

## CHAPTER 3

# WHEN WORLDS COLLIDE



*My initial reaction to arriving (in Mistissini): "Now, what's up with these Cree? Are they mute and do not speak? Are they taking the Mickey? Such impolite activity!" In truth, the Cree didn't do too much chattering, and a sort of tension was hovering. Soon enough all was well and good. It was this way for them, now we understood. It was not us who taught them to speak, but rather they who taught us to listen.<sup>296</sup>*

*The Singing Mediator* in the Mali-Burkina Faso example illustrates how engaging conflicting parties' fundamental worldviews can help create conditions for meaningful and lasting reconciliation. But what happens when the fundamental worldviews of the parties are not only different but actually collide? How can dispute resolution and peace processes

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<sup>296</sup> Maryse Demers, "Lend Me Your Shoes," *Cantilevers* 6 (1999): 53.

engage both worldviews and bridge conflict? This chapter starts with a brief first person narrative that illustrates the challenge of working through conflict when the parties' ways of framing reality, and hence code of ethics, differ. I then describe the following worldviewing skills: shifting worldview rigidity to flexibility; learning to listen for worldview difference; and creating shared pictures. Finally, I end with a story that illustrates how creating shared pictures between communities entrenched in deep-rooted conflict can lay the relational foundation for addressing difficult substantive issues and more meaningful reconciliation. These stories also illustrate that reconciliation is not an end goal but rather an on-going dynamic relationship "full of energy and differences."<sup>297</sup> In this way, rather than escalate conflict, worldview differences offer an opportunity to deepen one's own worldview and broaden one's understanding about life itself.

### **The Story of a Francophone-Cree Youth Exchange**

In the 1990's I worked as a group leader for a youth intercultural exchange program called Chantiers Jeunesse. First Nations communities would invite this organization to bring six to twelve francophone youth from around the province of Quebec to their communities for the summer to participate in an intercultural exchange and to work on a community development project.<sup>298</sup> One of these exchanges was with Mistissini, a Cree community in northern Quebec. The youth band council initiated this project with the goal to improve francophone – Cree relations and strengthen Cree culture. Both groups were fighting for self-determination and often found themselves pitted against each another. Tensions were

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<sup>297</sup> Assefa, "Peace and Reconciliation as a Paradigm: A Philosophy of Peace and Its Implications on Conflict, Governance and Economic Growth," 4.

<sup>298</sup> These youth exchanges were modelled after the European youth projects to reconstruct Europe after World War I and World War II. Their mission was to foster mutual understanding while reconstructing European infrastructures that had been demolished.

particularly high as the Oka crisis,<sup>299</sup> the fight over Hydro Quebec,<sup>300</sup> and the Quebec Referendum of 1995<sup>301</sup> played centre stage in recent years. The band council hoped an intercultural youth exchange project would help foster improved relations between the two groups and strengthen Cree culture.

As group leaders, my colleague and I brought six francophone youth to the community, who were then matched with six Cree youth. We lived together for the summer in the bush with an elder who taught us how to build a traditional Cree cultural camp. We learned how to prepare the land for a culture camp, build a large tipi and Chaptuan,<sup>302</sup> and most importantly how to live together in ways that valued worldview pluralism.

I learned that this project had been attempted the year before; however the Cree youth had left the project after only one week because of an underlying worldview conflict. With this in mind, I developed, along with my colleague, an extensive pre-departure orientation for the francophone youth, which included an intercultural skills module as well as presentations from resource people from Mistissini. When the Cree and francophone youth finally came together in Mistissini, my co-group leader and I carefully designed activities that reflected the differing culturally relevant ways of addressing group inclusion needs. For example, we balanced

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<sup>299</sup> In 1990, there was an armed stand off between the Canadian army, the *Securité Quebécois*, and the Iroquois over land that the town of Oka wanted for a golf course and the Iroquois claimed was their traditional burial grounds.

<sup>300</sup> During the 1990's the Cree fought against Hydro Quebec's plan to build a dam on their territories.

<sup>301</sup> In 1995, Quebec held a referendum to decide whether they would remain a part of Canada or separate. Many Indigenous people within the province of Quebec opposed separation as they were concerned about their own rights for self-determination.

<sup>302</sup> A Chaptuan is a large tent traditionally used for feasts and other important community gathering and events.

activities that were verbal and expressive to address francophone inclusion needs with more quiet and non-interference activities for the Cree youth.<sup>303</sup> What I learned from this experience mostly relates to the francophone youth, I therefore make only occasional reference to the Cree experience.

Despite my best efforts, after about four days some of the francophone youth came to me very upset and angry with the Cree youth. Many wanted to leave. They complained angrily that the Cree youth were not friendly, they never looked them in the eyes or asked them questions. In addition, some claimed, the Cree were lazy and never got up as early to begin work. Finally, others were upset that in the day some Cree youth would sleep on their beds. I realized that rudimentary intercultural training was not enough. Worldviewing skills can only be developed in relationship.<sup>304</sup> No matter how much we learn theoretically, when worldviews collide our response is emotional.

The francophone youth demonstrated what is at the heart of many relationships across worldview difference, particularly those with colonial histories. Rather than question oneself and one's own way of seeing and being in the world, the youth's initial reaction was to dismiss, ridicule, and reject the Cree youth's ways of seeing and being.

The francophone youth were exemplifying what Mary Clark refers to as rigid worldviews; they could only see the conflict from within their own framing of reality.<sup>305</sup> Clark has examined worldviews throughout the world and has found that some worldviews are more adaptable in the face of change than others and can be seen on a continuum of

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<sup>303</sup> Michelle LeBaron identifies three different ways to categorize cultural starting points: high and low context communication; individualism and communitarianism; and specificity and diffuseness. See LeBaron, *Bridging Cultural Conflicts: A New Approach for a Changing World*.

<sup>304</sup> Marcos, *Our Word Is Our Weapon*, 391.

<sup>305</sup> Clark, *In Search of Human Nature*, 377.

rigidity to flexibility.<sup>306</sup> When a person (or community) who holds a **flexible** worldview encounters another person (or community) with a different worldview they are able to maintain their own worldview and learn about the other group's cosmology with ease and curiosity. On the other hand someone coming from a **rigid** worldview encountering another with a different cosmology will react by dismissing the difference as inferior or even wrong and proceed to impose their worldview through every means possible.<sup>307</sup> Going back to Nudler's thesis that worldviews hold the most fundamental and important human need for meaning, it is understandable that someone holding a rigid worldview would be very threatened by a different cosmology. Rather than questioning one's own worldview and hence the very meaning of one's existence, it is far easier to dismiss and try to dominate the other worldview.<sup>308</sup>

When "worlds collide," our code of ethics may be inadvertently violated, evoking deep feelings of indignation and even outrage.<sup>309</sup> In turn, strong emotions such as anger or outrage can activate the limbic system in our brain, which in turn transmits an adrenal message to either fight or flight.<sup>310</sup> For example, the francophone youth's indignation led them to feel victimized on the one hand, wanting to leave the project. On the other hand, they slipped into an offender role as they spoke in disrespectful ways about the Cree. In this way, a violation of deeply held principles can launch parties into a

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<sup>306</sup> Ibid, Mary Clark, "Symptoms of Cultural Pathologies: A Hypothesis," in *Conflict Resolution Theory and Practice: Integration and Application*, ed. Dennis & van der Merwe Sandole, Hugo (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1993), 44-49; Clark, *In Search of Human Nature*, 379.

<sup>307</sup> This is particularly problematic when a person or group utilizes coercive means by drawing on economic, political, and military power sources unavailable to the other person or group.

<sup>308</sup> Redekop, *From Violence to Blessing: How an Understanding of Deep-Rooted Conflict Can Open Paths to Reconciliation*, 34.

<sup>309</sup> Clark, *In Search of Human Nature*, 188-89.

<sup>310</sup> Ibid., 217.

deep-rooted victim-offender cycle as each group's code of ethics is violated. In these circumstances, Redekop suggests that we must deal with the pain, break the trance,<sup>311</sup> and override our initial reactive responses in order to move relationships towards reconciliation.<sup>312</sup> Learning worldviewing skills that soften worldview rigidity and foster flexibility is a key element often overlooked but essential in transcending deep-rooted victim-offender cycles.

### **From Rigid to Flexible Worldviews**

With a little guidance the francophone youth were able to quickly learn new worldviewing skills that enabled them to understand their own cultural lens, become aware of different ways of seeing and being in the world, and avoid spiralling into an endless victim-offender cycle. I listened to them fully and asked them to think about what offends them and try to identify what this told them about their own culture.

At first they resisted my suggestion because they were very angry and wanted to leave the program. I persisted and asked that one of their complaints was that the Cree never looked them in the eye and I wondered what that told them about their own culture. The participant that was most upset by this discovered that eye contact and a great deal of verbal communication were important to her. Without that she felt unwelcome and even rejected. Similarly, another participant began to discover that a certain amount of personal space is important to her and that she did not like other people lying on her bed. Finally, the participant who was the most upset about what he perceived as the laziness of the Cree youth discovered that he had a strong Protestant work ethic that

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<sup>311</sup> See Redekop, *From Violence to Blessing: How an Understanding of Deep-Rooted Conflict Can Open Paths to Reconciliation*, 291.

<sup>312</sup> *Ibid.*, 288-91.

placed a high value on being punctual and working long hours.<sup>313</sup> For many of the youth it was the first time they had identified specific values related to their culture.<sup>314</sup>

I then asked them to suspend judgment over the next few days and whenever they felt offended to think about what that said about their own values and culture and to also develop a sense of curiosity about what that may indicate is important to Cree culture. This was no easy task because the francophone youth genuinely felt excluded, rejected, and disrespected. Suspending judgment entails attending to and releasing emotional reactions and choosing instead an attitude of openness and curiosity.<sup>315</sup> In developing an openness to another worldview, the francophone youth were able to adjust their initial emotional responses and develop a sense of inquiry; they also gained knowledge about themselves and even life itself.

### Learning To Listen To Worldview Difference

Soon, the francophone youth began to realize that the Cree youth have different notions of personal space, time, work ethics, and communication. For example, one youth told me she realized the lack of eye contact and verbal communication may indicate that the Cree value silence and could even demonstrate respect by allowing the francophone youth to fit into the larger group in the way they are most comfortable. By suspending judgment, she began to not only understand another worldview but also began to develop an appreciation for silence and non-interference. By the end of the project, both the francophone and Cree youth spent

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<sup>313</sup> LeBaron explains that time and work is one of the most common intercultural misunderstanding; see LeBaron, *Bridging Cultural Conflicts: A New Approach for a Changing World*, 275.

<sup>314</sup> LeBaron explains nothing is culturally neutral and therefore it is important to understand your own cultural lens; see *Ibid*, 275.

<sup>315</sup> LeBaron describes these skills as developing a *spirit of inquiry* (awareness increases, perspective broadens, and starting points are explored) and a *spirit of release* (judgment does not block perception) in 2003, 142.

much of their time together enjoying shared silence. In fact, many francophone youth reported that after their return to their home communities, friends would ask why they were no longer talkative. In an interview with *The Cree Nation*, a francophone participant, Isabelle Gauthier, explained that after this project she no longer saw “the point in talking for the sake of talking.”<sup>316</sup> This was certainly in stark contrast to the beginning of the project when many participants felt anxious with silence.<sup>317</sup> Robert Vachon explains that as we develop a rich and full inner life, we have less need to talk and instead discover “movement and growth in silence and stillness.”<sup>318</sup>

Another youth realized that in his frenzy to work hard he missed opportunities to build quality relationships. He noticed that the Cree youth may not start work as early as him, but that they actually got a lot more done in a shorter amount of time because they talked together about the work and therefore came up with ways to accomplish tasks with less effort and more efficiency. Again Isabelle Gauthier explained that at first she thought the “Crees are unorganised compared to non-Natives. But (now) I feel it is the opposite, that non-Natives get too stressed out by deadlines. It is something that I learned, just relaxing around time.”<sup>319</sup> In essence, the Cree taught the francophone youth the art of *being* rather than *doing*.

Yet another youth who had been outraged about Cree youth sleeping on her bed begun to understand that different cultures have different notions of ownership, sharing, and

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<sup>316</sup> William Nicholls, “Working Together Respecting Differences,” *Nation* 3, no. 22 (1996): 12.

<sup>317</sup> Ibid.

<sup>318</sup> Vachon, “Beyond the Religion of Human Rights, the Nation State, and the Rule of Law,” 7.

<sup>319</sup> Nicholls, “Working Together Respecting Differences,” 11.

personal space.<sup>320</sup> She realized her culture values individually owned property whereas perhaps the Cree saw objects as something to be shared. While she still struggled with her emotional reaction, she was able to suspend judgment and become curious about another way of being and perceiving.

One participant began to feel Cree culture was better than francophone culture and began to reject francophone culture and adopt Cree ways. In his eagerness to “go Native,” the Cree youth began to distance themselves from him. He learned that taking on another’s culture created inauthentic relationships. Slowly he learned the importance of valuing his own culture and how to engage respectfully with another. In *Towards Ethnorelativism: A Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity*, Milton Bennett describes the phenomenon of denigrating one’s own culture and believing another culture as superior as “reversal.”<sup>321</sup> Bennett explains that while this may appear to be a more enlightened stance than denigrating the other culture, in fact it is “only changing the center of ethnocentrism.”<sup>322</sup> Bennett explains that “reversal” can be a normal developmental stage in learning intercultural skills; however in order to progress to more authentic relationships of mutuality, a person stuck at this stage must first learn to value his/her own culture.<sup>323</sup>

The youth had learned vital worldviewing skills. Rather than using their judgments as an excuse to reject others or

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<sup>320</sup> Western culture sees property as individually owned, while many indigenous cultures traditionally do not have a concept of property rights, but rather a code of ethics that emphasizes one’s responsibility to use things “in a spirit of harmonization with all that exists” in Vachon, “Beyond the Religion of Human Rights, the Nation State, and the Rule of Law,” 13.

<sup>321</sup> Milton Bennett, “Towards Ethnorelativism: A Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity,” in *Education for the Intercultural Experience*, ed. Michael Paige (Yarmouth: Intercultural Presss, 1993), 19; Vachon, “Beyond the Religion of Human Rights, the Nation State, and the Rule of Law.”

<sup>322</sup> Bennett, “Towards Ethnorelativism: A Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity,” 20.

<sup>323</sup> *Ibid.*, 21.

themselves, they learned to use these strong emotions, such as indignation, as a map to better understand their own culture and that of the Cree. Marcos explains, "by listening and learning about the differences of the other, (we can) understand better what (is) different in us."<sup>324</sup> Building relationships across differences provides an opportunity to strengthen, appreciate, revise, and at times re-make our worldviews.<sup>325</sup>

This was a turning point for the group; they began to build truly mutual relationships with one another. While during the previous year all Cree youth had left the project, this year dozens of Cree youth soon joined the project. In addition, as the francophone youth became more inquisitive about Cree ways and culture, the Cree youth developed a sense of curiosity and interest in their own culture, igniting a new thirst for knowledge and connection to their own roots.

### **Creating Shared Pictures**

Soon the group began to develop shared pictures,<sup>326</sup> they were able to be loyal to their own worldviews, yet develop ways to work and live together that reflected a truly intercultural environment. For example, each youth led different aspects of the project and had to consider the various world frames within the group. One of the Cree youth took on coordinating work responsibilities for the entire group. Sometimes he encouraged the francophone youth to slow down, take time to enjoy what they were working on, and the people they were working with. Likewise, he would motivate some of the Cree youth to get up earlier to begin work with everyone.<sup>327</sup> At the beginning of the project, English was the common language; however as relationships developed

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<sup>324</sup> Marcos, *Our Word Is Our Weapon*, 391.

<sup>325</sup> LeBaron discusses this practice as attunement and alignment. See LeBaron, *Bridging Cultural Conflicts: A New Approach for a Changing World*, 170.

<sup>326</sup> Shared pictures is a term used in *Ibid.*, 291.

<sup>327</sup> Nicholls, "Working Together Respecting Differences," 11.

French, Cree, and English were used interchangeably and sometimes all within the same sentence.

Creating an environment where everyone's way of framing reality was valued led the francophone youth to develop a new awareness of and empathy for the experiences of the Cree youth. In the evenings, we frequently shared stories around a campfire or went to the nearest town for an evening of dancing. Campfire stories included traditional legends imbued with metaphor and proverbs as well as personal experiences and sometimes even song.<sup>328</sup> For example, near the end of the project, two Cree youth shared their experiences of being called "stupid lazy Indians" when they went to the neighbouring white school. Francophone youth began to see how rigid worldviews can easily degenerate into cruel racist comments like these and understood better the importance of learning worldviewing skills as a way to humanize relationships across difference.

Some evenings we canoed across the lake to the reserve. From the reserve we took a mini van down a dirt road for one and a half hours until we reached the neighbouring francophone town, Chibougamoo, where we went dancing. As frequently happened, when the bar closed a fight broke out between Cree and francophone youth from the region. Regardless of whether francophone or Cree youth had started the fight, the police would often arrest the Cree youth. While participants from our program were never arrested, this deeply affected the francophone youth as they witnessed

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<sup>328</sup> Storytelling metaphors, legends, myths, proverbs, and song are all windows into a person or culture's worldview; see LeBaron, *Bridging Cultural Conflicts: A New Approach for a Changing World*, 275-83. For example, during environmental negotiations a developer may refer to a forest as a "farm" to be clearcut; whereas a conservationist may refer to the same forest as apart of our "living planet" to be preserved. Each metaphor gives us a clear image the relationship each person has to the forest and conveys a glimpse into their meaning-making worlds in Docherty, *Learning Lessons from Waco: When the Parties Bring Their Gods to the Negotiation Table*, 290.

first hand injustices inflicted on people they had come to love.<sup>329</sup>

Worldviewing skills go beyond improving interpersonal relationships, they have the capacity to deepen our own cultural roots, broaden our understanding of life, and ultimately develop the fullness of our humanity. Moreover, creating shared pictures that first work to open the heart and build relationships can generate a kind of creative tension leading to innovative ideas – an important ingredient in transforming deep-rooted inter-community conflicts and laying conditions for meaningful and lasting reconciliation. To illustrate this potential, I will end this section with an inspiring story about how a community play transformed the relationship between Enderby, a small predominantly white rural town in the Okanagan, and the neighbouring Splots'in First Nation.

### **Not The Way I Heard It**

Cathy Stubington, a Euro-Canadian puppet theatre artist, moved to Enderby, a small town in the north Okanagan in 1994. She was unsure what she could do with her skills and how she could contribute to this town. After having three children in two years, she eventually initiated, with the support of a steering committee, a project called *The Enderby and District Community Play Project*. The idea for the project was modelled after English playwright and director Anne Jellicoe's work in which "a core group of professional theatre artists work in a community for a period of time to facilitate

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<sup>329</sup> An ethic of love in peace-building, community building, and dispute resolution is explored in the following texts: Elise; Brigagao Boulding, Clovis; Clements, Kevin., "Practice Love and Sustain Hope," in *A Handbook of International Peace-building: Into the Eye of the Storm*, ed. John Paul and Jenner Lederach, Janice (San Francisco: Jossey -Bass, 2002), 299-304; Clark, *In Search of Human Nature*, 221-28; bell hooks, *All About Love: New Visions* (New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 2000), 86-101.

and create a play about the community, for the community, and put it together with as many members of the community as possible.<sup>330</sup> The play's story line is drawn from local people's real lived experiences. As Stubington gathered stories, she realized there was something significant missing – the voices and stories from the neighbouring Splats'in First Nation. Moreover, she realized that she, like many others from Enderby, had never even talked to one person from this First Nation community. Like many rural communities in Canada, the lines between First Nations and Euro-Canadian cultures are solidly drawn. Racism runs deep and contact is often minimal.<sup>331</sup> She was unsure what to do about this but decided that the play would only be successful if it managed to bridge this gap.

Eventually, Stubington contacted the Splats'in band office to discuss her play and the possibility of their participation. Soon she was invited to a band council meeting, which eventually led her to build good relationships with the community. As she got to know the community, the more she realized how different their cultures were, and the less sure she became on how to proceed. Her persistence, however, paid off. She was finally introduced to the Splats'in story-keeper,<sup>332</sup> Rosalind Williams. Trust was built incrementally as they found ways to work together in a spirit of equality and respect for their respective perspectives. As Stubington became aware that it would be inappropriate to write the First Nations segments herself, she asked Williams if she

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<sup>330</sup> Cathy Stubington, "A Panel Discussion on Cultural Development" (paper presented at the Creative Cities Network Inaugural Conference, Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue, Vancouver, November 2003).

<sup>331</sup> Dorothy Christian, personal communication, December 2003.

<sup>332</sup> A story-keeper is responsible for keeping stories about the community, its members, and the land. Based on an oral tradition, the story-keeper must have an impeccable memory as she or he must remember who is related to whom, how the community relates to other communities, and to the land and to resources; Dorothy Christian, e-mail communication, January 15, 2004.

would like to co-write the play, along with herself and Vancouver director and playwright James Fagan Tait,<sup>333</sup> so that each depicted, to the best of their ability, the history of both communities from their respective worldviews and experiences. Their hope was to involve both community members as a way to build relationships and raise consciousness about their joint histories. They involved approximately eight hundred people from both communities, a spectrum from sectors such as education, health, police, government, small business, and the service industry. One hundred and sixty-three community members took acting roles; three hundred or more volunteered as seamstresses, set designers, and construction builders; and hundreds more donated items for the play, told stories or participated in workshops.<sup>334</sup> Working together they built relationships where previously there had been none.<sup>335</sup>

Finally, in 1999, they presented their play, entitled *Not The Way I Heard It*. The play was sold out every night for two weeks as community members from both Enderby and Splat-s'in filled the seats to full capacity. One Splat-s'in community member, Dorothy Christian attended several rehearsals and two performances in order to make a video of the play entitled *One Small Step*. She recounts being particularly moved when she saw young men from her own community, who are normally busy partying and rarely engage in community events, actively participate as actors. For her, their participation showed their pride in seeing their own stories on stage. One night Christian sat next to an elderly white man from Enderby. She noticed during the part of the play that depicted the creation of the reserve and the impact European arrival had on First Nations, he cried. She was deeply touched to see that the history of her people had an impact on him. The

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<sup>333</sup> James Fagan Tait is playwright and director from Vancouver.

<sup>334</sup> Cathy Stubington, December 2003.

<sup>335</sup> Dorothy Christian, "One Small Step," ed. Dorothy Christian (Vancouver: 1999/2000 season).

response of this man and its effect on Christian illustrates that when we realize the depths of what has been lost, we can find our common humanity in shared pain.<sup>336</sup> In opening our hearts, we tap into our deeper selves where there is a well-spring of love that connects us to the rest of humanity.<sup>337</sup>

This play became a vehicle for creating a shared picture between these two previously antagonistic cultures. As a result, the two communities have continued to build relationships, slowly moving towards creating conditions for more substantial reconciliation. For example, in 2001, the Splats'in band held their 17th annual Secwepemc (Shuswap) nation annual gathering. For the first time, they invited the three neighbouring non-Native municipalities. Euro-Canadians were so surprised that many phoned the Splats'in band office to ensure they were truly invited. Christian recounts the gathering's first day where her community fed over six hundred people, including many Euro-Canadians. She was particularly surprised to see her grade one teacher who came to seek her out and participate in the festivities.

In 2002, Cathy Stubington was concerned that the British Columbia referendum on treaty negotiations<sup>338</sup> would undermine the hard community building work they had achieved. She went to the band office to discuss her concerns with Chief Gloria Morgan. Together they decided to hold a public meeting to clarify the issues for both communities. They held it at the band hall and invited various speakers. The idea was to bring both cultures together again to discuss common issues and voice concerns. To their surprise, over two thirds attended from outside of the band, a first in the history of the two communities.

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<sup>336</sup> Parry, *Warriors of the Heart*, 12-13.

<sup>337</sup> Carl Jung, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections* (New York: Vintage Books, 1965), 396; Parry, *Warriors of the Heart*, 38.

<sup>338</sup> In 2002, the government of British Columbia held a referendum for all residents to vote on the breadth and scope of First Nations treaty negotiations. The process and wording was widely seen as a way to further undermine indigenous claims to land, resources, and self-government. See Alfred, *Deconstructing the British Columbia Treaty Process* ([cited December 10 2003]).

Similarly, within Enderby and other non-Native neighbouring towns there has been a push, albeit supported by case law,<sup>339</sup> to include First Nations in resource management discussions. While these changes have been incremental, and not always perfect, the relational shift has been remarkable given the short time frame and long history of animosity between the communities.

Last summer, Chief Gloria Morgan of the Splats'in band and Mayor Sue Philipps of Enderby led the 2003 Canada Day parade, sitting side by side in a convertible. Christian comments that on one level this act was politically difficult, given the history of Canadian encroachment on their land and the continued lack of acknowledgement and redress. However, she also recognizes that on a symbolic level it has tremendous significance. For example, she explains, "a little kid watching the parade would see the Chief and mayor leading a parade together. In the child's mind it would symbolize equality."<sup>340</sup>

For Christian, reconciliation is about stepping out of the "politically correct box." Rather than jump to the conclusion that the Chief has been co-opted into a Canadian nationalist narrative, Christian argues it is important to understand that some activities are small steps towards righting our relationships, but do not reflect an end in and of themselves.<sup>341</sup> In fact, political correctness can sometimes foster inauthentic relationships and result in false reconciliation. For example, the term "First Nations" gives an impression of indigenous nationhood, while in practice indigenous people are treated as an ethno-cultural minority group holding special rights within the Canadian state.<sup>342</sup> Similarly, one can apologize using politically correct language but do little in terms of changing relationships of domination. Reconciliation is not an intellectual process; "the head can set direction for the

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<sup>339</sup> *Delgamuukw V. British Columbia*, [1997], 3S.C.R.1010.

<sup>340</sup> Christian.

<sup>341</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>342</sup> Taiaiake Alfred, personal communication, November 15 2002.

heart, but the heart must arrive at its own pace."<sup>343</sup> Going through the motions of reconciliation with our words, when our heart firmly disagrees, can actually worsen relationships as resentment festers over time.<sup>344</sup> Chief Avrol Looking Horse, a Lakota elder explains, "the longest road you'll ever walk in your life is the sacred journey from your head to your heart."<sup>345</sup> Bypassing this journey can create internal dissonance and "simply halt us at that point" in the reconciliation process.<sup>346</sup> Reconciliation is a whole-hearted process that involves authenticity and self-responsibility. Only in engaging the mind, heart, body,<sup>347</sup> and spirit<sup>348</sup> can conditions be created for reconciliation.

These small steps toward reconciliation can sometimes lead to surprising results. For example, a few months before the opening night, the steering committee of the Enderby-Splats'in play decided to hold a *Floating Lantern Ceremony* in celebration of British Columbia River Day on the river that runs through the two communities. Cathy Stubington, with the help of two youth, held several lantern-making workshops prior to the event. In addition, the committee decided to ask someone from each community to speak about the river at the ceremony. A gift was given to two elders from the Splats'in community with this request. In the end the Splats'in drum group sang, Elder Casmir Felix prayed in the Secwepemc language, and someone from the municipality of Enderby talked about the river. They then each launched

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<sup>343</sup> Dunn, "The Process of Forgiveness-an Exercise," 31.

<sup>344</sup> Ibid.

<sup>345</sup> Chief Arvol Looking Horse, *A Call to Action* (2001 [cited December 15 2003]); available from <http://www.cleannorth.org/article/312.html?mode=nocomment>.

<sup>346</sup> Dunn, "The Process of Forgiveness-an Exercise," 31.

<sup>347</sup> Redekop, *From Violence to Blessing: How an Understanding of Deep-Rooted Conflict Can Open Paths to Reconciliation*, 302.

<sup>348</sup> Dorothy Christian, personal communication, December 10, 2003.

their lanterns.<sup>349</sup> The event was so successful that it has become an annual event. For Dorothy Christian, learning about this event was a particularly hopeful sign because, for her, reconciling with the land is at the heart of indigenous – non-indigenous reconciliation.<sup>350</sup>

These two stories illustrate how the creation of shared pictures and reconciliation are not “one time events” or an end goal where one finally arrives. Rather reconciliation is an ongoing dynamic relationship, “full of energy and differences.”<sup>351</sup> The Cree-francophone youth exchange and the Enderby-Splats’in play illustrate being rooted in one’s own worldview, developing the capacity to dynamically engage with another worldview, and creating shared pictures lays a relational foundation for taking risks, generating innovative ideas, addressing substantive issues, and building relationships of mutuality.

Like with building blocks, we draw on our previous worldviewing skills and continually learn more. For example, the dominant cultural group begins to realize that there are other ways of thinking, seeing, and framing reality and starts to learn the humility involved in being part of humanity rather than in charge of it. Similarly, the cultural group that has been on the receiving end of cultural domination begins to recognize institutions and conflict resolution initiatives that do not resonate with their meaning-making systems and seek to connect with their own. Both groups work at honing their worldviewing skills; they learn new freedom in staying loyal to their unique ways of seeing and knowing while simultaneously engaging and connecting with other world frames. Together

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<sup>349</sup> Cathy Stubington, email communication, March 17, 2004

<sup>350</sup> Christian, personal communication, March 22, 2004. For more information on the importance of reconciling with the land see Dorothy Christian, “Witness,” ed. Dorothy Christian (Vancouver: Vision Skylight, 1998).

<sup>351</sup> Assefa, “Peace and Reconciliation as a Paradigm: A Philosophy of Peace and Its Implications on Conflict, Governance and Economic Growth,” 4.

they deepen their respective worldviews and learn how to foster shared pictures.

As both groups develop fuller pictures, everyone begins to realize the enormity of what has been lost.<sup>352</sup> When we fully face the current global cultural crisis, whereby eliciting local capacity after it has been eradicated, forgotten, or damaged beyond recognition seems next to impossible, we can easily become overwhelmed. Moreover, regenerating meaning and flexibility into Western worldviews (or other dominating cultures) seems like a monumental task given the current global monoculture and chaos. Rekindling worldview pluralism however, is an imperative as it is “akin to healing the spirit that sustains us.”<sup>353</sup> Anchoring ourselves in the vision of a vibrant and pluralistic world and remembering cultural resiliency illustrated by Rigoberta Menchu’s words when she says, “you have taken away the foliage and branches and even the trunk of our (cultural) tradition, but we still have our roots,”<sup>354</sup> we can gather strength and courage to undertake this necessary journey. It is to this task that I shall now turn.

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<sup>352</sup> Joseph Montville writes about the importance of healing the wounds of history through storytelling and joint ‘walks through history’ in Montville, “Justice and the Burden of History,” 129-43.

<sup>353</sup> Marie Battiste, ed., *Reclaiming Indigenous Voice and Vision* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2000), xxiv.

<sup>354</sup> Esteva, “Enough, Basta” 84.in Vachon, “Guswenta or the Intercultural Imperative: Towards a Re-Enacted Peace Accord between the Mohawk Nation and the North American Nation-States (and Their People),” 54.