



MCC Saskatchewan



**National Day for Truth and Reconciliation
(September 30, 2021)
Learning Opportunities**

Here are a series of learning opportunities designed for wherever you are at in this journey. One suggestion: after you finish an item, take a few minutes to write down any comments, reflections, feelings or questions that it has brought up.

“Indigenous Neighbours” 101.

Feel like you’re just wading into this conversation? Here are some highly recommended starting points. And also, a couple words of introduction:

- **“Indigenous”** – in Canada, this word refers to 3 distinct groups: First Nations, Inuit, and Métis. (First Nations are only called “Indian” in a legal context, referring to people whose lives are subject to the Canadian law called “the Indian Act.” And in the US, First Nations are commonly called “Native Americans.”)
- **“Truth & Reconciliation”** – this phrase grows out of the work of the Truth & Reconciliation Commission (TRC), who spent 7 years travelling the country to listen to the accounts of hundreds of survivors of Indian Residential Schools (IRSs), and then issued a series of reports and calls to action in 2015.

1. Learn what MCC Saskatchewan has been up to:

- Watch the documentary [Reserve 107: Reconciliation on the Prairies](#). (30 min) A [study guide](#) is available.
- Listen to several episodes of the [Reconcile: Everyday Conversations](#) podcast. Season one features non-Indigenous speakers; season 2 features Indigenous speakers. (About 30 min each)

2. Watch someone else go on a journey of encounter:

- [First Contact](#) is a reality-TV documentary made by APTN (Aboriginal Peoples Television Network), that follows a group of (strongly opinionated!) folks who have had minimal exposure/interaction with Indigenous people, as they go on a month-long tour to different Indigenous communities across Canada. 2 seasons, 3 episodes (45 min) each.
Note: you might need to sign up for a free subscription to “Lumi,” the APTN online streaming site, to watch this. But it’s worth it!

3. Watch this sermon:

- [Ray Aldred](#), a Cree minister who has served with denominations from the Alliance to the Anglicans, spoke on [repentance, truth & reconciliation](#) at Lakeview Church (Saskatoon), in January 2019. (30 min)

Truth & Reconciliation 201

You've been around this conversation for a little while, and want to go a bit deeper.

- **Top recommendation:** on Sept 30, take in this **live session** of the “MCC at 100” conference (U of Wpg): “*MCC and Indigenous-Settler Relations in Turtle Island.*” 6-8pm CST (Sask) time. Listen to three Indigenous leaders who have worked in different ways with MCC. (It's free, but [pre-registration is necessary](#) for the link).
- Go on a “**Doctrine of Discovery**” **self-guided walk** through downtown Saskatoon (1½-2 hrs), alone or with others. The guide is available [here](#).

Some recommended online documentaries:

- [*nîpawistamâsowin: We Will Stand Up*](#). An important perspective on the 2018 trial of Gerald Stanley for the 2016 shooting death of Colten Boushie. (98 min)
- [*Doctrine of Discovery: Stolen Lands, Strong Hearts*](#) (Anglican Church of Canada, 2019). (66 min)
- [*Yummo Comes Home*](#). The story of a survivor of the Kamloops IRS, and the intersection of his story with a Mennonite church from BC's Fraser Valley. (28 min)

Other online presentations:

- A general overview of Canada's **Truth & Reconciliation Commission**, presented through some [interviews with Justice Murray Sinclair](#), Chair of the TRC . (28 min)
- [*Treaty As Sacred Covenant*](#) (a series of webinars presented by Mennonite Church Eastern Canada). Eight video presentations—they're all important, but if I had to recommend a starting point, I'd say **Adrian Jacobs**.

To read:

- Do you live in **Treaty 4** or **Treaty 6** territory? (Look [here](#) if you're not sure.) Read brief [biographies of key personalities](#) involved in signing the treaty.
- Explore [*ayisiyiniwak: A Communications Guide*](#) (2019), developed by the City of Saskatoon.

There are so many good books to read! Here are some suggested starting points.

- Thomas King: *The Inconvenient Indian: A Curious Account of Native People in North America* (2012). Essential reading.
- Bob Joseph: *21 Things You May Not Know About the Indian Act* (2018).
- Harold R. Johnson is an important Saskatchewan voice. Two recommended books:
 - *Two Families: Treaties and Government* (2007).
 - *Peace and Good Order: The Case for Indigenous Justice in Canada* (2019).
- Jesse Thistle: *From the Ashes: My Story of Being Métis, Homeless, and Finding My Way* (2019). A recent bestseller.
- Robin Wall Kimmerer: *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants* (2013). A beautiful and enriching book.
- Richard Wagamese. *Indian Horse* (2012). Award-winning novel (and now film).

Decolonization 301

The issues can get a lot more difficult, complex, and—for white settler folk—more threatening. But for those of us settlers who have experienced the gift of meaningful relationships with Indigenous people, we know it's imperative to go here. We've seen and felt the resilience, beauty, and strength of Indigenous communities and individuals, which changes the nature of these hard conversations.

Another selection of important books to read, including some specifically for Christians, and Mennonite Christians:

- Chelsea Vowel: *Indigenous Writes: A Guide to First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Issues in Canada* (2016).
- James Daschuk: *Clearing the Plains: Disease, Politics of Starvation, and the Loss of Indigenous Life* (2019, rev. ed.) Award-winning writing, disturbing history.
- Elaine Enns & Ched Myers: *Healing Haunted Histories: A Settler Discipleship of Decolonization* (2021). See the MCCS [book launch event here](#).
- Mark Charles and Soong-Chan Rah. *Unsettling Truths: The Ongoing, Dehumanizing Legacy of the Doctrine of Discovery* (2019).
- *Unsettling the Word: Biblical Experiments in Decolonization* (2019), edited by Steve Heinrichs.
- For Mennonite perspectives, read: *Be It Resolved: Anabaptists and Partner Coalitions Advocate for Indigenous Justice, 1966-2020* (2020), edited by Steve Heinrichs & Esther Epp-Tiessen. Copies available at the MCCS office.

Or, to watch... here are just a sampling:

- [Trick or Treaty](#) (2014 documentary on Treaty 9 territory, northern Ont); 84 min.
- [Jordan River Anderson](#) (2019) – 65 min. Issue of treaty rights to healthcare, and how children fall through bureaucratic cracks.
- [We can't make the same mistake twice](#). (Generations of injustices against Indigenous children). (2016; 2hr 43min)
- Or anything else by Indigenous filmmaker [Alanis Obomsawin](#) (at the NFB website).
- [Birth of a Family](#). (2017; 79 min) Tasha Hubbard documents 4 siblings meeting each other after being adopted out as infants.
- from Native Alberta Counselling Services:
 - [Care is NOT an option](#). Explores the successes of a BC First Nation in supporting families. (2017, 22 min)
 - [Journey Home](#). Explores healing Indigenous children in the child welfare system. (2019; 26 min)
 - [Voice – Aboriginal Human Rights](#). Exploring the experience of racism. (2021, 22 min)