

### **Quest for Respect Part III: The Next 150**

#### **Luke 18:18-30 by Patty Friesen (Oct.22/17)**

In the Quest for Respect for indigenous spirituality and identity, autonomy and relationship, we are challenged to discern what God is revealing to us in these days and what loyalty to Jesus looks like in the midst of Canada 150. As aboriginal writers say in *Surviving Canada 150*: For us, Canada 150 represents an opportunity to share some stories of this land and of the peoples from this land. It is also an opportunity for all peoples to come to terms with what it means to live together on the Indigenous lands we call Canada. To live together in a way that honours the treaties, and to figure out a way to live together in a manner that is mutually agreeable and mutually beneficial for all.

The art show at Wanuskewin challenges us all to think about the next 150 years together in Canada when indigenous people are leaders in politics, science, arts and spirituality. We need to imagine the next 150 years as moving from cultural genocide, poverty, and racism to learning the rich wealth of history and medicine and connection to earth and respect for elders that lies within indigenous culture. As we've been processing the sins of the past in adult education, we keep saying, we didn't know but now we do and so what's next?

Quoting Doug Cuthand from the Star Phoenix, "We witnessed Prime Minister Justin Trudeau humble himself and the country in front of the United Nations. He spoke candidly about Canada's ongoing and colonial relationship with the First Nations, saying, "We are greatly ashamed, Trudeau said, And for far too many Indigenous people, that lack of respect for rights still persists today." It was a speech the likes of which the United Nations is not used to hearing. But Cuthand says it comes down to money and

economic development, “We need an effort on par to the Marshall Plan that was used to rebuild Europe after the Second World War. Canada is a rich nation and the fact that 150 of our indigenous communities have to boil their water so it’s safe to drink is absolutely appalling. The fact that resources are extracted from our traditional lands with no revenue sharing is an enormous stumbling block in our development. Without the political power and financial resources, we are consigned to a stagnant life of poverty.”

After working for \_\_\_ years in social work, Harold Loewen has seen poverty. Harold is recently retired from his government job and now working for Egadz in Saskatoon, an inner city outreach for at risk youth and will share some reflections.

(conclusion) Shortly after being elected Mayor of Calgary, Naheed Nenshi challenged Calgarians to do “Three Things for Calgary.” He asked each citizen to think about three things that would make their street, neighbourhood, and city better and then, simply, do those things. Mayor Nenshi has reissued his challenge. This time he asked each Canadian to think about three things they could do for Canada to make Canada a better nation. In this spirit, I would challenge us to think of three things we can do to improve the lives of Indigenous peoples and in transforming the economic disparity between Canada and Indigenous nations. Let us pray:

Creator God who made and loves us all, thank you that we can live in these times of truth-telling and reconciliation with our indigenous neighbours. We pray for the wisdom and courage to stick our necks out in relationship, culture, spirituality and political advocacy. We have no clue where this journey will lead us but guide us faithfully each step of the way. Amen.