



RETURNING TO SPIRIT

VOLUME 3, ISSUE 2 JULY 19, 2010

THANK YOU!

Shortly after our last newsletter was distributed, we received the wonderful news that CCEPIRSS had been successful in getting the RTS funding “unstuck”!

We are very grateful to the CCEPIRSS Board of Directors, their legal team headed by Pierre Baribeau, and all of the Catholic Entities within CCEPIRSS for

their unwavering commitment to the mission of RTS. Without their support and persistence, RTS and its mission would have been in serious jeopardy.

The renewed funding from CCEPIRSS will ensure that the RTS process will continue to create reconciliation between Aboriginal

and non-Aboriginal communities across Canada.

We would also like to once again thank the many organizations and communities who supported us during those months when the funding was stuck. Without those contributions, RTS would not have continued to operate.

RECONCILIATION—WINNIPEG JUNE 2010

Reconciliation has been the most amazing process. The team of trainers helped to make this a safe journey for me and for everyone else. My eyes have been opened and I was able to receive the healing that I needed. I felt the compassion and understanding from those that I spoke with in the process. I am able to begin trusting again. I want to go out into the world, to my family and community to share what I've experienced here.

Phyllis Racette, Ebb and Flow First Nations, MB

This workshop made a difference in my life — doing completion with elders and other First Nation without being hurt. I was listened, I was accepted. This workshop gave me joy, peace to be able to share at a deep level with First Nation People. A greater awareness of my need to help my sisters to let go of past hurts. Arrange for more healing workshops.

Sr. Léa Archambault, St. Boniface, MB

It is up to me to make that difference. We have talked of understanding, acceptance, etc. it is now my responsibility to take it further perhaps into my community and I shall “do it”.

Thank you and your helpers for having made this transformation possible.

Phyllis Gibson, White Bear First Nations, SK

This workshop was truly a life giving experience, it really opened up a new vision and relationship for me as a non-Aboriginal person. To understand the cultural values of the natives. Also, this workshop has challenged me to make myself available and present for reconciliation and creating a new path to better future.

Augustine Ezediniru, Sagnkeen (Ft. Alexander), MB

COMING UP!

Special Event—Dec 5, Winnipeg, MB

Reconciliation Workshops

Jan 27-Feb 2, 2011, Yellowknife, NWT
Mar 24-30, 2011, Pr. George, BC



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THANK YOU!!

This newsletter was copied, collated, stapled and stuffed by a dedicated group of RTS volunteers in Winnipeg. Thank you to the Missionary Oblate Sisters (Olive Halpin) for covering the copy costs.

HOW THE RTS SEMINAR SERIES WAS, FOR ME, A "STEPPING STONE" TO FURTHER GROWTH!

WE HAVE TO
EDUCATE
OURSELVES
TO KNOW
WHO WE ARE.
THAT'S WHAT
I MEAN
WHEN I SAY,
"TEACH THE
CHILDREN".

EDDIE BENTON-
BANAI
OJIBWAY

In April 2008, I began experiencing the RTS Seminar Series. I wanted to deepen my understanding of the many concepts received in the RTS workshop, but more so, I wanted to deeply connect with the spirit of who I am and move forward in greater freedom.

I was very interested in the Seminar, "Conversations for Moving Forward". It was for me, a stimulus to move beyond barriers and obstacles which prevent new life and new dreams from becoming realities. Today, I find that initiating conversations of possibilities stimulates creative energies in me and around me.

The seminars on leadership, I

found very interesting and helpful. It stressed the importance of being true to who I am as a leader, of being in touch with my values and of freely choosing to pursue whatever I am committed to, in spite of obstacles.

The seminar on "Mapping and Strategic Planning", I found especially stimulating. I was asked to choose a project that could be life giving for me and to find ways of making it happen. This meant, making requests of people who could help to bring the project to reality. I had wanted to learn how to update our congregation's web site for some time but had not pursued the idea. It seemed too complicated, too huge an endeavor. The

encouragement of the team members and the seminar process was enough encouragement for me to begin a discovery journey which is today, on-going. With the help of a few people, I have learned how to up-date our website. There is no end to the learning process and therefore I do not hesitate to ask for help when needed. These requests lead me on a never-ending life-giving journey of discoveries.

If you are interested in discovering new possibilities and entering a transformation process, these seminars are for you!

Cécile Fortier, m.o.
Winnipeg, MB

A BISHOP'S TAKE ON THE 5-DAY WORKSHOP

Returning to Spirit is a creative initiative in seeking reconciliation between members of Christian churches and First Nations people regarding the Indian Residential School Legacy.

Engaging participants through a path of deepening self-understanding, a coming to terms with one's own internal obstacles to authentic encoun-

tering with the other, and a being summoned to attentive listening, Returning to Spirit attempts to build a new language oriented towards reconciliation and healing.

Like the work of ecumenical dialogue commissions, it seeks to create a space for honest dialogue and conversation between participants,

and to cultivate a discourse which fosters reconciliation.

Like ecumenical relations as a whole, while it involves communities of people, it also proceeds on this path of reconciliation one person at a time.

Bishop Donald Bolen
(Roman Catholic Diocese
of Saskatoon)



It is only by knowing ourselves that we can get in touch with our power. It is said, "Tell me what you know about yourself and I'll tell you what you know about God. Tell me what you know about God and I'll tell you what you know about yourself." As we increase knowledge of ourselves, as we choose to grow spiritually, as we clean up our act, then we can teach the children.

(www.whitebison.org)

COMBINED SEMINAR SERIES IN PR. GEORGE, B.C.

Another first in RTS history took place in May and June in Prince George. A team of trainers, along with Marc Pizandawac, delivered the Seminar Series to a mixed group of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal participants!

There are many Aboriginal participants in the Prince George area, who have taken the 5-Day workshop and Reconciliation workshop, who

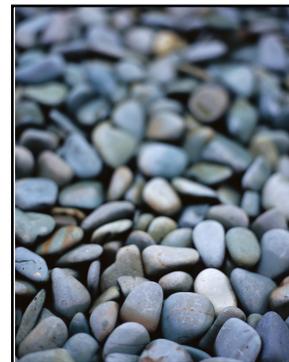
want to bring this work to their own communities. The first step in becoming a trainer, however, is to take the Seminar Series.

With no Aboriginal trainers in the Prince George area to deliver a Seminar Series to Aboriginal participants, we were in a Catch 22! In an innovative solution, Marc and his time devoted several Saturdays to delivering a modi-

fied Seminar Series program. Several seminars were delivered together each Saturday.

They were intense and long days, but the participants were exhilarated by the end of it... as were the trainers! A great example of RTS making the impossible... possible...

Thank you to the Diocese of Prince George for helping to create this new possibility!



A NECKLACE

Reconciliation can happen in strange and roundabout ways! A few months ago, a bead necklace was given to one of our Aboriginal trainers, Dennis Chartrand. The necklace had been made by a Missionary Oblate Sister who taught the girls beadwork while in Indian Residential Schools, decades ago.

Dennis and another trainer attended an Aboriginal Circle of Educators conference in Winnipeg, where Adam Beach (Hollywood actor) was a keynote speaker. Adam grew up on the Dog Creek First Nations Reserve on Lake Manitoba, and for part of his childhood was raised by his grandmother who had attended Indian Residential Schools as a child. Adam spoke of "going beyond, tak-

ing risks, fulfilling and following your heart and dreams, Residential school, culture, language, responsibility and more. Both trainers were amazed to see how his speech was so aligned with the philosophy of RTS!

After the presentation, Dennis managed to thread his way through the crowd of fans and paparazzi and reached Adam. He shook Adam's hand and thanked him for what he had said, sharing how in line it was with RTS. Reaching into his pocket, Dennis realized he had the Thunderbird necklace and recognized it was destined for Adam. He gave it to Adam and told him it had been blessed by the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal cultures. Adam received the necklace with much excite-

ment and put it on immediately. Dennis left him with an RTS brochure which Adam promised to read when he had the chance.

Four days later, true to his word, Adam phoned the RTS office to get more information. Who knows what will come out of that!

We never know when opportunities will present themselves to continue the process of reconciliation, to build bridges between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal. It can be something as simple as a bead necklace given in friendship...

What opportunities for reconciliation are showing up in your life? How are you living reconciliation in your life... in all areas of your life?

MAKE VISIBLE
WHAT,
WITHOUT YOU,
MIGHT PERHAPS
NEVER HAVE
BEEN SEEN.
ROBERT BRESSON

This RTS workshop is a truly healing reconciliation process. It has helped me look at my Journey since taking part I and now part III and completion with the Churches. We need to have more of our First Nations to take this. Keep on recruiting F.N. trainers and some day our Nation will be reconciled and healed.

*Bernice Saulteaux, Carry the Kettle, SK
Reconciliation Workshop, Winnipeg, MB, June 2010*

RTS RECONCILIATION WORKSHOP—WINNIPEG, MB—JUNE 24-30, 2010

THE
NONVIOLENT
APPROACH
DOES NOT
IMMEDIATELY
CHANGE THE
HEART OF THE
OPPRESSOR.
IT FIRST DOES
SOMETHING TO
THE HEARTS AND
SOULS OF
THOSE
COMMITTED
TO IT.
IT GIVES THEM
NEW SELF-
RESPECT; IT CALLS
UP RESOURCES
OF STRENGTH
AND COURAGE
THEY DID NOT
KNOW THEY
HAD.

DR. MARTIN
LUTHER KING, JR

Intentionality for reconciliation was super high in Winnipeg on the week of June 24 to 30th as 52 Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal/Church participants, along with 17 trainers, embarked on the second phase of the RTS process – the Coming Together! Anticipation, trepidation, expectation were in the air but for e-most this palpable commitment to being in service to reconciliation in the wake of the Residential School legacy.

The workshop was held at the Canadian Mennonite University (CMU) and was hosted by the RC Archdiocese of Winnipeg. Participants came from Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, and Nunavut (Canada), and from Minnesota (USA).

The first two days were for the non-Aboriginal/Church group (priests, ministers, sisters, a bishop, deacons and lay persons) and the next two for the Aboriginal group (First Nations and Inuit). These two days were spent on communication – what con-

nects us in conversations and what disconnects us – and how to say what we need to say to be complete without blaming or making wrong.

The last three days both groups came together. After a brief review of the 5-Day workshop which both group had taken, though separately, participants were invited to meet one on one with someone from the “other group” for a conversation for completion. The atmosphere was one of trust, respect, simplicity, reverence! Once back in the large circle – the sacred space – there was a time for sharing prayers and for sharing what was present to each one – joy, freedom, space, liberation, peace, reconciliation!

Asked how this workshop had made a difference in their life – here is a sample of what was said:

It opened me up to feel lighter about life.

In my ministry, I feel empowered to be intentional about

causing reconciliation to happen.

I felt the compassion and understanding from those that I spoke with in the process.

The most significant thing about this workshop is the power of the process to empower.

This workshop was truly a life giving experience, it really opened up a new vision and relationship for me as a non-Aboriginal person.

Our thanks to the RC Archdiocese of Winnipeg for hosting this workshop and to the CMU for opening their facilities to us. Our thanks also to Marc Pizandawac for being there in the delivery of the workshop! Marc often says that we must never forget that RTS is a gift from the Creator and that we are simply the ones to bring that gift forward. This reconciliation workshop proved once again to be gift from the Creator and we say, “Thank You!”

Olive Halpin, m.o.
Winnipeg, MB



It made me realize that I can change/alter my way of thinking, in terms of myself and others.

It has brought new understanding towards the Catholic Church. That “priests and nuns” are human beings and not aliens as I have thought for so many years. That one can have communication without yelling to be heard! There can be communication without blame, judgement nor hate.

I am now able to look at the Western Culture with new eyes and appreciation for the different races. I am empowered at peace and filled with awe at the workshop and myself. Awesome!!

*Marie- Lucie Uviluq, Cambridge Bay, NU
Reconciliation Workshop, Winnipeg, MB, June 2010*

STANDING IN THE RIVER

For those of you who have taken the 5-Day workshop, you may remember the River... a powerful image of how we can live our lives... facing the future or facing the past.

The other day, I was out in the bush, getting myself re-charged and re-energized. I find that the woods also stimulate my creative spirit. I make connections between things and new ideas come to me.

It suddenly came to me that when we are standing in the River, facing the past, we aren't necessarily holding onto the painful things, the resentful things, the hurt things. For sure, that might

be part of it. But a more subtle form of hanging onto the past comes forward, when we realize that we have been hanging onto the "golden era". You know... "it was so much better when Archie was chief", "our parish was so alive when Fr. Andy was here"... We get stuck on old relationships, old friendships, old ways of doing things.

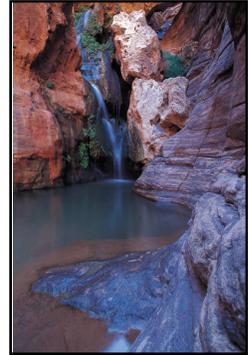
Nobody can measure up to our beloved deceased spouse. Nobody can measure up to our former band chief or pastor or bishop or boss or...

We engage in the old chant of "remember when...". But the truth is, we can get super stuck in that... to the point that the new potential spouse,

the new relationship, the new band chief, the new pastor, the new boss... doesn't even have a chance. They come down the River, out of the future, and we toss buckets of the past over them...

We compare them with everything from our "golden era" in the past... and we don't even give them a chance. We aren't open to seeing their unique giftedness... We only see our stuckness...

So, how do you want to live your life? Tossing buckets of the past into the future... never really experiencing life to the full... Or standing in the present, open to whatever surprises may come down the River?



SPECIAL EVENT 2010

The RTS Fund Development team has expressed their intention of holding a Special Event on December 5 2010 at Thunderbird House in Winnipeg. This Special Event will follow in the footsteps of the one held May 8th 2009 at the Norwood Hotel in Winnipeg. For those who attended, you will remember that last year's event was a huge success not only as a fundraiser but as a 4th circle creation where First Nation and non First-Nation

came together to celebrate life in the spirit of true reconciliation.

This year's Special Event will continue along this path with a commitment to generating, leading and developing a completely new event which furthers the growing spirit of reconciliation between Aboriginal and non Aboriginal people.

Now is the time for all of you who have expressed a desire

to volunteer with RTS to make yourselves known and to join in this exciting adventure!! Please call the RTS office (toll free at 1-877-772-1991 or email us at: winnipeg@returningtospirit.org in Winnipeg and let us know what you are ready to offer!

Jacques Lafrance
Special Event coordinator
Jacques.lafrances@returningtospirit.org

EACH PERSON
IS GOOD
IN THE SIGHT
OF THE
GREAT SPIRIT.
SITTING BULL

This workshop has made a tremendous shift in my life. I have wondered how the prophesy of the Anishinabe people that states "the Anishinabe people would bring harmony to the four races" could ever possibly happen. In the last three days I have witnessed that prophesy. I am clear in my role and responsibility in creating that prophesy. I have witnessed the healing of our grandmothers and grandfathers of the past as we heal in the present. Goodbye Residential School!!!

*Burma Bushie, Hollow Water First Nation, MB
Reconciliation Workshop, Winnipeg, MB, June 2010*

UPCOMING SCHEDULE

Our workshops are scheduled well into 2011.

Two Reconciliations are planned for the early new year, one in Yellowknife and one in Prince George, BC.

For more information on any of these workshops or to host a workshop, please contact our Winnipeg Office at 204-772-1991 or Toll free at 1-877-772-1991.

July 22-27, 2010
Aboriginal – Little Grand Rapids, MB
 Contact – Ernest Keeper
 204 982-2090

Aug 23-27, 2010
Non-Aboriginal – Winnipeg, MB
 Contact Deborah Clark ACE
 (204)-772-2231

Aug 23-27, 2010
Aboriginal – Fort Qu'Appelle, SK
 Contact: Lori Whiteman
 (306) 332-2689 (w) (306)550-5770(c)

Sept 13-17, 2010
Aboriginal – Hollow Water, MB
 Contact: Robyn Hall
 204-363-7241

Sept 20-24, 2010
Non-Aboriginal – Saskatoon, SK—Queen's House, Saskatoon, SK
 Contact: Lucie Leduc
 306-242-1916

Sept 27-Oct. 1, 2010
Aboriginal – Prince George, BC
 Contact: Jean Marie Lehtinen
 250-964-4475

Oct 18-22, 2010
Non-Aboriginal – Prince George, BC
 Contact: Jean Marie Lehtinen
 250-964-4475

Oct 24-28, 2010
Aboriginal – Saskatoon, SK—Queen's House, Saskatoon, SK
 Contact: Norman Opekokew
 306-829-2156

Nov 10-14, 2010
Non-Aboriginal – Yellowknife, NWT
 Contact: Gail Paquin
 867-920-2129

Nov 24-28, 2010
Aboriginal – Yellowknife, NWT
 Contact: Gail Paquin
 867-920-2129

Contact the Winnipeg Office if you would like to see a workshop in your area.

LIFE IS LIKE
 PHOTOGRAPHY.
 YOU USE THE
 NEGATIVE TO
 DEVELOP.
 ANONYMOUS

A LEAF OR A KAYAK

Have you ever watched a leaf drifting along on a stream? It gets caught in the current, swept along over rocks and rapids. Sometimes it ends up caught in a little back eddy, lazily going around in circles, going nowhere.

That's how we live our lives sometimes... We are swept along on the current of life, over rocks and rapids, sometimes even over waterfalls! It can be kind of scary, kind of fast... and we really don't feel like we have control over our lives.

Sometimes we get stuck in a backwater, going around in

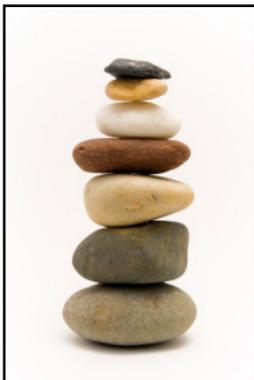
circles. It's kind of safe in this little backwater. No rushing force of current to sweep us along. We can get comfortable here too. But we're also sort of stuck... We're safe... but not really going anywhere. We could stay there an awfully long time too... maybe even for ever...

Have you ever seen a kayaker moving in a river. They go with the flow for the most part, but they can steer themselves around. Even if they go over a waterfall, or bump up against a rock, they somehow seem to make it through. They can't avoid all obstacles, but they can handle them.

Sometimes, they even take a breather in a little back eddy.

We can live our lives like that kayaker too. We can go with the flow of life... swept along by the current of life... but directing ourselves nevertheless... And sometimes we do need a breather, and we take a rest in a backwater... But in the end, we know that life isn't lived in a backwater, life is lived out in the river... And we know that we are the ones who can move us out there...

Sometimes we're a leaf... sometimes we're a kayaker... always we have the choice as to which we will be...



GRATITUDE AND BEST WISHES

It is with a sad, but grateful heart, that we bid farewell to Sr. Tarianne DeYonker op, who has been elected to the leadership of her religious community, the Dominican Sisters of Adrian, Michigan.

Tarianne made her first RTS workshop in October 2007, in the Diocese of Prince George. Gripped by the power of RTS to transform lives, Tarianne entered into the trainer development process. By the summer of 2008, Tarianne was on the non-Aboriginal core team, and has

been a valued member of the team since then.

With a background in Marriage and Family Counseling, Tarianne was always excited to share how RTS was transforming the way in which she counseled her clients, helping them, and her, to move forward.

We would also like to thank Bishop Gerry Wiesner omi and the Diocese of Prince George, for sharing Tarianne's talents with RTS, and for supporting her in her ministry with RTS.

We wish Tarianne all the best in her new ministry with her community, and know that she will continue to live the principles of RTS in her life! Who knows, perhaps she will find time to come back for a workshop or two!!



SPOTLIGHT ON A BOARD MEMBER—JOANNE MARTELL

I was born to two hard working people; Edwin and Mary Anne Martell. I am the oldest of eight children. My father was an addictions counselor and my mother was a language instructor.

I am a single mother of six children (only one 17 year old at home now) and ten grandchildren. That makes for a busy and blessed life. My grand babies bring me so much joy and what a gift from God!

I work in the finance department and have been all my working life. I worked for Waterhen Lake First Nation for twenty five years and my current employer is the Flying Dust First Nation doing the same kind of work. I have been commuting to Flying Dust for the last five years. I enjoy working in finance as it's awesome to get paid to do

what you like. That is a bonus!

I was introduced to RTS in 2005 by Kurt Stang. He would not let up on me and today I am grateful for that. I had a full life but was left wondering if that was all there was to life. My life at the time seemed to be going well but I often felt as if there had to be more joy to living. I remember looking over the form that I had to fill out and I wanted to let go of what I thought was holding me back. I went to that workshop with the intention of doing what I had to do to break free. Attending the workshop was an eye opener for me. It changed my life forever. I can still feel the freedom from bondage of the past. It was enlightening and I wanted to give back.

I want to be a trainer. I want others to have what was so

freely given to me. I want the whole world to experience this freedom. It takes commitment to deliver this work and I thank Marc for saying yes to his vision and living that vision. I thank all the trainers who are working hard to deliver the workshop to other communities. Thank you to the Board (past and present) and to Anne Taylor for seeing everything through. May God go with us on this journey.



ONCE SOCIAL
CHANGE BEGINS,
IT CANNOT BE
REVERSED.
YOU CANNOT
UN-EDUCATE THE
PERSON WHO
HAS LEARNED TO
READ.
YOU CANNOT
HUMILIATE THE
PERSON WHO
FEELS PRIDE.
YOU CANNOT
OPPRESS THE
PEOPLE WHO ARE
NOT AFRAID
ANYMORE.
CESAR CHAVEZ

RETURNING TO SPIRIT—RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL RECONCILIATION INC.

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Newsletter articles are welcome!
Send to the Editor (Gigi Jakobs):
communications@returningtospirit.org

Thanks to Olive Halpin Cécile Fortier,
Joanne Martell, Jacques Lafrance, Gigi
Jakobs, Don Bolen, Anne Taylor, Dennis
Chartrand, for contributions & photos in
this edition.

Next edition—October 15, 2010



Returning to Spirit (RTS) is a non-profit organization that designs and delivers workshops and training programs for reconciliation within the context of residential school issues that have negatively impacted First Nations People, Religious communities and Canadian society in general.

Our focus is on moving people forward through the principles of personal empowerment. This defines all our work, including coaching sessions and consulting, which are designed to support individuals, families, organizations and whole communities to move forward in life.

Our work goes beyond healing. It provides conditions for transformation in personal, family, community, and organizational life.

UPDATE YOUR INFORMATION

Have you moved recently? Changed your phone number or your email address?? Do you want to keep up to date with RTS workshops and information? Want to know when the next Reconciliation Workshop is going to happen in your area?

If YES, then we invite you to fill out this change of address information and either fax it to us (403-270-3963) or mail it (to one of the addresses above), or email the info to us (info@returningtospirit.org). Otherwise... we can't reach you!

Please print neatly (especially email address)

Name: _____

Address: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Province: _____

Ph # (H): _____ Ph # (W): _____

Email: _____

A FRIEND IS
SOMEONE WHO
KNOWS THE
SONG IN YOUR
HEART,
AND CAN SING IT
BACK TO YOU
WHEN YOU HAVE
FORGOTTEN THE
WORDS.
DONNA ROBERTS