

Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him, ‘As for me, I am establishing my covenant with you and your descendants after you, and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the domestic animals, and every animal of the earth with you, as many as came out of the ark. I establish my covenant with you, that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of a flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth.’ God said, ‘This is the sign of the covenant that I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations: I have set my bow in the clouds, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow is seen in the clouds, I will remember my covenant that is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. When the bow is in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth.’ God said to Noah, ‘This is the sign of the covenant that I have established between me and all flesh that is on the earth.’

Worship Leader: Patrick Preheim

Pianist: Susan Ens Funk

Song Leader: Lynn Driedger

Guest Speaker: Dave Neufeld

Welcome and Announcements

Invocation: #861 VT

Gathering Hymn: Morning Has Broken #495 VT

Lighting of the Peace Lamp

Time with the Children

Hymn: This is God’s Wondrous World #180 VT

Joys and Concerns

Congregational Prayer: #864 VT

Scripture: Genesis 9:8-17

Sermon: Ancient Echoes (Patrick and Dave)

Hymn: In Christ There Is No East or West #390 VT

Benediction: #1053 VT

Sending Hymn: The Peace of the Earth Be With You #838 VT

Monday of this week felt something akin to the epic flood of Genesis. I wasn't at Market Mall that day, but I wasn't far away. I needed to try four or five different roads to navigate my way over the seven seas to Coy Avenue. There I watched helplessly as the water was surging over the gutters. The gutters were doing their job, just lacking in capacity to deal with the volume. I thought of Genesis 8 that day and God's promise to never again flood the earth.

The next morning I went for my morning walk along the river. It was still before 6:00 am and I was shocked to see cars in the Gabriel Dumont parking lot.

Normally I am the only soul out there at that hour. Further along the trail I found a group of people erecting a teepee. It was beautiful to behold. I knew it was National Aboriginal Peoples Day, but I didn't know what the plan was for this particular sight. The teepee makers seemed focused, so I didn't go over to visit. In hindsight I wish that I would have. We would have visited about the teepee and the events planned for the day. It would have been a good chat. We should all take the time to chat when opportunities present themselves. I thought about Genesis 8 that day and God's covenant with all nations, tribes, and languages. The trail needed a bit of repair work, but I sensed the reality of the great covenant God made with all peoples.

Later that day I was out at Rosthern, Tiefengrund and Shekinah. They land is always beautiful out that direction, but the clouds that day were particularly stunning. And the birds were singing--- warblers and woodpeckers, geese and gulls. The creatures were decaling God's praises in their own dialect. It made me think of a line from John's Revelation: "Then I heard every creatures in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in sea and all that is in them saying "To the one seated on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honour and glory and might forever and ever! And the four living creatures said Amen! And the elders fell down and worshiped" (5:13-14). Creatures declaring God's grandeur and elders falling down to worship happens in places like Shekinah. And I thought about the fact that God covenanted not only with people in Genesis 8, but all creatures great and small.

Several weeks back I went to the Roxy theater on a Saturday afternoon because I had heard that there was a screening for a documentary about Ancient Echoes. For

those who do not know about Ancient Echoes, it is a very spiritual space in the area of Herschel. I had a chance to walk the land with a number of other Mennonite pastors with Dave Neufeld as our guide. We saw large boulders that bison once used as rubbing rocks. We saw the buffalo jump where those who stewarded the land in earlier times provided for their families. We took some time at a spot where earlier generations of spiritual people would make a vision quest. It is an remarkable rock which has been hollowed out so that a person can lie down in it. And when a person does lie down in the hollow of the rock facing the sky, one sees the clouds but doesn't hear the wind. Oh, one can see the grasses moving and the clouds moving, but the sound is wondrously suppressed. One can see others, but one feels on their own with the creator. I can only imagine what it would be like at night. The documentary is part of Mennonite Church Saskatchewan's efforts to be walking the good path of reconciliation. I thought of Genesis 8 and Revelation 5 as I walked the hills as well as watched the documentary.

Key players in the recent Ancient echoes story are Sue and Dave Neufeld. Dave and Sue have given much of their time and energy to the Ancient Echoes initiative. They have given us permission to watch part of the documentary and I asked them to reflect on the ways in which their journey as part of Ancient Echoes has impacted their spirituality. First, we will watch a the opening clips from the documentary.

Patrick Preheim, co-pastor Nutana Park Mennonite Church

Nutana Park Mennonite Church – June 26, 2022

When I accepted an assignment with the Herschel church, I assumed my heavy involvement with Indigenous issues was over. While travelling south of Battleford to Herschel my car died. Several “priests” and “Levites” passed by. A “Samaritan,” a man with a redish complexion and a long braid, driving a rusty old pick up, came to my rescue with this screwdriver which he found under the floormat of my car after he had piled all the

contents of my car into the ditch. A sign? - Maybe I was not finished with Indigenous persons and issues.

On a Sunday afternoon, shortly after we moved to Herschel in 1986, Peter Wiens took Sue and me for a hike in the Coal Mine Ravine.

PICTURE - PRAYER/TEACHING STONE

This is one of the sites Peter took us to. Since that day I have taken many people to visit and pray at this site.

I took a group of elders for a tour of the ravine. The leader of this group informed me that they would be returning to this site the next day to perform a ceremony – “AND YOU WILL NOT BE HERE” – BUT THE EAGLE WILL BE. Even if invited I could not have attended because I had a funeral at that very time. After bidding farewell to the family at the cemetery, and as I walked toward my car, a large eagle swooped down in front of me.

I sat beside this stone with John Cuthand – who was doing research of pre-contact sacred sites in south western Saskatchewan. As I beat my drum and sang Joseph Naytowhow’s song John accompanied me with his rattle – and then he graciously gifted the rattle to me. John then said, “You are the CUSTODIANS of these sacred sites!” That affirmation became the title of the documentary of Ancient Echoes.

My first interpretation regarding this petroglyph came via Terry Sakoweta Widrick, born Iroquos in New York State. My encounter with him was when he was employed by Native

Ministries, Conference of Mennonites in Canada. His interpretation has stood the test of time.

PAINTING: THE BONES OF OUR ANCESTORS

When Jo Cooper, Metis artist, born at Selkirk Manitoba, and now living in Frontenac Quebec, brought her 17 painting exhibit “The Disappearance and Resurgence of the Buffalo” to Selkirk for an exhibit, Terry opened the exhibit with prayer and then told Jo, that she needed to continue her vision quest at Herschel. Jo enquired, “What is Herschel.” Terry told her about the sacred ceremonial sites in the Coal Mine Ravine.

Jo came to Herschel for three months that summer and brought her paintings with her. At the opening ceremony one of the elders told Jo that those paintings belong in Herschel. Those paintings have never left: they were paid for by money raised from the dismantling and selling of lumber from two grain elevators by local volunteers – along with a donation from Enbridge.

PICTURE - PROPHECY OF WHITE BUFFALO STONE:

This stone became very important to Jo, but I never quite discovered why, until several years later when I experienced a revelation while observing this petroglyph. Suddenly, I saw a backbone, a hump, a left leg and the face of a buffalo calf folded over onto the body: all on a white rock: this must be a record of the “Prophecy of White Buffalo.” When I shared my experience with Jo the next summer she calmly said, “Now you

have it.” Healing and reconciliation, is the focus of Jo’s paintings. This prophecy, given long before the arrival of the Europeans, declared that they would be visited by a people from afar: that would result in a great period of suffering: and then would come a period of healing and reconciliation – that period would be ushered in by the birth of a white buffalo calf. In 1994 a buffalo cow in Wyoming gave birth to a white calf – the Indigenous community has seen this as a fulfillment of prophecy. We are blessed to be living in this era of opportunity.

PICTURE - A SIGN.

In the very early years of our involvement at Herschel an Indigenous friend by the name of Lyle Lee identified this area as a place for the meeting of the tribes for ceremony. He said I should look for symbols that might indicate that. Last summer one day I was returning to the entrance gate to the Coal Mine Ravine by a slightly different route. Suddenly I stopped short: before me was this three part arrangement of rocks. My thoughts immediately returned to Lyle Lee. And I found myself thinking: “the ever loving outstretched arms of the creator gathering the diverse nations of the world into one nation, one circle – directed by the Spirit as indicated by the single stone in the center of that circle.”

When the village of Herschel council acquired the school and teacherage they contacted the Royal Saskatchewan Museum for advice. They told us we should not spend any

money until we had a professional design a museum for us: they had a person to suggest. The cost would be \$35,000 to \$50,000. We had no money and did not hire any professional. No professional could have designed what has happened. In mysterious ways the Spirit has led from one person to another to another and brought about what we now know as ANCIENT ECHOES.

Ponder these words by Joseph Naytowhow:

We are all one people, we all come from one creation way on high;

We are all one nation, under one great sky, you and I.

We are all one people; we are all one nation;

We are all one color if we try.

Dave Neufeld, retired pastor and custodian of the land

Peace Lamp Reflection “To all my relatives”

A translation of mitakuye oyasin would better read: “For all the above me and below me and around me things. That is, for all my relations...it is this understanding of inter-relatedness, of balance and mutual respect of the different species of the world, that characterize what we might call Indian people’s greatest gift to Amer-Europeans and to the Amer-European understanding of creation at this time of world ecological crisis.

I think most Indigenous peoples have some world view or understanding of this way of being—a way that sees us as living in deep relationship with other humans and all species. I suspect all human beings desire to live according to what I sometimes call “the original instructions.” Perhaps it’s similar to what some call “the common good.” Indigenous people understand this way of living as not a future utopia but simply the way to be now.

By giving credence to the idea that all people are related to each other, we open ourselves to the possibility of once again becoming family with all humanity. By realizing the connectedness of humankind to all animal life and life in every form, we become aware of new possibilities for learning and becoming active in species preservation. By studying humanity’s dependence upon creation, we learn how to sustain our planet. By studying humanity’s dependence upon creation, we learn how to sustain our planet, and we learn fresh perspectives for developing food, water, and renewable energy.

What if we all were related. What if the Lakota prayer—for all that is above me, and all that is below me, and everything that is around me—is a prayer said on behalf of our relatives?

Most important of all, every living creature could realize the fact that peace is attainable if we are all willing to say, “We are all related”.¹

¹ <https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/58495625-becoming-rooted>), chapter 9.