

## Mamow be-mo-tay-tah/Let Us Walk Together



*Mamow be-mo-tay-tah/Let Us Walk Together* (Canadian Ecumenical Anti-racism Network, 2009) is a compilation of articles by Aboriginal writers gathered to help people of Canada engage with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The following is an excerpt from the introduction by Harley Eagle, describing how the journey to right relations must be a journey to unmask racism in our communities and our churches and face our own power and privilege.

“...you will hear *Our Voices* as Native Peoples of this land talk about the effects of racism and oppression on us, and our communities, and thoughts on paths of healing and being anti-racist...”

...For many, the process of colonization is a process that happened in some distant land many years ago. Yet for others it is a process that is ongoing, alive and well in our communities and indeed within ourselves. It seems most people understand colonization as only the subjugation of a People and the taking of their land. What is important to remember is that it was also about changing the world view of the Original Peoples....

...For most Indigenous Peoples from this part of the world there was a realization that in order to walk in a way that provided for balance both within a human being and external to a human, a way

of living was required that paid respectful attention and relationship to all things to insure a healthy existence. Therefore respectful relationship to all things was a hallmark of the cultures of the People of this land and at its core a way of living with and for the environment rather than seeking to control the land for personal profit.

When Indigenous people speak of racism, they often make connections with the effects on the land and the need for freedom to live walking in balance within ourselves and all that surrounds us and to continue that cycle in and for our children...

In looking at the symbol of the Medicine Wheel we are reminded that it holds deep meaning for us as we progress on life's journey. It finds its logic in the patterns of nature, the directions, the four basic elements. It expresses cycles just as we find in the natural world, the seasons, the cycle of day and night and the natural rhythms of our bodies. We are told by Indigenous teachings that in order to walk as balanced human beings, we need to pay attention to the four areas within us expressed as the Spiritual, Emotional, Physical and Intellectual quadrants...

...Perhaps one of the most vital of needs to embark on this anti-racism endeavour is to be able to listen deeply. The stories you will hear go beyond simply gathering information. If we listen deeply, they will lead us to look deeply at the issues and circumstances that surround the difficult relations both historically and presently between dominant Canada and descendants of its Original Peoples. Deep listening will take us to a place of asking why it all happened and will whet our appetite to dig for deeper understanding. With deeper understanding come creative and holistic solutions toward a healing journey where we all have a place and responsibility to each other and to the land.

Deep listening leads to connecting to one another in authentic ways. We cannot do this work alone nor can we jump too quickly to simply getting along. We need to enter into a process that helps us embrace the myriad difficult issues before us: the Indian Residential School experience and its legacy in our communities; treaty rights violations; the murder of Aboriginal women going unnoticed; Canadian apartheid through the Reserve system; poverty; land and resource exploitation – the list goes on. Common to all these issues is racism.”

Questions for reflection:

1. What do I need to know more about in order to understand racism experienced by Aboriginal people in Canada? Where can I find the information I need to understand my part in racism?
2. What am I as an individual – or we as members of a community – able and willing to do to become informed about the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and to support community engagement?