

## **Solitudes in Shared Spaces: Aboriginal and EuroCanadian Anglicans in the Yukon and Northwest Territories in the Post-Residential School Era**

CHERYL GAVER  
University of Ottawa

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Truth and Mercy have met together  
Justice and Peace have kissed (Psalm 85:10)<sup>1</sup>

According to John Paul Lederach, known for his pioneering work on conflict transformation, reconciliation is achieved only when truth about the past has been made public, justice for perpetrators and reparation for victims have been accomplished, forgiveness of perpetrators by victims has been offered and peace through the establishment of transformed relationships has begun.

Using the residential school issue as a window onto the current relationship between Aboriginal and EuroCanadian Anglicans in the Yukon and Northwest Territories (NWT), I explored reconciliation within the Anglican Church of Canada (ACC) at the congregational level by focusing on three questions: (1) how could the past relationship be described? (2) what changes had occurred since the closure of residential schools in 1969/1970; and (3) how could the current relationship be characterized? In other words, had anything changed at the local level since the residential school era? During my research, I uncovered the existence of three narratives: (1) the dominant narrative of a destructive and dehumanizing colonialism; (2) a secondary narrative of positive experiences and personalized relationships; and (3) a third narrative of cultural collisions.

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This essay summarizes the findings of archival research and three fieldtrips to Canada's North where I visited seven communities and spoke with eighty-one individuals between 2005 and 2008. A more detailed account is presented in my thesis.

### ***The Anglican Context***

The context for my project came from the ACC itself. During the residential school era,<sup>2</sup> the ACC operated twenty-six of the one-hundred-thirty residential schools.<sup>3</sup> Aware of problems in its relationship with Canada's Aboriginal peoples, the ACC commissioned a study of the situation in the late 1960s. The findings, published in 1969 as *The Hendry Report*,<sup>4</sup> uncovered the existence of a "Jekyll-and-Hyde" relationship. Among its many recommendations was the suggestion that the ACC move towards partnership with Aboriginal peoples. In 1969, the ACC officially withdrew from the residential school program, and began implementing many of the Report's recommendations.<sup>5</sup>

By the 1990s, the residential school issue had come into public consciousness and to the forefront of Aboriginal concerns. The ACC formally apologized at a Sacred Circle Conference in 1993 and committed itself to living the Apology.<sup>6</sup> One product was the creation of the (Anglican) Aboriginal Healing Fund<sup>7</sup> where communities, organizations, and dioceses can apply for grants up to \$15,000 for healing or reconciliation projects.<sup>8</sup> As of 2007, the Anglican Healing Fund had distributed over \$3 million.

Working with the Federal Government, Aboriginal representations and other denominations, the ACC searched for ways to resolve past injustices. In 1999, the Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) program began; this was followed in 2003 by the Indian Residential School Settlement Agreement (IRSSA). An agreement worked out with the Federal Government limiting ACC liability to \$25 million reduced the risk of bankruptcy:<sup>9</sup> the Federal Government would pay any amount awarded by courts above \$25 million. In 2005, the IRSSA was replaced with the Common Experience Payment (CEP) program.

From the perspective of the national Church, the ACC had successfully moved beyond the paternalistic nature of its earlier relationship with Aboriginal peoples. My question was how much had changed at the local level in a region where, between 1895 and 1970, the ACC had operated ten of its twenty-six residential schools.

### ***The Dominant Narrative***

The first narrative – the one most commonly mentioned in the media, by many Aboriginal peoples, and by the ACC itself – is a narrative of a colonialism that manifested itself in efforts to deliberately destroy Aboriginal peoples and cultures, stripping away any power they had, and marginalizing them from the dominant society. According to this dominant narrative, the by-products of this colonialism were the dehumanization of, and the physical and sexual abuse experienced by so many, Aboriginal people.

Evidence exists to support this narrative. Much has been written about the impact on northern Aboriginal peoples of what can be understood as institutionalized colonialism.<sup>10</sup> Kiawak, a participant of mixed heritage, stated that hunting regulations which made sense in southern Canada would have led to famine situations had people not ignored them and later fought them. No participant, however, shared personal experiences of sexual abuse in the residential schools although one told about a local ACC priest having sexually abused a family member in the NWT community<sup>11</sup> and Kiawak only talked of being “smacked” on occasion. Archival research did confirm that physical abuse had occurred in at least some schools. No participant confirmed that children were forcibly removed from home, but some shared how parents were pressured into sending them to residential schools.

This does not mean that northern residential schools were “good” but rather that the situation and colonialism in the North differed from that in other parts of Canada.<sup>12</sup> Most important in the northern narrative are the traumas that many experienced being removed from their families and communities and sent to schools that were sometimes thousands of kilometres from home<sup>13</sup>; and that resulted from so many children dying in the schools without families ever being told.<sup>14</sup> Still haunted by the past when she spoke with me, Aqpik shared how her sister was five or six when she went to Hay River Residential School. So scared was she that her parents sent along her younger brother even though he was only three or four. Both died there. Neither the school nor local clergy told the parents they had died or why, and no personal items were returned. “Dad said one day he heard of the boy passing away. The girl grieved so much she passed too.” A few years later, another sister went to a different residential school. She was there “September, October, November, December, January, they flew her body (home), but none of her clothing and no explanation of how

or why she died.” Aqpiq’s story reveals colonialism within the northern ACC in which Aboriginal people were seen and treated as dehumanized objects rather than as human beings with human feelings.

This inability to attribute human emotions to Aboriginal peoples is perhaps best exhibited by (Bishop) William Carpenter Bompas who worked among many different Aboriginal peoples in the North between 1865 and 1901. Writing after over twenty years in the region, Bompas was still unsure whether Inuit mothers loved their children, and had no understanding of how or why children were sometimes given away.<sup>15</sup> His inability to recognize anything in Aboriginal cultures that challenged notions of English superiority was displayed when he noted that the Gwich’in language had a “conjugation of the verbs [that was] more elaborate than in the Greek . . .” but could not admit “that the language [was] the invention or elaboration of the people who [spoke] it.” Bompas preferred to believe that, “the only alternative [to their having developed it themselves] seems to be that their language is to each race the gift of their Creator.”<sup>16</sup> God’s intervention was easier for him to accept than the possibility that Aboriginal people might not be as primitive or backwards as Bompas believed.

### ***The Second Narrative***

Despite evidence supporting the dominant narrative, by day three of my first fieldtrip, I had run into a challenge. Almost as soon as I walked into Kiawak’s office and before I could sit down (let alone begin recording the interview), Kiawak thundered, “We were NOT taken away by force!”

That statement was reiterated by EuroCanadian and Aboriginal participants in both the NWT and the Yukon. Kavik refused to be interviewed and several other Aboriginal participants were unsure about being interviewed precisely because they had *not* been taken away by force nor had they suffered physical or sexual abuse in residential schools. Todd and other EuroCanadian participants in Yellowknife asked what had really happened in northern residential schools precisely because the dominant narrative contradicted what Aboriginal friends and co-workers were saying. In fact, no lawsuits have been filed against the Diocese of the Arctic as of 2008 when the project ended.

My assumptions about the dominant narrative were being challenged. I was discovering a second, more positive narrative. In some NWT schools and in some years, Aboriginal languages were taught, bilingual

children identified and used as translators for monolingual students (e.g., Hay River) and traditional skills passed on by Aboriginal elders (Shingle Point, Coppermine). Some participants said that religious services in the schools had been trilingual. Records showed that residential schools – often the only schools available – included Aboriginal, EuroCanadian, or mixed-heritage children and, at Hay River, adult students.

Research revealed a number of missionaries who demonstrated respect for the people, sensitivity to Aboriginal traditions, and willingness to not only develop relationships with Aboriginal peoples but also learn from them. Arriving in the NWT in 1935, the Rev. Henry George Cook found himself teaching children from “some few Indian families resident all year in the settlement, the sons and daughters of R.C.S. and RCMP personnel, the local Doctor-Indian Agent’s son” and others. He adapted to the situation and the need to accommodate how Aboriginal children learned, writing in 1979:<sup>17</sup>

I had trouble with the younger Indian children getting them to work with figures. The little rascals used to bring a deck of cards to school and during lunch break they played some card game I never did figure out. I played them a dirty trick however – taught them to play cribbage – it was phenomenal how their mental arithmetic improved.

During that same era, Archibald Lang Fleming, bishop of the Arctic from 1933 to 1949, displayed a similar openness to learning and adapting. Although he began his career with a colonialist perspective that considered Aboriginal people to be primitive and in need of being brought into the light of Christianity and European civilization, Fleming ended it quite changed by his time in the North, writing in 1965:<sup>18</sup>

I loved [the Inuit] because I soon discovered that they were real people, men and women and children just like the rest of mankind . . . As I lived with them away from the mission house, either as a paying guest with a family in an igloo or in my own tent pitched among theirs, I came to understand and to appreciate their fine characteristics – their courage, generosity and patience; their outstanding love for their children; and their utopian socialism as far as the sharing of food is concerned . . .

Time and time again they went out of their way to help me, an ignorant foreigner, and so I changed from holding the typical

superiority attitude of the white man towards the native and I came to see him truly as an equal. Whatever superior knowledge I possessed about some things, the Eskimo had superior knowledge about other things. I lacked many of their fine attributes and I became grateful for the privilege of knowing them, for all that I was learning from them and for all that they were doing for me . . . even regarding the inner meanings of some of the great truths which I had been sent to teach them. I received not a little inspiration from them. And some of my ideas had to be radically changed because of what I learned from trying to help them to understand what I thought I knew so well.

The relationship Fleming developed with the Inuit eventually earned him the nickname “‘Inooktaukaub,’ or ‘One of the Eskimo.’”<sup>19</sup> Succeeding Fleming as bishop in 1950 was Donald Ben Marsh. Marsh, who came from Great Britain, established schools where the Inuit could train as catechists, and even ordained several to the priesthood.<sup>20</sup> His view on the importance of Aboriginal languages differed from that held by the Canadian government of the period as his writings reveal:<sup>21</sup>

The Welsh language has been spoken since childhood in almost every family . . . The Welsh language is vitally alive and of importance, for it is not only taught and used in school, but is the language of the people and they are proud to be Welsh.

[It is] obvious that unless they [the Inuit] have a pride in their own race and their own people, they will feel themselves second class citizens, and this will be a direct result of the educational system. That they have to live among their own people later is obvious, and there would seem to be no future for them anywhere in numbers. What they have a real need to feel is to be one with and to have a great respect for their parents and elders. It seems to me that we face the task of making the Eskimo feel that the very wonderful quality of their forefathers are things to be treasured and practised. To do this it is vitally necessary that there should be some presentation of their parents' qualities and old way of life during school hours and through school channels.

How widespread such attitudes were among EuroCanadian Anglican clergy in the NWT and Yukon is unknown but their existence may well explain why lawsuits against the ACC in the NWT have not been filed, and why so many participants shared a different narrative than the

dominant one.

The situation in the southern Yukon differed significantly from that in the NWT.<sup>22</sup> In fact, one former residential school staff who had substituted at the Carcross residential school in the Yukon for a short time refused to say anything about her time there although she readily shared experiences at her own NWT residential school. Among the Gwich'in, whose territory spans both the northern Yukon and NWT, a somewhat positive history is found, perhaps because, as one participant put it, the Gwich'in became Christian before the white men came and messed things up (Alariaq). They were converted by the Rev. Robert McDonald, a contemporary of Bompas.<sup>23</sup> While the Gwich'in of the time considered him "White" because of his ties with the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC), the Church Missionary Society (CMS), which had appointed him to the region, considered him to be "Other." McDonald's father had worked for the HBC but his mother was of mixed blood: part Ojibway, part "White" and part "mulatto."<sup>24</sup> McDonald's background gave him an advantage: he understood Aboriginal people in a way non-Aboriginal missionaries did not. McDonald married a Gwich'in woman (Julia Kutug) and, with her help, translated portions of the Bible and the Anglican prayer book into Gwich'in. He trained Gwich'in elders to serve as missionaries; they trained others. During my second fieldtrip, a number of EuroCanadian and Aboriginal participants spoke of McDonald's on-going influence as the Gwich'in continue to play an important role in the Anglican Church in both the Yukon and the NT.

What becomes evident from this very brief overview of the relationship between Aboriginal and EuroCanadian Anglicans during the residential school era is the complexity of that relationship. Not only do you find missionaries with a firm belief in their own superiority and in the need of Aboriginal people to become more like EuroCanadians, but also you find missionaries who deeply respected the people and their traditional wisdom, and who valued and worked to preserve traditional languages and ways. Not only do you find the dehumanization of Aboriginal peoples, but also you find missionaries and Aboriginal peoples getting to each other as "real human beings" and developing personal relationships.

To speak of Aboriginal-missionary relations in Canada's North as "colonialistic" is too simplistic. It dismisses too many personal experiences and encounters, and too much evidence of Aboriginal agency. The 1969 *Hendry Report*, characterized the relationship as "Jekyll-and-Hyde" which seems to be more accurate of the northern situation. If Aboriginal

people encountered the “Jekyll,” then they were fortunate and likely had good experiences and memories; if they encountered the “Hyde,” then they likely had bad experiences and memories.

### ***The Third Narrative***

Before the research project began, and sprinkled throughout the project, were clues to a third narrative that suggested the relationship – both in the present and historically – was influenced by something else . . . but what?

The first clue came in Oakville, Ontario in 2003. A local Anglican Church hosted a presentation on the residential school issue, the need for local congregations to contribute to the IRSSA, and the agreement that had been negotiated between the ACC and the Federal Government limiting ACC’s liability to \$25 million. Aboriginal representatives talked about wanting to withdraw from the entire process as a result of that agreement. What became evident was that Aboriginal and EuroCanadian people were operating from two completely different understandings of the issue.

From the EuroCanadian perspective, the residential school issue represented an adversarial situation with plaintiffs (Aboriginal people) on one side and defendants (the ACC and Federal Government) on the other. Since the agreement that had been negotiated between the defendants would have not affect any amount judges might award to the plaintiffs, there was no need to involve the plaintiffs in the negotiations.

From what I came to believe represented the Aboriginal perspective, the residential school issue represented a weakened relationship in which all parties had been damaged. In order to repair and strengthen the relationship, all parties had to be involved. By excluding Aboriginal peoples from the debate surrounding the possible bankruptcy of the ACC, EuroCanadians were again demonstrating that nothing had changed; Aboriginal people were still excluded from situations that affected them.

This difference in perceiving what the problem is continues to play out in the North where the residential school issue is too often seen as an “Aboriginal” problem. One ACC clergy asked why I wanted to visit his congregation since his was a “white” congregation. EuroCanadian participants wondered what they had to contribute; many simply referred me to an “Aboriginal person over there” who might have something to say – as though they had absolutely nothing to do with a relationship. Many Aboriginal participants referred me to others who had attended residential

school or had been abused in residential schools, as though the issue had no influence on their own relationships with EuroCanadian peoples.

During one service I attended, a bishop's letter was read in which the bishop asked for donations for schools in Africa. EuroCanadian Anglicans at the service seemed interested in the project and wanted to know more. Aboriginal Anglicans present were notable by their silence and lack of interest. Nowhere in the letter did the bishop acknowledge any similarity between what he was requesting and what other bishops had requested during the residential school era. Nowhere did he specify how the African school project differed from the residential schools.

The differences went beyond different perceptions about the residential school issue. Other differences also emerged during the fieldtrips. In one congregation, the EuroCanadian priest had unwittingly created tension among the Aboriginal members. Gary ensured that welcome cards were put into pews for people to complete if they wanted him to visit them. He used a baptismal information package that included a form to be filled out by parents interested in having their child baptized. He involved the laity (i.e., non-clergy) in worship services in traditional ways: as greeters at the door, as readers of Scripture lessons, and as intercessors offering prayers. Being of a rather high church temperament, Gary introduced chanted responses during services. None of these endeavours – from Gary's perspective – reflected anything other than the traditional, albeit on the high church side, form of Anglican worship. His style of ministry was also fairly traditional. He tended to function as priest-as-administrator rather than as priest-as-pastor; this led to a tendency to distance himself from parishioners, leaving them to take the initiative to contact him. From Gary's perspective, he respected Aboriginal peoples, was aware of the history in which EuroCanadians had sometimes controlled every aspect of Aboriginal life, and saw himself as giving space to Aboriginal people to do things for themselves. What he did not see was how everything he did antagonized many of the Aboriginal people in his congregation.

Aboriginal people did not fill out the baptismal forms. Word began to spread that Gary refused to baptize their children. Aboriginal people did not chant, nor did they volunteer for the functions Gary saw as open to laity. Sometimes, an Aboriginal member took over the service by making special announcements or offering additional prayers. Sometimes an Aboriginal choir performed during services without his having been notified. Gary came to accept such behaviour as part of the Aboriginal

culture. He saw EuroCanadian members of the congregation reaching out to their Aboriginal confreres at coffee hour and welcomed their initiative, but never talked about taking the initiative himself.

Gary's high-church practices were generally accepted by EuroCanadian members, but not by Aboriginal members. That difference extends beyond Gary and affects the relationship in other congregations in the territories. Most missionaries who introduced Christianity to Aboriginal people in the North were of low church, conservative, evangelical persuasion. Many Anglican immigrants who come from other parts of Canada are high church and/or liberal. Not only do worship styles differ between the two, so does the selection of music. Several Aboriginal participants said the hymns were "unsingable" while one EuroCanadian criticized the over-use of evangelical choruses instead of more substantial hymns. Anglican wardens and lay readers, coming from liberal congregations in southern Canada that accept same-sex marriage, discover they are no longer permitted to function in any official capacity in northern congregations, expressing feelings of alienation.

The dominant narrative of a profoundly destructive colonialism which must be mitigated if the relationship between Aboriginal and EuroCanadian peoples is to improve simply does not go far enough in recognizing how different the groups are. While Gary knew some of the colonialist history and tried to affirm what he saw as cultural practices among Aboriginal people, Gary did not realize that his own style of ministry and his own understanding of his role as priest-as-administrator were very much indicative of his own culture. What he considered to be normative was, in reality, normative only from a EuroCanadian perspective. While he recognized differences that he assumed were cultural, he did not understand their significance. He never understood how important personal relationships were among his Aboriginal parishioners. He never recognized their refusal to complete forms as an invitation to him to visit at the time and place of his choosing. He never recognized their refusal to perform functions generally assigned to laity as a request for a more meaningful relationship and participation in the service. He never saw his own distance as a rejection of any relationship with Aboriginal people. Gary did not recognize signals Aboriginal parishioners were sending him; many of them misinterpreted Gary's actions. Gary is no longer with that congregation.

Alice shared a story of cultural differences and how they affected one's perceptions of the residential schools. She told how a friendship had

been destroyed. An Aboriginal friend from residential school days filed a lawsuit claiming she had been abused at the school. She asked Alice to be a witness in her case. Alice refused; she had not seen any abuse. Her friend said, "But we had chores to do." Alice replied, "That's part of being a family." What neither Alice knew nor, in all likelihood, staff at the residential school either, was that Aboriginal children were given chores only once they reached puberty in some cultures. To ask a pre-pubescent child to do chores in such a culture would be understood as abuse, so while her friend saw abuse; Alice saw what she considered to be normative.

Such differences between Aboriginal and EuroCanadian peoples go beyond the dominant or even the secondary narrative. They go further than many assume when talking about cultural differences. Such differences show up not only in practices and interpretations of events and situations, but also in the deeply rooted centre of one's being: as reflections of how people perceive and organize reality itself.

What happened in residential schools and the historical relationship between Aboriginal and EuroCanadian peoples represents a negotiated space of cultures in collision. Colonialism shifted the weight of that space towards a preponderance of EuroCanadian practices and values. Those practices and values continue to shape the relationship in the present despite initiatives to empower Aboriginal peoples, support Aboriginal languages, and respect Aboriginal cultures.

The problem: how does one negotiate values and practices fundamentally opposed to one another? For example, how does one define who is related to whom? Canadian society, based on a EuroCanadian worldview, tends to be patriarchal yet defines relationships bilaterally, based on blood. The Inuit traditionally were bilateral but had a different understanding of family in which relationships were as much defined by names as by birth.<sup>25</sup> Among Athabaskan peoples, relationships traditionally were defined by clans with some groups being matrilineal and others patrilineal.<sup>26</sup> How can these different systems accommodate one another in our society today?

What happens when a marriage relationship accepted by one culture is rejected as incestuous by the other? This is the situation in Canada's North. According to Athabaskan tradition, a person should marry someone from a different clan: for example, Jane (Crow) could marry Mark (Wolf). Since clan membership is determined by the mother, their children, Jenny and Michael, would both be Crow; both would have to marry Wolf. The problem comes in the next generation. Jenny's daughter, Julia, would be

Crow. Michael's son, Murray, however, would be Wolf after his mother. According to Athabascan tradition, Julia (Crow) and Murray (Wolf) are free to marry each other. According to European tradition, they cannot because they are related more closely than permitted by law. On the other hand, according to European tradition, Julia can marry Jim, who is also Crow but not related to her by blood. According to Athabascan tradition, however, Julia cannot marry Jim since he is of the same clan. For Julia to marry Murray, she runs into penalties from Canadian law; for her to marry Jim, she effectively renounces her Athabascan culture.

A third example revolves around names. In EuroCanadian societies, children are often named after their parents or grandparents. In some Athabascan societies, however, it is the parents who are re-named following the birth of their children!<sup>27</sup> How does a EuroCanadian Canada, with its insistence on "legal" names, deal with Aboriginal societies in which names are routinely changed over the course of one's life.<sup>28</sup>

For many EuroCanadians, such examples have nothing to do with colonialism. Colonialism is a thing of the past; all people, regardless of cultural background, are free to play important roles in Canadian society. Other cultures may be accepted, respected and accommodated to some extent, nevertheless, there is also among many a sense that EuroCanadian values and practices are the norms of Canadian society.

For many Aboriginal people, however, such examples are very much indicative of an ongoing colonialism. Colonialism continues in laws that emphasize degrees and certificates while devaluing personal knowledge and experience. Cree in Northern Quebec / Ontario have to hire non-Cree to take tourists on boat trips in their own territory because they cannot pass the tests EuroCanadian governments have developed for certification. To be certified, guides must know "how to get back in the boat once you fall out." To be judged an expert guide among the Cree, however, one must know "how never to fall out the boat."<sup>29</sup> Colonialism continues in the business world which often tries to accommodate cultural differences but enforces compliance to standardization, and which values productivity and the bottom line over and against relationships and individuals. Colonialism continues in education systems that promote logic and reason while devaluing spirits and dreams. The result is, as Bishop MacDonald (Métis) pointed out in one presentation, the "bifurcation of body and soul."<sup>30</sup>

***Participant Views on the Relationship***

Many participants felt that the overall relationship between Aboriginal and EuroCanadian Anglicans in northern churches was good or, at least, better than in the old days. Gary pointed out that it would have been unthinkable to incorporate Aboriginal symbols or customs into Anglican services a few years ago but now such practices were accepted as natural. In fact, several Anglican congregations either held services in the local Aboriginal language or included portions of their service in that language. Outside of Whitehorse and Yellowknife, Aboriginal people held prominent positions within congregations. Frank elaborated on one difference between northern and southern congregations: in the South, power-sharing seemed to be built into the structure to ensure both Aboriginal and EuroCanadian representation in the diocesan power structure; in the North, however, power-sharing simply worked out that way as dioceses searched for people who were best qualified – their faith mattered; their ethnic background did not. Kudloo (Aboriginal) held a similar view. In her community, ethnicity was irrelevant. When something needed to be done, she simply called whomever was best qualified to do it.

At the same time, cautionary remarks were expressed by some Aboriginal and EuroCanadian participants. Aqpik, and others, wondered if anything would change *after* Harper's apology. Kevin wondered how much had really changed: if the price of gas and oil increased enough, would EuroCanadian Anglicans respect Aboriginal land ownership. Arthur talked about increased tensions between EuroCanadian and Aboriginal peoples because of Aboriginal people asserting their rights and power. Gary wondered how often he would have to apologize for the residential schools; the Apology had already been offered at the National level (Kyle and other clergy, however, felt it was very important to apologize at a personal level to whomever needed to hear the Apology, saying that frankly what happened in the south was too far away to matter in the North). Darien felt that Aboriginal people would be happier having their own place to worship (though it is unknown whether he was referring to segregation or tensions that had developed with the recent closure of the "Old Log Church" where Aboriginal people used to worship). Janet and others wondered why so few Aboriginal people attended their services. Alistair felt that there was no future for EuroCanadian people in the NWT while Joanne believed the residential school issue was only the "tip of the

iceberg” (Joanne).

Referring to the relationship that existed between Aboriginal and EuroCanadian peoples in the NWT, Lyle said:

There is a very strong pride in the Northwest Territories that “we got it right.” Now, that doesn’t mean that “we got it perfect” but it does mean “we got it right” in terms of how we do things. The way that Aboriginal / non-Aboriginal people work together, the kind of respect that we have for each other, the different cultures and different ways of doing things and so on – there’s a real strong pride in that and it’s bought into by everybody.

And yet, the Yellowknife Anglican Church had no Aboriginal people at its services and, in several other congregation, Aboriginal parishioners were present and involved in services yet somewhat separate and distant from the EuroCanadian parishioners during coffee hour.

### ***Conclusion***

The ACC approached reconciliation with its Aboriginal members in 1969 from a EuroCanadian perspective, focusing on Aboriginal empowerment, power-sharing initiatives, and moving from paternalism to partnership. Changes, while gradual, have been sustained over the years. As an institution, the ACC has moved beyond a EuroCanadian understanding of colonialism. This may explain why a number of participants felt the relationship between Aboriginal and EuroCanadian peoples was fairly good and why there seemed to be less interest in reconciliation, particularly in the NWT where the majority of clergy and bishops are Aboriginal. After all, how meaningful would an apology be coming from an Aboriginal bishop who had attended residential school? The relationship is less positive in the Yukon.

In other ways, however, the ACC, particularly at congregational and diocesan levels, has forgotten lessons that some missionaries recognized: the importance of developing relationships. In other words, the way to stop colonialism’s dehumanization of Aboriginal peoples is to humanize them by creating environments where relationships are fostered and nurtured. The ACC has yet to deal with the cultural divide that continues to be found in many of its congregations and that continues to affect its relationship with Aboriginal peoples in Northern communities where Aboriginal and EuroCanadian people worship together yet remain separate.

How far along the road to reconciliation are Aboriginal and EuroCanadian Anglicans in Canada's North? Lederach identified four qualities essential for reconciliation. Mercy is demonstrated by those Aboriginal Anglicans who have found healing in their faith and in forgiving. Truth is revealed as people tell their experiences – both good and bad, and historical records come to light. Justice occurs as the ACC confesses its guilt, accepts responsibility for its past, and makes reparations. Peace is found among parishioners and congregations. Much has been done. And yet – much remains to be done. If Aboriginal and EuroCanadian peoples in the NWT and Yukon cannot agree about the interpretation of the past, miscommunicate when talking in the present, and do not understand how different each other really is, then has reconciliation really begun at all?

### ***Endnotes***

1. John Paul Lederach, "Civil Society and Reconciliation," in *Turbulent Peace: The Challenges of Managing International Conflict*, ed. Chester A. Crocker, Fen Osler Hapson and Pamela Aal (Washington DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2001), 848.
2. The term "residential school" first appears in the 1920s (Alan Hayes, *Anglicans in Canada: Controversies and Identity in Historical Perspective* [Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2004], 31); the schools, regardless of what they were called, existed earlier. When "residential schools" first appeared is debated. For purposes of my research, the residential school era began in 1820 with the Rev. John West's arrival at Red River (Manitoba), and ended in 1969 with the withdrawal of the ACC from the residential school program.
3. How many residential schools existed is also debatable. According to the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (DIAND) website in 2006, one hundred thirty schools were officially recognized as residential schools or hostels. Of these, twenty-six were run by the ACC. The list, recognized in the Residential Schools Settlement, is a living document with more schools added as more information is uncovered (Residential Schools Settlement Fund, "Responses by Canada to Requests Made Pursuant to Article 12 to Add Institutions to the Settlement Agreement," *List of Residential Schools: Residential School Settlement: Official Court Notice*, last accessed 7 August 2010, <http://www.residentialschoolsettlement.ca/SchoolsEnglish.pdf>).

4. The final report, known as the *Hendry Report* and published in 1969 (reprinted in 1998), summarized the interaction between Aboriginal and EuroCanadian peoples as a situation:

... where a group of people, already buffeted by drastic social change and disorganization, were placed in an administrative straitjacket by an authoritarian or paternalistic government and deprived of the power and desire for independent action ...

The system was paternalism – a harsh and also stingy paternalism (Charles Hendry, *Beyond Traplines: Does the Church Really Care? Towards an Assessment of the Work of the Anglican Church of Canada with Canada's Native Peoples* [Canada: Ryerson Press, 1969], 27).

While critical of the ACC for its destructive attitudes (e.g., paternalism, arrogance, and racism), the report also recognized a positive dimension to its relationship with Aboriginal peoples:

On the one hand (missionaries) have smashed native culture and social organization. On the other hand they have picked up the pieces of an indigenous way of life which had been smashed by other Europeans – traders, soldiers, administrators – and have helped the people put the pieces together in a new shape (Hendry, *Beyond Traplines*, 21).

According to the report, and as mentioned at the beginning of this section, this mixed package in which “missionaries have been both a disruptive and an integrative force” (Hendry, *Beyond Traplines*, 21) reflected a “Jekyll-and-Hyde” history. The report concluded that, for the ACC to improve its relationship with Aboriginal peoples, the ACC would have to change its attitudes and move from paternalism to partnership (Hendry, *Beyond Traplines* [1969], 79; [1998], 101).

5. In 1969, the ACC withdrew from the residential school program, and began implementing the report's recommendations: In 1972, the ACC hired the Rev. Ernie Willie, who became the first Aboriginal person at the national office. Later, the ACC established the Subcommittee on Native Affairs (Joyce Carlson, *Dancing the Dream: The First Nations and Church in Partnership*, [Toronto: Anglican Book Centre, 1995], 32), which eventually evolved into the Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples. More Aboriginal people have since been ordained as clergy and even as bishops, including the current Bishop of the Arctic, Andrew Atagotaaluk (Inuit). A number of theological and training schools for Aboriginal people have been established, including the Arthur Turner Training School in the Diocese of the Arctic. In 2007, the Rt. Rev. Mark MacDonald (Métis) was appointed National Indigenous Bishop. For more information on the initiatives see the *Living the Apology* section of

the ACC website (<http://archive.anglican.ca/rs/index.htm>).

6. Other denominations also dealt with the residential schools issue, and offered apologies.
7. Not to be confused with the AHF established by the Federal Government in 1998 (<http://www.ahf.ca/faqs>).
8. ACC, *Indigenous Council Report to 2004 General Synod* (Toronto: The Anglican Church of Canada, 2004).
9. The Diocese of Cariboo declared bankruptcy in 2001 (Kathy Blair, "Diocese of Cariboo Plans Own Shutdown: Bishop Will Be Out of a Job," *Anglican Journal*, 2000, last accessed 4 March, 2011, [http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi\\_7042/is\\_7\\_126/ai\\_n28817649/?tag=content;col1](http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_7042/is_7_126/ai_n28817649/?tag=content;col1)).
10. For example Valerie Alia, *Names, Numbers, and Northern Policy: Inuit, Project Surname, and the Politics of Identity* (Halifax: Fernwood Publishing, 1994); Ken Coates, *Canada's Colonies: A History of the Yukon and Northwest Territories* (Toronto: James Lorimer and Company, 1985); and *Best Left as Indians* (Montreal-Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1991); René Fumoleau, *As Long As This Land Shall Last: A History of Treaty 8 and Treaty 11, 1870-1939* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2004); Shelagh D. Grant, *Arctic Justice: On Trial for Murder: Pond Inlet, 1923* (Montreal-Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2005); Robert Gordon Moyles, *British Law and Arctic Men: The Celebrated 1917 Murder Trials of Sinnisiak and Uluksuk, First Inuit Tried Under White Man's Law* (Burnaby: The Northern Justice Society, Simon Fraser University, 1989); and Nathan VanderKlippe, "What Happened to the Dogs?" *Uphere* 24, no.8 (September 2008): 62-70. Several Anglican bishops talked about colonialism in their writings including Archibald Fleming, *Archibald the Arctic: The First Bishop of the Arctic* (Great Britain: Saunders of Toronto Limited, 1965); Donald Marsh, "A History of the Work of the Anglican Church in the Area Now Known as the Diocese of the Arctic," *Arctic History* (Northwest Territories: Diocese of the Arctic, 1967); and John R. Sperry, *Igloo Dwellers Were My Church* (Yellowknife: Outcrop, the Northern Publishers, 2005).
11. This project focused on the present. Specific details of residential school experiences were not sought but some participants offered their stories.
12. It is impossible to elaborate on all the differences between the northern and southern contexts in this paper, but some are worth noting: First, geographical realities of the Arctic and Subarctic precluded widespread efforts to turn Aboriginal peoples into farmers. Secondly, while the Indian Act was passed in 1876, little effort was made to implement it in Canada's North; until WWII, government policy towards Aboriginal people in the North tended to be "best

left as Indians” which translated into less support or involvement in northern schools.

13. An exhibit sponsored by the Legacy of Hope Foundation in 2008 was entitled: *We were so far away: the Inuit experience of residential schools*. Its opening statement read simply: “We were far away from home, very far away; emotionally, geographically and spiritually.”
14. Another exhibit, launched at the National Archives of Canada and supported by the Legacy of Hope Foundation in 2009, was entitled: *Where are the children?*
15. William Carpenter Bompas, *Diocese of Mackenzie River* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1888), 42.
16. Bompas, *Diocese of Mackenzie River*, 53.
17. Henry Cook, *The Early Days of Education in the North* (Yellowknife: NWT Archives, N-1992-18, 1979), 6-9.
18. Archibald Lang Fleming, *Archibald the Arctic: The First Bishop of the Arctic* (Great Britain: Saunders of Toronto Limited, 1965), 294-295.
19. Donald Ben Marsh, “A History of the Work of the Anglican Church in the Area Now Known as the Diocese of the Arctic,” *Arctic History* (Yellowknife: Diocese of the Arctic, 1967), 6.
20. By 1967, four catechist training schools had been set up. During the Marsh era several Inuit catechists were ordained as priests: among them, Armand Tagoona, ordained in 1964 and the first “ordination to the Priesthood of any Eskimo”; Gideon Kitsualik in 1966; and Noah Nasook (no date given). Because of initiatives taken by the Inuit themselves, European / EuroCanadian missionaries, upon arriving in a new region, sometimes discovered that converts were already waiting for them (Marsh, *Arctic History*, 11-14).
21. John S. Milloy, “*A National Crime*” – *the Canadian Government and the Residential School System, 1879 to 1986* (Winnipeg: The University of Manitoba Press, 2003), 255-256.
22. Among the differences are historical events such as the Klondike Gold Rush and the attitudes towards Aboriginal peoples by the more influential missionaries.
23. Bompas refused to serve as an assistant priest under Robert McDonald who had been in the region longer because he could not accept that McDonald “though [his] superior in missionary ability” should have authority over him given that he was “a Native of this country” (Frank A. Peake, “From the Red

River to the Arctic: essays on Anglican missionary expansion in the nineteenth century,” *Journal of the Canadian Church Historical Society* 31, no. 2[October 1989]: 87). This may have been one reason why the CMS consecrated Bompas as Bishop rather than McDonald who had seniority and more success in his missions. It was shortly after Bompas’ consecration that McDonald married Julia Kutug, performing the marriage himself rather than inviting Bompas to officiate.

24. Patrick Moore, “Archdeacon Robert McDonald and Gwich’in literacy.” *Anthropological Linguistics* 49, no.1 (Spring 2007): 29.
25. Among Inuit peoples, names and gender are not connected. Names include the *atiq* or “soul-name” (which includes personality), carried over from a deceased person to a newborn named after the deceased. The *atiq* binds the newborn to relatives of the former carrier and to the social network of all who carry the same name. For more information see Alia, *Names*, 1994.
26. Athabascan societies tend to be matrilineal but, as Sharp discovered, matrilineality or patrilineality may depend on where the group is located (Henry S. Sharp, *The Transformation of Bigfoot: Maleness, Power, and Belief Among the Chipewyan* [Washington: The Smithsonian Institution Press, 1988], xiv).
27. Among Athabascan peoples, parents were traditionally renamed after their children (Marie-Françoise Guédon, *Fieldnotes on the Nabesna*, unpublished, 1969-1970).
28. Among the Inuit and other Aboriginal nations, names were traditionally changed when they failed in some way or one’s identity changed significantly. For example, if a person became sick and was not responding to treatment, his or her name was showing itself to be lacking in power. Changing the person’s name became a way to attach itself to stronger spirits (or, in the case of the Inuit, *atiq*) who might be able to effect healing (Alia, *Names*, 1994; Marie-Françoise Guédon, *Fieldnotes on the Inuit* (unpublished, 1965-1966).
29. The example was provided by Cree participants at the Tuktuk-Poro-Atihk Workshop in Ottawa in 2009 which I attended. More information on the workshop can be found at <http://aix1.uottawa.ca/~icul-ture/projects/tuktu/index.html> (last accessed 15 August 2011).
30. Remark made by Bishop Mark McDonald during his presentation, “Self-determination & governance,” in *Educational Series on Aboriginal Issues* (Oakville: St. Simon’s Anglican Church, 21 October 2009).

