmed me on so many levels. I am aware of how I began this process to try to understand my "bad" UCC so that I might learn to "love" it again, and thereby be able to stay in it. Although I do believe that I have come to a deep understanding of what happened in the Edmonton Residential School, and also believe that there is learning in that for the UCC, the most surprising and even alarming thing for me is how I have come to understand my own complicity as a member of the UCC and as a white settler. Susan McBroom says:

> This means that unconcealment and authenticity are found in moving fluidly within the fullness of the past, while remaining in the present through relationships toward the future. This is not necessarily easy as it is a process and not a predetermined destination. As becomes apparent, the process is fundamentally internal. While I may uncover the truth through external historic and current events, it is the internal processing of these events that surface my complicity. That which comes forth from unconcealment does so as a result of my intent and patience. The layers of understanding unfold as I am willing to uncover that which is uncomfortable and at times horrifying. Apologies are false and ultimately empty if I am not prepared to unconceal, reveal and accept the truth. There can be no reconciliation without coming out of concealment.[381]

As I am able to accept my own complicity, "there is an imperative to present information to the reader regarding our own understanding and unveil our own prejudice, so that our

[381] Susan McBoom, "Truth, Relationship, Responsibility and Reparations with Inuit." (unpublished manuscript, March 2015), 5.

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readers can determine for themselves whether there is any truth-value to our findings."[382] As others read what I have written, "my horizons or particular viewpoints, which express who I am, are unique and constantly forming. They are shaped not only by my past and my awareness of the present, but also by the fact that my understanding changes over time."[383] I am aware that my own past experience in my Church is part of how I understand the history as shown in the archival data. I have experienced the UCC as oppressive, sexist and patriarchal and another reader who has a different experience may have a different understanding. It is not a matter of having the only truth, but having a truth that is unique to me. As I continue to open myself to further experiences and learning with both Aboriginal Peoples and others, I must remain open to new understandings. "Understanding past and present as intertwined, in the light of the common conditions of human life, helps orient us toward the future. It is not until then that the fundamental task of hermeneutics is accomplished, that is, our life has changed in some respect."[384]

The Past of the Church

The archival data has shown that the Edmonton Residential School was operating within a polity that was deeply informed by the factors of: sexism/patriarchy, colonialism/settler mentality, racism, and an extraordinary relationship with the Government, based on the mutually accepted goal of assimilation of Aboriginal Peoples.

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[382] de Sales Turner, "Horizons Revealed: From Methodology to Method," *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 2, vol.1 (2003): 6-7, http://creativecommons.org//licenses/by/2.0 (accessed Spring 2015).

[383] Ibid., 12.

[384] Marja Schuster, "Hermeneutics as Embodied Existence," *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 12 (2013): 203, http://creativecommons.org//licenses/by/2.0 (accessed Spring 2015).

My attempt at articulating them, I believe, clearly shows that they were overlapping in their effects on the culture of the school. In fact, I found it difficult to logically divide the archival data in this way. I wanted to present the evidence that I found as to their presence, but was often aware that the data that I documented under each factor at play could sometimes as easily been in another.

Kimberle Crenshaw, a black legal scholar, "coined the term "'intersectionality'" and argues "that a key aspect of intersectionality lies in its recognition that multiple oppressions are not each suffered separately but rather as a single, synthesized experience."[385] This resonated with the frustration that I sometimes felt in trying to separate the categories of oppression that I found in the archival data. The students at this School, did not experience the above oppressions as individual entities, but as a "single, synthesized experience."[386] The factors worked together to cause a culture of oppression and abuse.

The factors collectively formulate three overarching stories of life at the Edmonton Residential School. The first is the story of the institutional church protecting itself at the expense of children; second, how this was lived out in the total lack of concern for the children, and the absolute silence of the children's experience in the case of abuse by Clarence Ludford; and lastly, the story of the collaborative, collegial relationship between UCC and the Government to maintain the oppressions.

The first story is the hardest one for me to reconcile for my UCC. Earlier I asked the question of how fathers and grandfathers in positions of power in the church could

[385] Sharon Smith, "Black Feminism and Intersectionality," *International Socialist Review 91*, (2015):1-3, http://isreview.org/issues/91/black-feminism-and-intersectionality (accessed April 28, 2015).

[386] Ibid., 3.

not be concerned about children, *any children*, who were suffering? I cannot understand how the protection of their own careers and the reputation of the UCC could be put before the wellbeing of children for whom they had responsibility. It can only be explained in the way the derogatory language in the archives describes the children and Aboriginal People in general. As John Milloy states:

> Officials and missionaries, even if they operated in remote corners of the land, did not stand outside Canadian society. They shared with other Canadians a discourse about Aboriginal people that informed their activities and in this case, their educational plans. The basic construct of that discourse, with due regard to the poetic and philosophic utility of "the noble savage," continued to be that of the uncomplimentary comparison between the "savage" and the "civilized."[387]

Clearly the value of children was so inferior to their own value, that they could easily justify putting themselves and the UCC before the children. Of course, to do this also meant putting aside any connection to the values that they must have held dear in their Christian faith. It must have been compartmentalized in their own UCC and faith life.

This discounting of the value of children then appears in the total absence of concern for them when sexual abuse was identified. As I have stated, I found not one single letter, report or inquiry into the wellbeing of the children when the abuse was disclosed. The only exception to this was when Earle Stotesbury had Clarence Ludford removed from the School after children began to disclose to him their experience with Ludford. Even following Rev. Stotesbury's return to Saskatchewan, in a letter from Stade to Powell, in regards to sexual activity at the School, Rev. Stotesbury *was hesitant to say anything to anyone else, principally because of the way he had stuck his neck out regarding homosexual practices in the school.*

John Milloy, in *A National Crime,* discusses the pervasive "belief that Aboriginal

[387] Milloy, *A National Crime*, 25.

children were sexually abnormal"; that Aboriginal People matured sexually earlier than Non-Aboriginal, or that they were indeed just without morals and that 'nature is very strong in them'.[388] On the other hand, "references regarding the behaviour of non-Aboriginal staff were encoded normally in the language of repression that marked the Canadian discourse on sexual matters."[389] He also states that in "Departmental files, in descriptions of punishment that violated the discipline guidelines, [is shown]...the subtle connection between physical violence and sexual abuse."[390] Clearly here again, is the devaluing of children, and of who they were because of their race. As the archival data showed, the absolute absence of concern for the children speaks loudly of the racism, and male dominant mind set of those dealing with this case of sexual abuse. It is then somewhat surprising to realize that it was indeed the sexual abuse that would begin the exposure of the system of residential schools. As Milloy says:

> What had finally broken the seal on the residential school system affixed by Duncan Campbell Scott and others and made public the story of neglect, and physical and cultural abuse was, ironically, the deepest secret of all – the pervasive sexual abuse of the children. The official files efface the issue almost completely. What explicit references exist focus normally on the sexual behaviour of the children, on a concern about intercourse among the children . . . [and] with greater frequency, reports of homosexual behaviour among the boys.[391]

The final story of the connection between the UCC and the Government is one of such long and complex history that it is a difficult one to articulate in summary. Many books have been written about the tie of the Christian church to the colonial/patriarchal/racist dynamics that were so pervasive through the entire residential

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[388] Milloy, *A National Crime*, 296.

[389] Ibid.

[390] Ibid.

[391] Ibid.

school system. The Church and the Government used each other in a kind of symbiotic way to achieve sometimes convergent and sometimes opposing goals. The fact that the archival data shows a continual tension between cooperation, mistrust, blaming, partnering, allegiances and divisions speaks of the complexity of the relationship. The relationship at the highest levels of authority for both UCC and Government indicates to me the very political dynamics that were at play. The language at those levels always seems to be cordial, as opposed to the sometimes vitriolic language at the staff level. The clear aim of assimilation of the Aboriginal People was the one overriding aim of both. There was a problem as long as Aboriginal Peoples existed, and both UCC and Government wanted to be rid of the problem. Neither succeeds, and as John Milloy states:

> Unfortunately the vision of residential school education, of "the circle of civilized conditions," pushed forward by the Department's assimilative determination, when made real in the process of building and managing the school system, fell far short of its goals. Right from the beginning, as the *Davin Report* was implemented in the early 1880's, the Department and the church partners created a persistently dark and shameful reality to which were consigned thousands of Aboriginal children.[392]

In the end, the UCC and Government were in opposite camps, as "the churches boxed the political compass so that at the highest levels and in most public forums, they supported Aboriginal aspirations."[393] This was the beginning of an attempt to come to terms with the long sad history as apologies where offered. Meanwhile, the government, "Essentially . . . tried to externalize the issue, throwing it back on the shoulders of

[392] John Milloy, *A National Crime*, 46-47.

[393] Ibid., 299.

Aboriginal people themselves."[394]

One of the most disturbing realities for me, in all of this Edmonton Residential School history, is the fact that the polity as set out in the procedure manuals of the UCC was not followed in relation to dealing with the minister, Clarence Ludford, who had sexually abused children throughout his time at the School. The "men" of both the UCC and the Government "lived a lie" because they were unwilling and/or unable to expand their own horizons, or open themselves to the intersection with others' horizons. They lived the lie they told themselves about their superiority of race. They lived the lie that they had the right to be part of a system which stole the land from the rightful owners, and the right to oppress the Aboriginal Peoples of the land. They focused with determination on the path they had chosen, and once on that path, there could be no deviation or re-thinking, even in the face of the real harm that was being inflicted on innocent children.

The children were almost irrelevant to how both the Government and the UCC hierarchy related to their presence. They were largely invisible, except as labour for the farm, or the running of the Edmonton Residential School. Both the UCC and the Government dismissed or ignored complaints by the children or their parents. When the abuse by Clarence Ludford was exposed, there was no focus on the wellbeing of the children, but rather, on protecting the reputation of the perpetrator and the hierarchal structure of the Church. It was as if the School were there solely for the employment and careers of the staff, and the bureaucratic structure of both the Government and the UCC.

When I entered paid accountable ministry in 1997, I experienced the UCC as sexist and patriarchal. When I tried to address these attitudes with the Conference staff

[394] Milloy, *A National Crime*, 301.

and with some, even most, of my colleagues I was ignored and dismissed. Like Mr. Stotesbury, it seemed that any person who deviated from what was the accepted norm of behavior was viewed as a trouble-maker. As I travelled the hermeneutic circle to gain understanding, I was able to make the connection of the UCC of the past to my own experience, or the experience of others that I observed. There was much in the archival data that seemed to be present in the UCC that I experienced in 1997 when I began my ministry. There was patriarchy and sexism. There was protection of the UCC reputation at the expense of myself and others who were abused with bullying and silencing. There was (and still is in places) a network of those, both male and female, who abuse others emotionally or with power, and protect each other from being unconcealed. Although I am unable to document any cases, I was aware of a code of silence concerning questionable sexual behaviour by male colleagues. I was never aware of child sexual misconduct, but that is not to say that it did not exist. It would seem that the culture of the polity of the Church had not changed a great deal since the time of the Edmonton Residential School. It has only been in the last ten years or so that I have experienced a concerted effort to change this culture, primarily as a result of the threat of law suits or scandals, or the formation of a union for paid accountable ministry personnel.

In 2008, the Prime Minister, Stephen Harper, made a public apology to Aboriginal Peoples from the floor of Parliament. In part it said, "Today, we recognize that this policy of assimilation was wrong, has caused great harm, and has no place in our country."[395] Susan McBroom in her analysis of this apology says:

> The question is if there is no place in Canada for the attitudes that inspired the residential school policy, then it seems reasonable that existing and new policies

[395] See entire apology at www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100/000015644/1100/000015649

> would change to reflect this renewed relationship? Is this the case or have we parsed off the experience of the survivors of residential schools to conceal deception and maintain the crucial illusion that an apology dismisses the interference with its domination concerning every aspect of Indigenous life willing to await another exposé of injustices only to offer another apology? Could it be that we are maintaining an illusion that this apology somehow resolves the harm done and that harm can now be put behind us?[396]

In March, 2004, The UCC, along with the Government, hosted a potlatch in Hazelton, BC. The intent was to "formally and publically apologize to the Gitxan for the internment of Gitxan children at Indian Residential Schools."[397] The apology was intended for the whole of the Gitxan Nation with a "special focus . . . on the 25 survivors of the Edmonton Indian Residential School who piloted a recently completed alternative dispute resolution program between the Gitxan, Canada and the United Church."[398] The former moderator, Dr. Marion Best, offered an apology[399] on behalf of the UCC which said in part:

> On behalf of the United Church of Canada, I apologize for the pain and suffering our church's involvement in the Indian residential school system has caused. We are aware of some of the damage that this cruel and ill-conceived system of assimilation has perpetrated on Canada's First Nations peoples. For this we are truly and most humbly sorry. To those individuals who were physically, sexually and mentally abused . . . I offer you our most sincere apology. You did nothing wrong. You were and are the victims of evil acts that cannot under any circumstances be justified or excused.[400]

Until 2001, the archival records of the Edmonton Residential School were restricted so

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[396] Susan McBroom, "Truth and Reconciliation for the Inuit," (unpublished manuscript, Feb8,2015), 4.

[397] Paulette Regan, *Unsettling The Settler Within,* 193.

[398] Ibid.

[399] See the entire apology by former Moderator Marion Best as recorded in Regan, *Unsettling The Settler Within,* 207.

[400] Paulette Regan, *Unsettling The Settler Within, 207*.

that no one could read the story that I have documented here. Since I knew about it in 1997, I found that when I spoke about what I knew or asked questions, it was most often not well received, especially if I were speaking to someone within the UCC bureaucracy. Even today, I feel that same discomfort when I speak of the Ludford case. I wonder whether Susan McBroom's questions above are equally appropriate for the UCC as they are for the Government.

The Way Forward for the Church

As I draw to my conclusion, I find that I am reluctant to articulate what I believe is the way forward for the UCC. My hope and prayer is that within this dissertation there may be some small seeds of hope and ideas that call others to find their own truths in what I have expressed as my truth. It is in these varied truths, the telling of them and the varied pathways ahead, that we may all be able to move toward being changed at our very core. When that happens, there is the possibility for changing *everything*, even changing the very core of the UCC. I have come to believe, through this journey, that it does not and will not require "an act of God" but rather as Sally McFague says, it will empower all of us to "fight with all our intelligence, power and imagination for the inclusion of all, especially those presently excluded in our particular time and place."[401] I feel hope in the many different ways that I have seen others, both in and outside of the UCC, engaging in learning and trying to find ways toward reconciliation, forgiveness and a new, "good way" of being, as is so often expressed by my friends in the village of Lax Kw'alaams. I have a sense of hope that has come to me as I struggled around and around the hermeneutic circle. This "movement in time, between fore-meanings and

[401] McFague, *The Body of God*, 178.

understandings, [has been my] pathway back to the past, to structures imbedded in our traditions, which conduct our understanding of the present and what we strive for in the future."[402] The journey into this long ago story has changed me in ways that remain private, and yet may be shared with others. I feel ready now to find my particular way of contributing to reconciliation with those who have experienced residential schools. I feel ready now to look at my UCC, not as something "bad" to be endured, but as a companion with me into the future. I have worked at unconcealment in the history, and have found unconcealment within myself. I also know that this never ends. I began with a will and a need to understand what happened in this story, and I continue on with a determination to experience this over and over again.

Although I remain reluctant to articulate the way forward for the church, I also feel compelled to share some of my understanding and hope for that future. I have learned a lot through the opportunity to do a degree in Native Studies and even more by living with the people of Lax Kw'alaams. Two things have stood out for me over the years. These are the value of stories and the ethic of "non-interference." I can remember many times listening to the elders tell stories and from my non-Aboriginal head, wanting an interpretation. It was not given. I also remember discussions with Aboriginal class mates and members of my congregation in the village around the issue of allowing children to learn by making mistakes rather than by being told the right way to do things. In my experience of observing parents in the village, children were carefully watched, protected and loved but they were also given a level of freedom that I did not give my own children when they were growing up. I also remember a conversation with a friend

[402] Schuster, "Hermeneutics as Embodied Existence," 198.

who described to me his life before being taken to The Edmonton Residential School. Since he was only 5 when taken to the School, his earliest memories in the village were of wandering freely, knowing that he could go to any relative's house when he grew hungry and he would be fed, and having a sense that many eyes were on him ensuring his safety as he explored his world. That story has stayed with me as well as my own sense of what he lost when he arrived at the School. It is my belief that his life was all about "interference" when he was a residential student.

I have spoken throughout my writing about story. My hope is that those in the UCC in particular, will read my work as the telling of story. I have offered quite a lot of interpretation but I do not want that to inhibit others to come to their own interpretation. I am not Aboriginal but I embrace the idea of "non-interference" in the context of what I have documented. As Shawn Wilson says, "Stories allow listeners [and readers] to draw their own conclusions and gain life lessons from a more personal perspective. By getting away from abstractions and rules, stories allow us to see others' life experiences through our own eyes."[403] This is my first hope.

I carry forward my own intentions of how I will continue to work in the Church to contribute to reconciliation and building right relationships. I have not always been courageous in the past and I am committed to rectifying that in the future. I am committed to speaking out and naming injustices when I see them. I am committed to being part of educational opportunities so that those in the pews may have opportunity and be encouraged to learn about the ways we abused Aboriginal Peoples in the past and our blindness to how we continue to do that in the present. I am committed to preach and speak at every possibility to raise my own and others awareness of the issues of our

[403] Wilson, *Research Is Ceremony,* 17.

complicity in colonialism, racism, sexism and patriarchy. In my own pastoral charge as a minister with both prophetic and pastoral roles, I will have to be very attentive to my own ability to be patient, respectful and kind as I urge us all on to a new way of being in relationship to Aboriginal issues. I am committed to being as self-aware as possible as I continue to uncover my own complicity in the wrongs of the past.

It is my hope that the UCC will be deeply committed, both financially and by concrete actions, to learning from the past and by transforming its actions in the future. The UCC as a whole and the people within it, the leadership and those in the pews, must be committed to "unconceal" both personally and as an institution the stories of our past and the part that we all have played in it. This will be hard, hard, work and will take persistence and much courage. We in the UCC need to continue to listen to the stories of survivors and accept that as members of the abusing Church we must not excuse ourselves or shy away from acknowledging the horrifying truth of the monstrosity of the behaviour. We must all be vigilant in accessing our behaviour in an ongoing way so that we are sensitized to recognizing when we are making decisions or acting in ways that are harmful to others. Part of this will be a concentrated effort on dismantling our privilege, facing and openly discussing our own issues of racism and being intentional on reflecting on where we have failed in the past. This is my second hope.

Now that the TRC has completed its work, I believe that it will be important for the "voice" of the UCC to be heard, loudly upholding and participating in implementing all of the recommendations as set out in the "Calls to Action." Just recently there have been voices calling for the Vatican to rescind the Papal Bulls. If we are to follow the lead of Aboriginal voices we should hear the voice of Oren Lyons, the Onondaga Nation Chief

and faith keeper who helped achieve the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. He along with the World Council of Churches, the United Methodist Church and the Leadership Conferences of Religious Women have called on the Pope to rescind the Doctrine of Discovery.[404] We must listen carefully to First Nations People's voices and follow their lead. This is my third hope.

I have intertwined my own story of my experiences in the UCC with this archival story. I have expressed my own confusion and frustration with the leadership of the UCC when I tried to raise concerns about behaviour that was harmful to me and to others. Since I am an "insider" in the UCC that was difficult and I questioned myself at many moments. As Sonya Dwyer and Jennifer Buckle expressed "the researcher's perceptions might be clouded by his or her personal experience" . . . [and what will be necessary will be] "an ability to be open, authentic, honest, deeply interested . . . "and committed to accurately and adequately. . . "[405] as was in my case, writing down the stories. I have tried to do that and be those things in my writing. I am also assuming that "outsiders" will read this and may be able to distance themselves from the complexity of my personal experience, emotions and feelings and see more clearly what is occurring in these intertwined stories and conceptualize a different and wider perspective of the connections, causal patterns and influences that I have documented.[406] Both the insider and outsider perspectives may be valuable to the UCC and to others. I am certain that for me "just as our personhood affects the analysis, so, too, the analysis affects our

[404] For more information on this refer to www.catholic.org/news/national/story.php?d=62801

[405] Sonya Corbin Dwyer and Jennifer L. Buckle, "The Space Between: On Being an Insider-Outsider in Qualitative Research," *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 8, no.1 (2009): 58-59. http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0 (accessed August 2015).

[406] Dwyer and Buckle, "The Space Between." 59.

personhood."[407] I would wish that the UCC members and especially the leadership could clear see that some of what I and others experienced in more recent years is very much still connected to how we functioned as an institution back in the days of this documented case of sexual abuse. We need to take that very seriously and work to change it in the present and the future. Collectively we need to see how the institution still moves to protect itself and how leadership moves to protect each other with an attitude of dismissing contrary voices. We must fully face our complicity and move to "unconceal" that and commit to action to change. That may be much harder for us to do as "insiders" than it is for "outsiders" such as the survivors and advocates who are urging us to do so. This is my fourth hope.

As I looked at the archival story I was most confounded by what seemed to be a leadership in the UCC that was certainly not living out their theology in how they conducted themselves in that leadership. I am urging the UCC leadership and members to, as Salllie McFague says, "try to live their faith, [with a] "working theology," a set of deeply held beliefs that actually function in their personal and public lives."[408] This is my last hope. (For now, as I continue on the journey, there will undoubtedly be others.)

The Journey Continues

The journey through the maze of my story, and the story of my faith continues. But like all stories, it is not mine alone. The struggle to find answers and justice in the tangled recesses of the maze is shared by many, especially by the First Nation Peoples of the Tsimshian Nation of Lax Kw'alaams, British Columbia, who tried to teach me what it

[407] Dwyer and Buckle, "The Space Between," 61.

[408] McFague, *Life Abundant*, 3.

means to have suffered the injustice and horrors of residential school when they were only children. I know that my life has been enriched by their lessons of courage and persistence in the tangled places of the maze. I am grateful they allowed me to be part of their story as well. And I am most grateful for the ONE who was steady by my side, through the swift and easy way, and more so through the times of slow and agonizing pace. There can only be one response to this journey, and that is to continue on, always knowing that the brilliant hue and guiding light will never fail me. In this imagery, I must be very clear that the light that I am speaking of is the light of God. I am acutely aware that this light/darkness of colour caused a great deal of difficulty in our past and continues to do harm.

My prayer is that you the reader, find the guiding light in whatever way of seeing comes to you. This may occur as you see and experience the healing that is happening for Aboriginal Peoples as they reclaim their respective culture, identity and spiritual way of being. It may also occur as you read this work. While I cannot speak for you, I do know that for me, this journey through and with the light of God is deeply personal and experiential. For me, the barbs and blades can never be the final experience in the maze. The ONE will not let it be so. At the end, looking back with longing, is answered with encircling green, in always offered grace, love and right relationship.

As I leave you, the reader, I embrace the thinking of Milloy when he says:

> . . . it is critical that non-Aboriginal people study and write about the schools, for not to do so on the premise that it is not our story, too, is to marginalize it as we did Aboriginal people themselves, to reserve it for them as a site of suffering and grievance and to refuse to make it a site of introspection, discovery and extirpation – a site of self-knowledge from which we can understand not only who we have been as Canadians but who we must become if we are to deal justly with the Aboriginal people of this land.[409]

[409] Milloy, *A National Crime*, xviii.

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