

International Nations for First Nations Conference

on Pentecost Week-end, June 5 – 7, 2025

**also Commemorating the 30th Anniversary of a Vision that was planted in
Elijah Harper's Heart for a Sacred Assembly**

RBC Convention Centre, Winnipeg, Manitoba

Highlights of the Reconciliation Proclamation That Came Out of Elijah Harper's Sacred Assembly in 1995

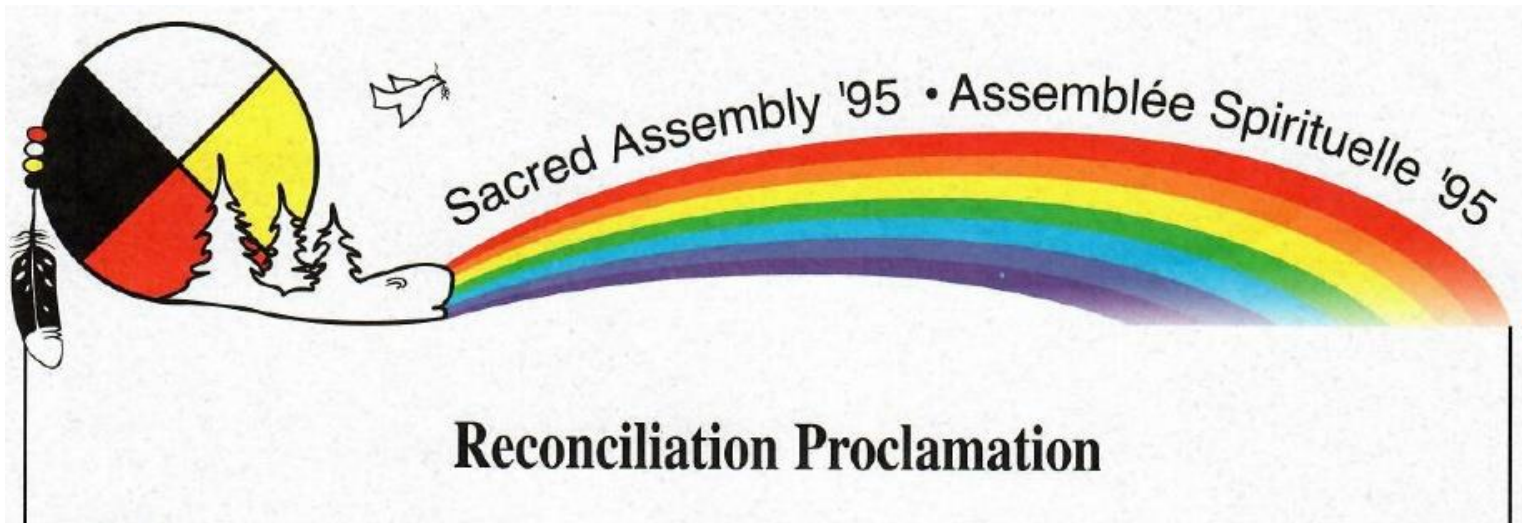


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Introduction



The **International Nations for First Nations Conference** from June 5 to 7 at the **RBC Convention Centre** in Winnipeg, Manitoba, will be a time of sharing an authentic Indigenous worldview in order to create better understanding and genuine reconciliation between both Indigenous and Non-indigenous people and leadership. This will be a unique Gathering that will focus on the social, economic and environmental issues facing First Nations communities from a *biblical* perspective rather than a *political* or a *religious* one.

This gathering will bring leaders together in local and municipal government, child and family services, the social justice area, business people, educators, administrators, authors and people who listen and learn from one another. The people who lead are no more important than those who faithfully serve in obscurity. We have all been created in the image of God our Creator, and have been given a work to do. It is not the position that we hold that adds value to our lives. As people we were all created with dignity and worth.

On the Day of Pentecost 2,000 years ago, the people from the different nations on earth all understood the word of God our Creator in their own language. The name Pentecost comes from the Greek word *pentekoste* which means *fiftieth*. The day is celebrated on the 7th Sunday (or fifty days) after Easter.

During the fifty years that the treaties were signed between the Canadian Government and the Original Peoples of the Land between 1871 and 1921, there was no real mutual understanding of what was the meaning of the words in the treaties because they spoke different languages, had different values and were from different cultures. There was no deep relational connect between human partners and nations as equals because the Holy Spirit was missing from the proceedings.

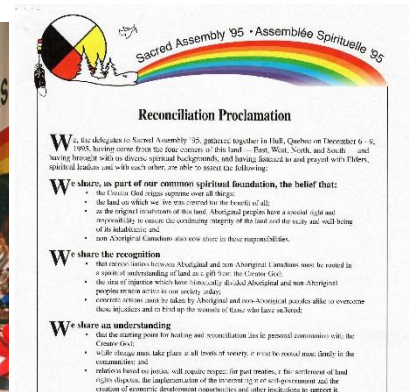
Already thirty years ago, Elijah Harper had recognized that the political process to try to rectify this has indeed failed us in trying to understand one another better. What was missing by the secular, civil governments of the past 150 years, he said, has been the spiritual element. Then Prime Minister Jean Chretien acknowledged this to be true. He also acknowledged that because it was a spiritual process, that it was the spiritual leaders who would have to take the lead in this, but that government must help too.

What Elijah Harper understood 20 years ago was the spiritual beliefs of those who signed the treaties, and that both the government as a political entity and the church as a religious entity had failed, and that what was needed was a spiritual process. He understood that those who signed the treaties had in many ways a more biblical understanding of land issues than what the Europeans governments and churches had at the time of the founding of the nation of Canada.

The authentic First Nations worldview is an affront to the secular humanism of the Canadian government and society which takes the separation of the church and state to mean the separation of a personal Creator from the state. To be secular means that you don't believe that the knowledge of God our Creator is foundational, or that He is not at the centre.

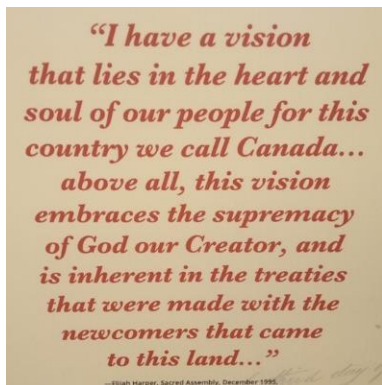
It doesn't necessarily mean that you are an atheist or an agnostic. It just means that God is pushed out to the edges of consideration. Day-to-day operations are done from priorities and philosophies that reflect a human-centred agenda that worships materialism and achievement based upon *the love of power* rather than a spirit-to-spirit God-centred one that is based on *the power of love*.

Elijah Harper's Vision for Canada and Highlights of the Sacred Assembly's Reconciliation Proclamation



1. We share, as part of our common spiritual foundation the belief that the Creator God reigns supreme over all things.

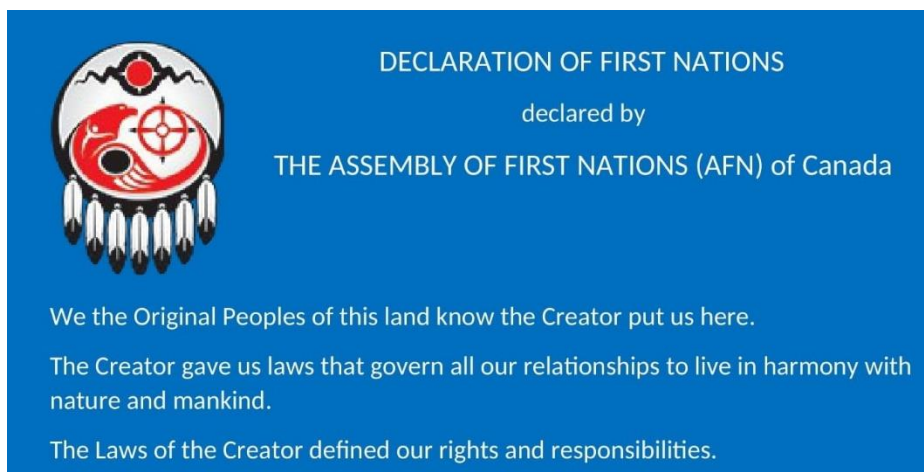
Four things should be noted from this most foundational belief.



(1) This understanding is inherent in the treaties signed by the Indigenous chiefs with the newcomers that came to this land, as was noted in **Elijah's Opening Statement** to the **Sacred Assembly** on December 5, 1995.

(2) This understanding that the Creator God reigns supreme over all things was not merely symbolic, or a consideration is pushed to the edges of public dialogue so that real life operations are done from ideologies and beliefs that reflect a purely human agenda as the primary agent of change. Elijah understood that there needed to be a *"meeting of the minds"* on this issue of *spirituality*.

(3) This understanding is consistent with the **Declaration of First Nations**.



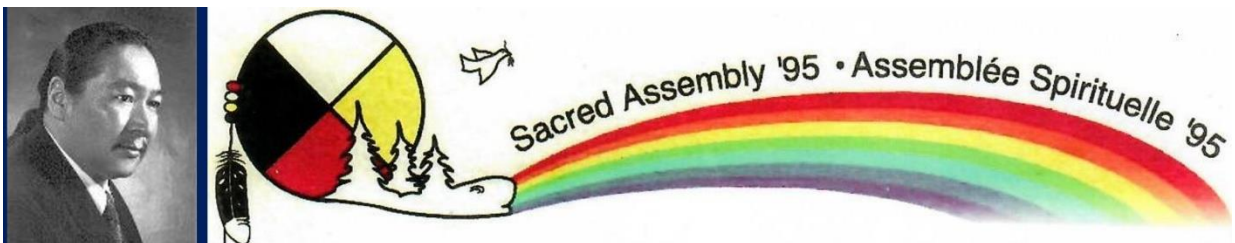
- (4) This understanding is also consistent with biblical truth. God's Kingdom rules over all, but He does not rule independently of human beings to whom He has delegated authority.



2. We share, as part of our common spiritual foundation, the belief that the land on which we live was created for the benefit of *all*.

Three things should be noted from this foundational belief.

- (1) In his opening address to the **Sacred Assembly** in 1995, Elijah Harper recognized that the Creator God is not a Respector of persons and is without partiality in how He has manifested His goodness to all from ancient times, and that this vision is not about greed, but about loving and caring, and about reflecting our Creator as His children to be sharing and generous with those in need.



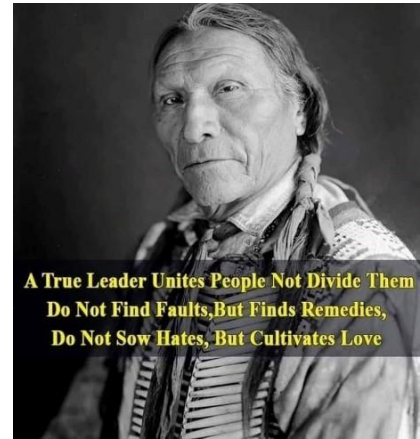
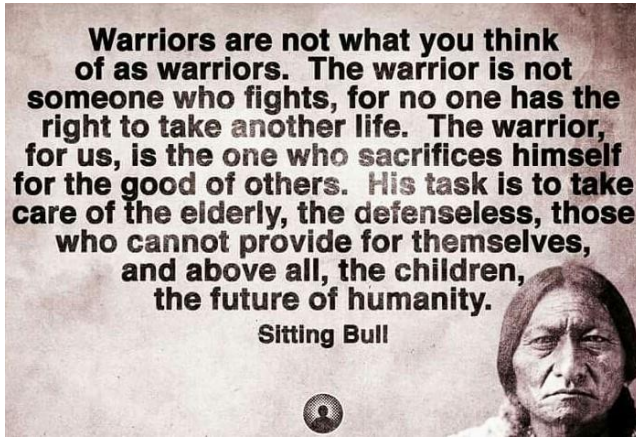
"I have a vision for this country we call Canada...This is the vision that is inherent in the treaties that were made with the newcomers that came to this land with their governments. We agreed to respect and to honour each other, to co-exist, to live side-by-side in harmony to share what we have—the knowledge, the land and the resources...

"This vision is not very complicated, but it is strong. It embraces unity, caring, loving and sharing, but this vision has been dormant, and has not been appreciated or understood by many ordinary Canadians...We have a responsibility to maintain the unity of this land and to sustain the environment, but we also understand the need to use the land for the benefit of everybody, not for greed."

Clearly, Elijah Harper's understanding of the Creator God was somebody who was caring, loving, sharing and generous, and that as human being created in His image and likeness, we, too, need to be generous with those who lack and who are in need so that the needs of people will be met out of human generosity rather than impersonal government largesse and welfare.

It is important to recognize that the Creator is good to *all*, not just to one group of people or one nation. It is vitally important to recognize that God our Creator created the land in order to allow human life to flourish, and that the land on which we live be used for the benefit of everybody, including the poor, the needy, the widows, the orphans, the aliens and those who are on the margins and have no family networks to provide for them.

- (2) This understanding is consistent with the teachings of the traditional knowledge keepers and chiefs.



- (3) This concept that the Creator God has been good, gracious and generous with all people and with all nations is also confirmed by the biblical truth that He causes the sun to shine and the rain to fall upon all people so that they will have food to eat and will be provided for.

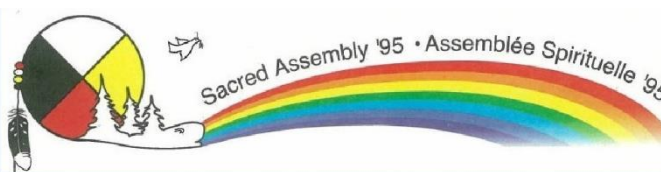


"In generations past He allowed all nations to go their own ways, nevertheless, He did not leave Himself without witness in that He did good, giving us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness" (Acts 14:16, 17).

So from Elijah Harper's Vision, from traditional knowledge and from biblical knowledge, we have the evidence that the land on which we live was created for the benefit of **all**, not just for some. This will require human beings who reflect the Creator's image into Mother Earth, mirroring His generosity, His loving, His caring and His sharing with others without partiality.

3. We share the recognition that reconciliation between Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Canadians must be rooted in a spiritual understanding of land as a gift from the Creator God.

Again, there are 3 things that we can share from this declaration in the **Reconciliation Proclamation**.



"We have a responsibility to maintain the unity of this land, and to sustain the environment.

Our forefathers had difficulty understanding the concept of owning land.

It is alien, like the concept of owning air.

But we understand the need to use the land for the benefit of everybody, not for greed....

It has become more apparent that these things need to be resolved,

and that the political process has failed us.

I believe there is something missing, which is the spiritual element."

Elijah Harper

Sacred Assembly, December 6, 1995

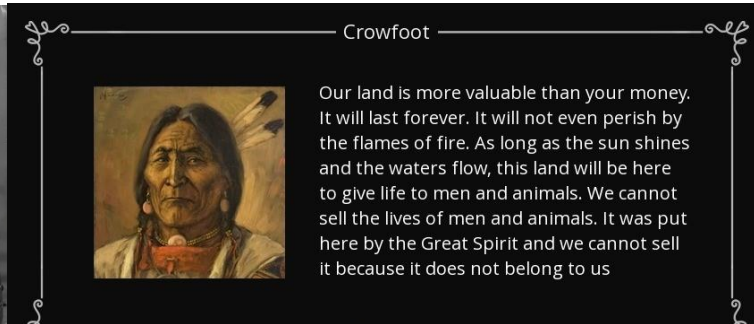
- (1) In his opening remarks at the **Sacred Assembly**, Elijah Harper declared that to his forefathers, the concept of owning land was as alien as owning air, and that embracing this is a spiritual process, not another failed political process. The **Reconciliation Proclamation** also acknowledges that the understanding that land is a gift from the Creator is a spiritual understanding. This will require spiritual, not political leadership.

- (2) That the land belonged to the Creator but who entrusted the earth and everything in it to the stewardship of human beings was an inherent part of Traditional Indigenous beliefs.



When issues of who owned the land came up, it was Chief Peguis' view that it belonged to the Great Father, but that it could be loaned to Selkirk for a time as he particularly welcomed those needing refuge who were being persecuted and treated unjustly in other parts of the world.

This was the view of **Chief Peguis** from the **Anishinaabe Tribe** who signed a treaty with the Selkirk Settlers in 1817, and whose son Henry Prince signed **Treaty No. 1** in 1871.



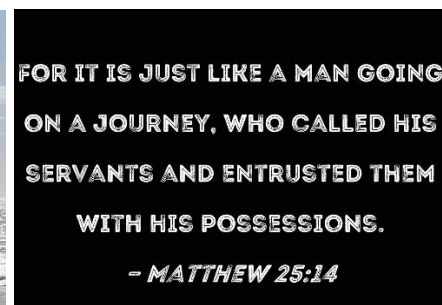
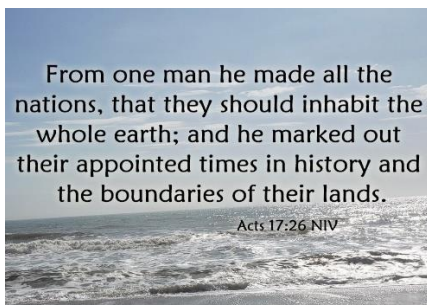
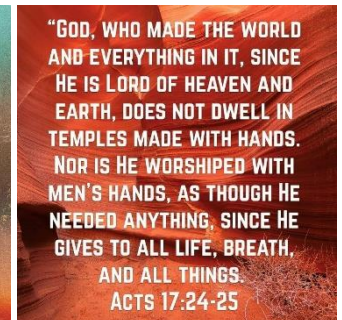
This was the view of **Chief Crowfoot** of the **Blackfoot Tribe** who signed **Treaty No. 7** in 1877.



"One does not sell the land people walk on." ...
Chief Crazy Horse, Sept. 23, 1875

Chief Crazy Horse was a member of the **Oglala Lakota Tribe**. He was a prominent leader and figure in the resistance to the U. S. government's expansion into Native American territories.

- (3) This concept of land ownership and stewardship is also in direct alignment with biblical truth.



Note the above sequence: 1. The earth (eretz, land) belongs to the Lord. 2. He has assigned the human race to manage and to steward the earth. 3. He has created everything, and has freely given to all life, breath and all things. 4. He created the nations, and established the boundaries of their lands. 5. The Creator is like a man going on a journey who has entrusted stewards with all of His possessions. 6. These stewards are to do business until He comes, that is, to invest in people who are of eternal value in caring, loving and sharing with others, not for selfish greed.

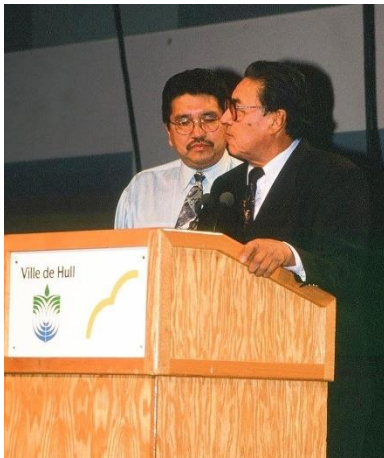
4. We share an understanding that the starting point for healing and reconciliation lies in personal communion with the Creator God.

Here again, we will make three observations about this point from the **Reconciliation Proclamation**.

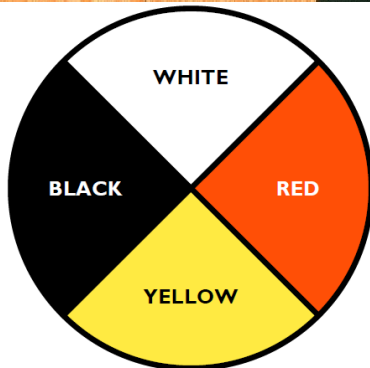


(1) This point in Elijah Harper's **Reconciliation Proclamation** is a reminder that his vision was not only that the Creator God reigns supreme over all things, and the land that was created for the benefit of all, and gifted/entrusted to human stewards. The Creator is also knowable and can be personally communed and conversed with. *This personal knowledge cannot be ignored, but is **the starting point** for healing and reconciliation.*

In other words, the uncreated Creator is an **"I,"** not an **"it."** The ultimate Reality is the great and eternal **"I AM"** rather than an **"It Was."** If ultimate reality is essentially and irreducibly personal or a Person rather than impersonal substance, then ultimate reality is relational, caring and loving in contrast to material substance which is impersonal and uncaring, and does not really care one iota about whatever happens to you or to me.



We know this to be the case, because Elijah called upon the person that he most respected (his biological father) to give the **Invocation** to open up the **Sacred Assembly** in 1995. Alan B. Harper was a faithful pastor at the **Red Sucker Lake First Nation** for 54 years, and was also a respected First Nations Elder. In his opening prayer in Oji-Cree, he invoked the blessing of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit upon the **Sacred Assembly**. The sacred belief is that God is actually a **Trinity of Persons** who agree as **One Deity**, and that the Godhead is already a unity within a diversity of Persons to which we are invited to fellowship and commune as foundational to healing and reconciliation with other persons created in His image and likeness.

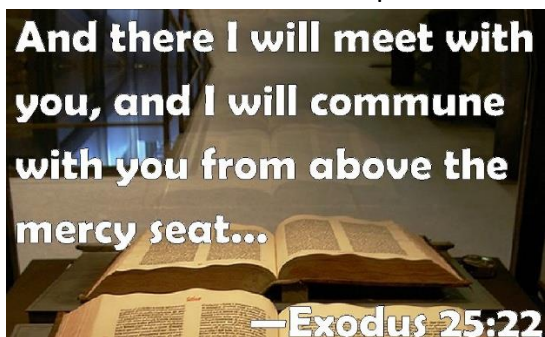


(2) Traditional belief in the Creator, as described in the **Declaration of First Nations**, is based upon the belief that there is only one Creator who has given us laws. It refers, not a **"a Creator,"** but to **"the Creator,"** the *one Creator who has created us all* from every tribe and nation—**red, yellow, black and white**—as the medicine wheel shows. The seven laws and seven teachings of the Creator are personal, because only a person can give laws and teachings to persons. The Seven teachings themselves are all personal qualities of love, respect, humility, courage, wisdom, honesty and truth. These are all *personal* qualities of a *Person*, not material substance.



On the very first day of the **Sacred Assembly** on December 6, 1995, the First Nations Woman Elder to the left stated emphatically during a panel discussion while pointing heavenward, **"There is only one God, the Creator up above."** In Babylonian and Egyptian mythology, the gods are multiple and they bring chaos by fighting with one another, but in core First Nations traditions, the Creator is other than a Nature down here that is capricious. He is a good God who reigns from heaven up above through those on earth who walk in **communion** with the Creator God.

(3) Personal communion with a personal Creator is also in alignment with biblical truth.



Prayer is not a monologue, but a two-way conversation, a mutuality, a person-to-person interaction and communion that will continually deepen the relationship so that we get to know one another better, and become ever more intimate. This is the type of relationship that Elijah Harper said was the starting point for healing and reconciliation. It is in personal communion with the Creator God.

5. We share an understanding that while change must take place at all levels of society, it must be rooted most firmly in the communities.

On this point in the **Reconciliation Proclamation** of 1995, we will again note three points.

(1) It was recognized at the **Reconciliation Proclamation** that came out of the **Sacred Assembly** of 1995 that we must share a commitment as individuals, as churches and faith communities, and as First Nations and Indigenous communities and organizations to return to our communities, and to develop ways to continue the process of healing and reconciliation that began at the Sacred Assembly of 1995.



Any momentum of a movement always reverts back to whatever is sustained and maintained at the local level after the national and global events are over. In each of our communities, there are people from different ethnicities and cultural backgrounds with whom we need to be reconciled in order to unite together to build a stronger community *together*.

This means becoming educated about past history wherever covenant promises and treaties have been broken, where innocent blood has been shed, and wherever the Creator's image has been defiled by human sin and injustice. The elders in each community know of things that have happened on the land that has brought about a defilement and a reproach. These need to be brought to the light so that the land can become cleansed under the authority of the local gatekeepers and leaders from the different spheres of the community.

We can think *globally* of a day when all of the nations of the earth will be reconciled, and will bring their glory and their honour into the City of God, the New Jerusalem, but we must begin by acting *locally* through the local relationships of the people that we live amongst for the most of the time. This is why God's order for sustainability is not *national* government, but the *local* church to give spiritual leadership locally that can move outward from there. It is also why a **Healing the Land Process** must begin in a *local* community where local chiefs, band council members, educators and those in social justice unite to welcome the process.

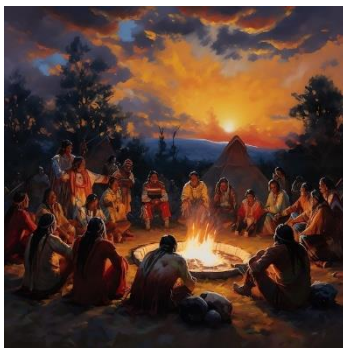
- (2) The truth about healing and reconciliation being rooted most firmly in the communities is also in alignment with traditional indigenous values. Even First Nations Grand Chiefs will tell you that it is not the Grand National Chief, or even the Grand Regional Chiefs, but the Local Chiefs that speak with the greatest level of authority when it comes to the issues facing each community.



The former Grand Chief of the **Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs (AMC)**, Derek Nepinak (who is a traditional man) once made the following statement on his *Facebook* page: “I used to think that building a nation meant that I put on my nicest suit and shirt, and fly to Ottawa to meet with the government of the day, enter into a battle of wills and seek concessions and accommodations so that we might exercise our ‘nation-hood’ from within the colonization in the **Indian Act**.

“Today, I understand that my contribution to nationhood means that I wake up early every morning, and do my best in getting my daughter to school on time so she can continue building her identity, her dignity in our culture, our history. To those parents who are doing everything in their power to build a strong generation of healthy children, you are building the nation!

“If we hope to build nationhood, it starts from the inside and flows outwards to the world. In saying this, I mean that we find self-government by taking responsibility for ourselves, helping our kids thrive by finding meaning and purpose in their lives. Then maybe, just maybe, we find ourselves able to contribute to the families beyond our own home fire. **This is how strong communities are built, this is how strong nations are rebuilt.**”



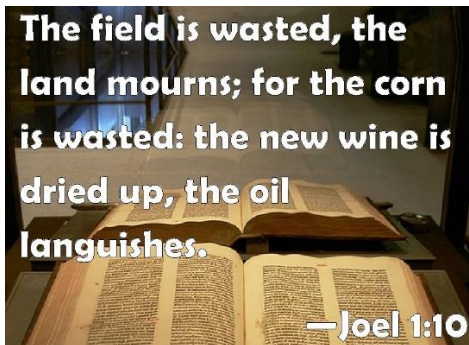
In contrast to the confrontation-adversary approach used by westernized governments, in the First Nations Traditional Government, the best chief was the best listener. He would listen to all points of view, and learn what he could from each perspective, and then make decisions based on what would be the most informed wisdom for the common good of all. Around the **home fire**, and **sitting in a circle**, everyone had a *voice*, but also came to *listen* and to *learn* from one another with their defense mechanisms down.

It is the local chiefs who have the real authority to speak on behalf of their own communities, and the special needs that they have, and the special issues that they face. The national and regional chiefs are there to serve the local vision, not the other way around. This is a vital point to ponder, because we are so prone to think that the main authority lies at the national or provincial level, when it is the local leaders who can make a decision to welcome the Presence of the Creator God into their community in order to do a work in healing human relationships as foundational to the healing of the land.

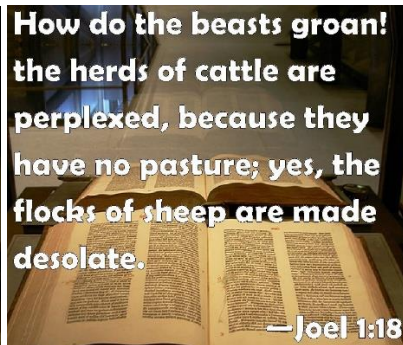
All of these areas are intertwined and interconnected, but it is in a personal relationship with the Creator God that individual hearts are healed, and when hearts are healed, they can then engage in reconciliation to other persons who want to see healing in diverse human relationships, and when social relationships are healed, the land is also healed. All of these things are inter-related and interconnected, because there is a direct connection between the *soul* and the *soil*, between the *hearts* of people and the *land* on which they live and need to develop responsibly, collectively and cooperatively for the benefit of *all*.

- (3) That there is a direct connection and relationship between *people* and *land* is also in direct alignment with biblical truth.

In Joel's day, the land was in a state of mourning because joy had withered up from among the sons of men.



The field is wasted, the land mourns; for the corn is wasted: the new wine is dried up, the oil languishes.
—Joel 1:10



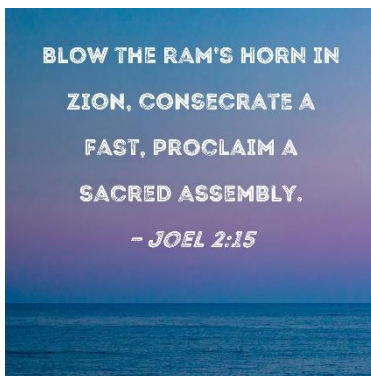
How do the beasts groan! the herds of cattle are perplexed, because they have no pasture; yes, the flocks of sheep are made desolate.
—Joel 1:18



The Vine Is Dried Up And
The Fig Tree Is Withered; The
Pomegranate, The Palm And
The Apple Tree- All The Trees
Of The Field-are Dried Up.
Surely The Joy Of Mankind Is
Withered Away.
Joel 1-12

Joel 1 describes a situation in which 1. the land mourns, 2. the beasts groan, and 3. the cattle are perplexed, 4. the plants and trees are dried up and 5. the joy of mankind is withered away. All of these things are interconnected. Creation is waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God, and for the joy of the Lord to be unleashed on to the land so that the desert areas can again rejoice, come alive and blossom like a garden!

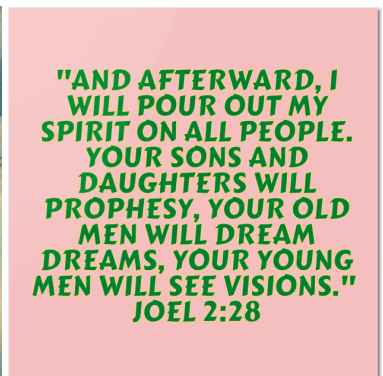
Joel 2 indicates that the human response to the condition was to *blow the trumpet in Zion*, and to *call a Sacred Assembly* so that the land could again be glad and rejoice as the leaders and people humbled themselves, and *welcomed the Holy Spirit to be poured out upon all flesh*!



**BLOW THE RAM'S HORN IN
ZION, CONSECRATE A
FAST, PROCLAIM A
SACRED ASSEMBLY.**
— JOEL 2:15



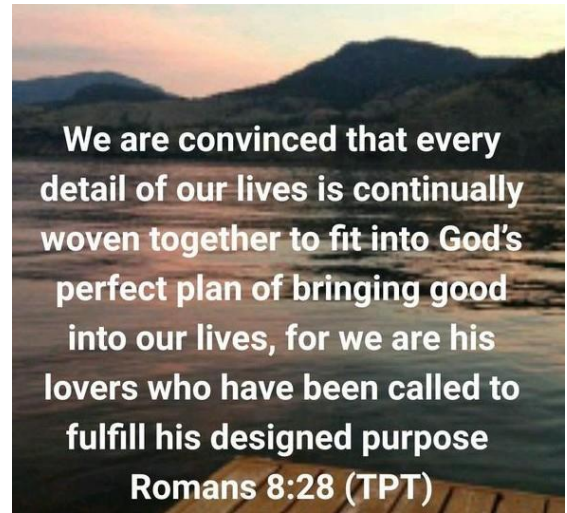
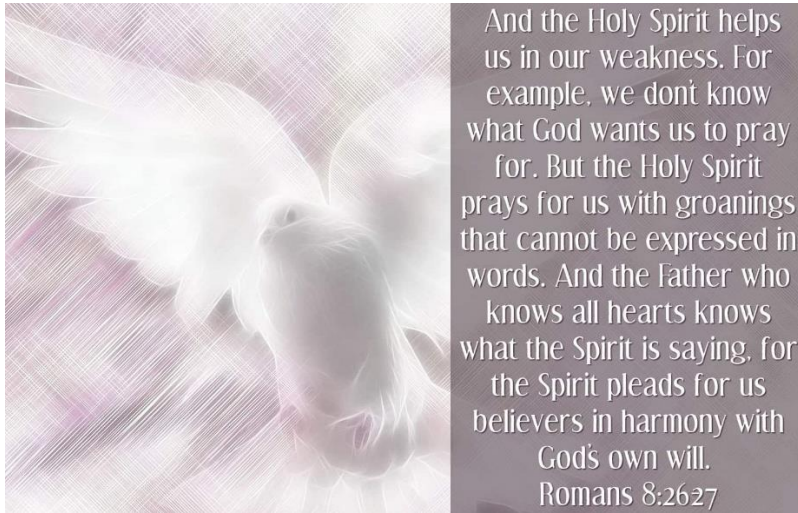
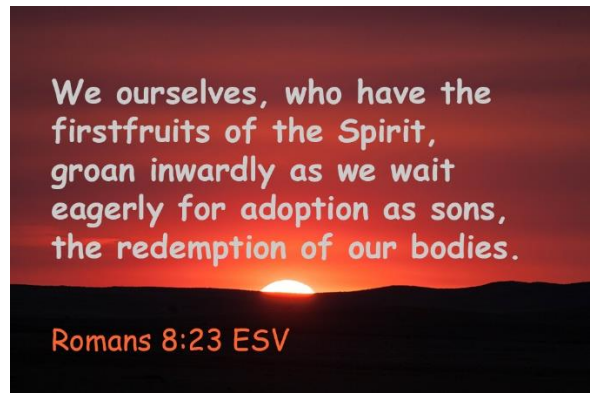
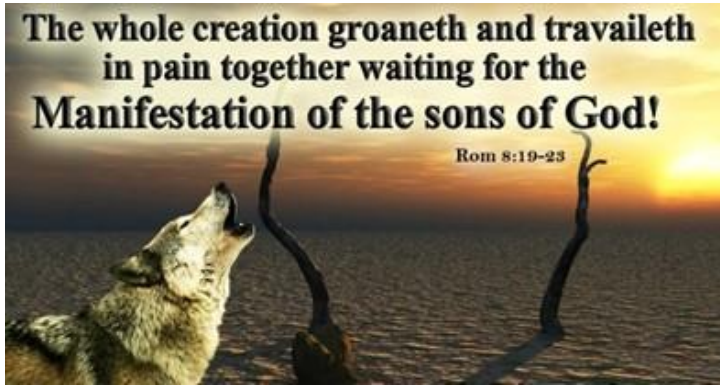
**"FEAR NOT,
O LAND; BE GLAD AND
REJOICE: FOR THE LORD
WILL DO GREAT THINGS."**
JOEL 2:21



**"AND AFTERWARD, I
WILL POUR OUT MY
SPIRIT ON ALL PEOPLE.
YOUR SONS AND
DAUGHTERS WILL
PROPHESY, YOUR OLD
MEN WILL DREAM
DREAMS, YOUR YOUNG
MEN WILL SEE VISIONS."
JOEL 2:28**

Just as Elijah Harper emphasized that healing and reconciliation were not a political, but rather a spiritual process, he demonstrated this along with his father Alan B. Harper welcoming the Holy Spirit into the **Sacred Assembly** of 1995. Now, thirty years later, in 2025, it is up to the local gatekeepers, rulers and authorities, principalities and powers in every community to welcome the Holy Spirit into their community to do a healing of relationships, and a healing of the land.

Romans 8 is the New Testament counterpart to Joel 1 and 2. We see three things in a state of groaning. (1) Creation is in a state of groaning, longing to be delivered from its bondage to futility and to decay. Romans 8:22. (2) Along with all creation, we who have the first-fruits of the Spirit groan within ourselves, longing for the redemption of our bodies. Romans 8:23. (3) The Holy Spirit in us is interceding for us with a groaning that is too deep for words, releasing a sound, a cry and a prayer for the Holy Spirit to be poured out, and to cause all things to work together for the good of those who love God, our Creator and Redeemer. Romans 8:26-28.



Both Elijah Harper and his father Alan B. Harper were men of prayer who allowed the Holy Spirit to intercede and to pray through them according to the will of God in order to bring healing and reconciliation to our land. There is a new generation that is rising up right now, the Jacob generation, that seek God's face, and that we fully believe will open up the gates for the King of Glory to come into their part of the earth!

