

ENDNOTES FALL TALKING CIRCLES November 20, 2024

Participants expressed appreciation for the contribution of the Haudenosaunee Grandmother Mim Harder, understanding her intense feelings of being unsafe during both episodes at the car rental unit in a remote industrial park in Vancouver as an Indigenous woman. Settler-descendants who are girls and women also experience feelings of being unsafe in the presence of boys and men. However, **Reclaiming Power and Place: the Final Report of the National Inquiry on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls** published in 2019 reveals that Indigenous women and girls as well as 2SLGBTQQIA persons experience staggering rates of violence. (After two years of public meetings across the country with family members, survivors of violence, experts, and Knowledge Keepers, a total of 231 Calls for Justice were directed to every level of government, social service providers, industries, and the public to reduce the occurrence of this violence. Those giving testimony identified how multigenerational and intergenerational trauma and marginalization in the forms of poverty, insecure housing, and being unhoused as well as barriers to education, employment, health care, and cultural supports provides a context to understand the factors impacting Indigenous women and girls as well as 2SLGBTQQIA persons.) As Helen Knott points out in her book **BECOMING A MATRIARCH: A MEMOIR (Alfred A. Knopf Canada, 2023)**, colonizing and patriarchal policies and practices are displacing women from their traditional roles in communities and governance, diminishing their status in communities and leaving them vulnerable to violence. Her understanding about what it means to be a matriarch in this generation led her to obtain a Bachelor of Social Work and to blog about the connections between violence directed towards women and violence directed towards Creation in resource exploitation. A participant noted that in the last segment of her book, the author consciously worked at learning how to take care of herself as she took opportunities to care for other members of her extended family and the wider community in order to prevent herself from repeating the patterns established by her mother and grandmother as well as other women in her community whom she had observed. Without her Mamma and Asu to hold her and love her, Helen Knott gave herself permission to nurture herself and learned to set boundaries with those who sought her for help. In this work of breaking established patterns and cycles of emotions, the author discovers how to set herself free.

A participant appreciated the author's understanding about the benefits of experiencing life as an ongoing spiral while going through cycles of seasons. In this way, Human Beings revisit experiences from different perspectives and discover opportunities of doing things differently. Much discussion ensued about how Helen Knott embraced her grief without being confined by a linear progression through time. Helen Knott continued to experience her grief for her mother and her grandmother as waves crashing upon her but also as a constant companion on her journey through life.

An Elder at the Coady International Institute in Nova Scotia challenges the author to learn how to make space for men. A participant pointed out that Helen Knott examined her feelings towards Indigenous men who have not protected her in the past or who exercise leadership and continue to discriminate and disempower females in their lives, acknowledging that "To continue to hate is to continue to assimilate." p. 167. The author also identifies how the men in her extended family had begun to develop skills in caring for each other and in better managing their emotions. Helen Knott also recounts how she manages a couple of relationships with particular men which break apart and learns what she needs to be healthy as a woman.

In an amusing conversation with Death, Helen Knott discovers how to free herself from oppressive and unrealistic expectations about her role as a Matriarch and experience joy in this work. It was noted that this realization gives her a Creation Story to recount and share with others. A participant noted that Helen Knott was so young in coming to this point in her life. Much discussion ensued about what the content of her next book might be.

It was noted that Helen Knott had taken Tobacco and spread these gifts on four waterfalls, three rivers, and five lakes. A participant noted that in a previous segment of her book, Helen Knott goes with her father with her newly shorn hair up a mountain on their traditional territories, gathers kindling according to her grandmother's teachings, lights a fire, and

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burns her hair as a ceremony. This participant also noted that at another time as Helen Knott drives out on her First Nations lands and waters, she discovers that she needs to scream and begins to do so, unlocking the scream which had been lodged in her throat. Each of these ceremonies involved prayers and connected herself with Creator/Divine Mystery/Great Spirit. A participant noted that Anglicans no longer practiced the Churching of Women after childbirth as a cleansing ceremony before receiving Holy Communion. It was noted that Indigenous Peoples benefitted from a wealth of ceremonies to use individually or with others to connect with Creator/Divine Mystery/Great Spirit throughout life in walking the Red Road in a good way.

A participant shared a news item which happened in the New Zealand parliament also known as the Beehive on November 14, 2024. The coalition government put forward a new piece of legislation entitled **Principles of the Treaty of Waitangi** introduced by the leader of the ACT (Association of Consumers and Taxpayers) Party David Seymour. This new bill was presented to redefine the implementation of the agreement between the Crown and 500 Māori Chiefs established in the Treaty of Waitangi (Te Tiriti) in 1840. This Treaty set out a partnership between the English colonizers of New Zealand and the Māori peoples of Aotearoa. This new bill would put an end to the court proceedings seeking to protect the rights and responsibilities of the Māori as well as the work of the Waitangi Tribunal which was established in 1975 to address the inequities experienced by Māori with respect to education, health, criminal justice, housing, expropriation of land, the care of the land, the rights of bodies of water, and the impact of resource exploitation on the environment. As a result, much public debate and discussion happened on an issue by issue basis over the years. Although David Seymour has Māori heritage, the new bill was tabled in parliament for its first reading. A member of the Labour Party with forty years of experience as a Māori lawmaker Willie Jackson vehemently objected to what David Seymour was attempting to do in changing New Zealand. Mr. Jackson was ejected from the Beehive. The leader of the Te Pati Māori Party Hana-Rawhiti Maipi-Clarke stood, tore up her copy of the new bill, and began a Māori chant and dance in protest with two other members of her party joining her. These three were ejected from the Beehive. Opposition to this bill maintain that the government seeks to change the implementation of the Treaty of Waitangi (Te Tiriti) without consultation with Māori peoples, breaching the principle of partnership, the Crown's obligation to govern in good-faith, and the Crown's duty to protect the rights and interests of Māori peoples. This bill passed its first reading in parliament. However, the other coalition party leaders have withdrawn their support of this bill. Tens of thousands of Māori and their supporters among Settlers and Newcomers participated in a walk from a variety of places in New Zealand/Aotearoa as a traditional Māori form of protest, arriving at the Beehive in the capital city of Wellington to become a gathering of about 42,000 people. When the Treaty of Waitangi (Te Tiriti) was signed in 1840, for every 40 Māori, there was 1 Settler/Newcomer. In 2024, there is 1 Māori to every 5 Settler-descendants/Newcomers in New Zealand. A participant in the Talking Circle wondered how a treaty could be abrogated and replaced by a set of principles as understood by the government coalition of a nation.

The storytelling and poetry of Helen Knott challenged participants in the Fall Talking Circles to consider a variety of spiritual practices and the importance of ceremonies: in understanding our mothers, grandmothers, and great-grandmothers as well as other female members of our extended families; in the work of caring for ourselves in the search for our particular role or roles in our families and communities; in honouring girls and women in our lives and keeping them safe; in coming to terms with addictions and being set free from their control; in the importance of storytelling about our ancestors and our own creation stories; and in getting out onto the land and waters engaging all of our senses to discover teachings from Creator/Divine Mystery/Great Spirit. The contributions of the Haudenosaunee Grandmother Mim Harder were appreciated. We missed the knowledge and experiences shared by Nanockashee Jacob Charles.

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We appreciate the efforts of Doug Jarvie in setting up the internet connection at Trinity so that we could be together by ZOOM for five Thursday evenings as well as the Trinity Office Administrator Kelly Clark in sending out the ZOOM link weekly and the documents needed to gather us together and be prepared for each of the Fall Talking Circles.

It would be good to meet in January 2025 to talk about the work of the FNMI Committee and to explore ways in which to engage our nearest Indigenous neighbours. One of the highlights of the past year was participating the Chippewas of Georgina Island Pow Wow and being able to support the Pow Wow Coordinator Lauri Hoeg in increasing the honoraria given to the children and youth who wore regalia and danced in the Pow Wow Circle as well as contributing to the costs of the feast for the Pow Wow participants and the Home Drum. Nanockashee Jacob Charles and the young men whom he gathered around him became the second Drumming Circle making the heartbeat of Mother Earth heard and felt by everyone in attendance of those two days. It was good to have 26 people from Trinity present on September 28, particularly the children and youth along with their parents.

For the upcoming Lenten Talking Circle 2025, we need to decide which book by an Indigenous author that we will explore as well as to secure one or more Indigenous participants with a reliable internet connection to join us. Please call the Reverend David Franks at 905-715-9997 with your suggestions or send him an email.