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Theology After Residential Schools

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Theology After Residential Schools

By

Christina M. Conroy
S.T.M., Yale University, 2006

Advisor: Wendy Farley, PhD

An abstract of
A dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the
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2016

Abstract
Theology After Residential Schools
By Christina M. Conroy

This dissertation articulates a Christian theological response to the Christian participation in residential schools. Between 1860-1996, it is estimated that 150,000 Aboriginal children in Canada were placed in what were largely church administered residential schools. The Indian residential school system was an assimilative education project designed by the government to "rid" Canada of "the Indian problem." (Duncan Campbell Scott) The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada was established by the victims of residential schools as part of the compensation package issued through The Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement, the largest class-action lawsuit in Canadian history. Between 2010 and 2015, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada received testimony from over 6000 witnesses. As a result of this witness, this dissertation argues that Christianity does not only justify dehumanizing behavior in the history of residential schools, it inflames it. I suggest that the colonial argument of cultural mimesis does not account for the proliferation of horrors that the church imposed on the children of residential schools. Using theologian Paul Tillich's symbol of the demonic, I locate the source of distortion and destruction internal to Christianity itself. I argue that absolutized versions of the theological symbols of Emmanuel (God-with-us) and divine condemnation underwrote and exacerbated the cruelties of residential schools. Such an argument demands of Christians that we acknowledge the capacity within faith and virtue to distort. We are asked to acknowledge that the ambiguous presence of the holy to human beings means we live in a dynamic, critical relationship to the language, images and tasks we use to reflect the beauty of divine love. I argue that Christian history discloses another stream of theology that rejects the absolutization of condemnation that distorts the image of the divine. As Christians in Canada seek to live into right relationship to our Aboriginal peoples, reconciliation will need to include not only acts of decolonization, but also of renunciation of demonic distortion within theology itself. A theology after residential schools speaks God to the world as Emmanuel, God-for-all-of-us, gathering the whole of God's creation into spaces of belonging and measurable flourishing.

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Protest is a form of communion.

-Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology I*

Table of Contents

Introduction

The history of residential schools refers to the assimilative project of education for Aboriginal children funded by the government of Canada and (largely) administered by Christian churches. It is estimated that 150,000 children were placed in the schools from 1860 to 1996.[1] When I was accepted into the theological studies program at Emory University, I proposed working on a theological response to the history of Indigenous residential schools in Canada. The history of residential schools was something that had recently emerged in the Canadian news, and had begun its slow seep into the consciousness of the white settler majority. I have long been attentive to Aboriginal issues because the land that raised me (Saskatchewan, Treaty 2,4,5,6,8 and 10) has a large Indigenous population, and also because my colleague, Cree theologian Ray Aldred, offered formative and forthright conversations about the church's relationship with First Nations people. As I began my studies, I brought with me an awareness of the ways in which I had benefited from Canada's broken treaty relationships and Canada's racist placemaking strategies of the reservation system. I also brought with me a recent, inchoate awareness of the enmeshment of the church with

[1] In chapter 1, I summarize the history of residential schools, as well as the live history of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. The forced enrollment was at its highest around 1931. The TRC gathered data on the history of residential schools, including survivor testimony of their personal experiences, at public national events which I attended from 2011-2015. A summary of the TRC findings, published after the writing of some portions of this dissertation, can be accessed online and in print. "Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future - Summary of the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada," The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, accessed July 14, 2016, http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/File/2015/Findings/Exec_Summary_2015_05_31_web_o.pdf.

Indigenous oppression.[2] My increasing shock over Christian participation in harms was amplified by a tour of slave castles in Ghana. There, above stone dungeons still draped with shackles and spattered with blood, rose a chapel. Slave traders, officials, and their families could worship God overlooking black bodies, tortured and commodified. Later, when I began working with Holocaust history, I was confronted with the long legacy of Christian cultivation of antisemitism, a practice that facilitated the large scale church support of the state enacted horrors of National Socialism. With this legacy of destruction present to me, I began to question the relationship of Christian theology to Christian practice. If, as Paul Tillich argues, Christian theology is a "statement of truth about the Christian message and the interpretation of this truth for every new generation," how does one tell the truth about God without telling the truth about the distortions of God in any given history? And how does practice reflect belief?[3] As theologian from Canada, I could not contribute to the field of constructive Christian theology without seeking to understand and renounce the harms generated by a residential school history and committed in the name of God.

Reflecting on Toni Morrison's commentary on the feats of erasure we perform as communities, I acknowledge that we, as settler Canadians, have defined our nation "by the people we have held away from us."[4]

> Invisible things are not necessarily "not there"; that a void may be empty, but it is not a vacuum. In addition, certain absences are so stressed, so ornate, so planned, they call attention to themselves; arrest us with intentionality and purpose, like neighborhoods that are defined by the population held away from them. Looking at the scope of American literature, I can't help thinking that the question should never be asked "why

[2] "Placemaking" is an urban planning term that refers to the planning, design and management strategies for public places.
[3] Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology, Three Volumes in One* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967), Volume 1, 3.
[4] Toni Morrison, "Unspeakable Things Unspoken: The Afro-American Presence in American Literature," Michigan Quarterly Review 28 (1) Winter 1989, 11-12.

> am I, an Afro-American, absent from it?" It is not a particularly interesting query anyway. The spectacularly interesting question is, "what intellectual feats had to be performed by the author or his critic to erase me from a society seething with my presence, and what effect has that performance had on the work?" What are the strategies of escape from knowledge? Of willful oblivion?….not why. How?[5]

This dissertation will analyze a few of the most obvious "intellectual feats," religious decisions and theological distortions that had to be enacted in order to rid Canada of what Duncan Campbell Scott, then Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs called "the Indian problem."[6] My best hope for this dissertation, which is my best hope for theology itself, is that an attentiveness to the previously hidden history of residential schools, may ease suffering and halt the ongoing cycle Christian domination. I offer this dissertation as an act of reconciliation.[7]

The central claim of this dissertation is that in the history of residential schools, Christianity does not only justify dehumanizing behavior but inflames it. Though the colonial project of Indigenous education through residential schools was an institutional strategy of cultural genocide – both racist and dehumanizing -- cultural genocide did not need the sadistic, outsized abuses of children to accomplish its goals. I will argue that the Christian church, when it staffs and administrates the schools, enacts the racist and colonial mandate with a violence and sadism beyond that of its secular conceptual architects. Using Paul's Tillich's description of

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[5] Toni Morrison, "Unspeakable Things Unspoken," 11-12.

[6] I will be talking about Duncan Campbell Scott in chapter 2. His political goal to "get rid of the Indian problem" has become a repeated refrain for those of us citing Canadian history in relationship to First Nations. John Leslie, *The Historical Development of the Indian Act*, second edition (Ottawa: Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Treaties and Historical Research Branch, 1978), 114.

[7] The work of this dissertation was presented to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada at the TRC Alberta National Event in 2014. It was received in ceremony by the Commissioners and by residential school survivor representatives.

the demonic as a parasitic distortion of the holy, I argue that the absolutized versions of two Christian theological symbols -- Emmanuel (God-with-us) and divine condemnation -- underwrote and exacerbated the cruelties of residential schools. Naming and describing the distortions of these two symbols, I expose the source of residential school atrocities as internal to Christianity itself.

Content outline

In this dissertation, I construct a theological analysis of the Christian involvement in residential schools as a way to participate in the conversation that the former students initiated when they used a portion of the Indian Residential School Settlement Agreement (IRSSA) to establish the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) in 2008.[8] At the TRC national events, Commissioner Justice Murray Sinclair reminded the public that the data the Commission would collect on residential schools was not just a matter of Indigenous history, but of Canadian history -- that the burden of truth rests on all of us, newcomer and Aboriginal, and we are equally obligated to imagine a future where we move into respectful, loving relationships.[9] Even as I participate in the analysis of this portion of Canadian and church history, I will acknowledge that there is a fundamental mystery to the obscenities rendered at the hands of

[8] As is common in residential school documentation, I will refer to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada as TRC in footnotes and anecdotes. The TRC was inaugurated in 2008, and after a false start, new Commissioners were appointed in 2009 and organized with the Survivors Committee seven national events which began in 2010. It is a common misunderstanding that the government funded the TRC events. The TRC process was envisioned and paid for by residential school survivors.

[9] Justice Murray Sinclair is now Senator Murray Sinclair, appointed by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau in 2016. For the remainder of this dissertation, I will use Justice Murray Sinclair to reflect his designation during the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. I first heard Justice Sinclair speak to this effect at the National Research Centre Forum, Vancouver, March 1, 2011. The digital agenda for this forum is still available here: http://www.myrobust.com/websites/NRC/index.php.

the church. Though Paul Tillich will provide useful theological tools for systematically deconstructing the perversions of good described by former students, this deconstruction of a pattern of thought such as divine condemnation is not meant to imply that there is a logic to radical violence and abuse. I navigate the void of logic with a kind of tentative courage, proposing a path forward in four parts: history, ambiguity, demonic and alternatives.

I will begin this dissertation with an overview of the history of residential schools, from the seeds of inchoate Canadian nationhood (1840) to the live statements of survivors offered at Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada events (2010-2015). Using both political and religious history, I will suggest that the appetites of capitalism, colonialism and racism collaborate on what we now recognize as an attempt of cultural genocide.[10] The history will indicate that external evaluators issued warnings to the church administrators about the poor health conditions of the schools and about signs of distress and abuse observed in the children. I will indicate where documents provide evidence that church administrators knew about, and covered for, clergy harms. I will also signal that church administrators failed to integrate official recommendations, including the dissolution of the residential school project itself. In 1960, the government of Canada issued a mandate to close the schools, but records demonstrate that churches rallied to keep the schools open. The latter half of chapter one will chronicle the

[10] At the National Research Centre Forum in Vancouver, 2011, Stephen Smith, Executive Director of the Shoah Foundation, noted that the forced removal of children from their families qualified the history of residential schools as a genocide according to the UN definition. Stephen Smith, National Research Centre Forum, Vancouver, March 1, 2011. Five years later, after the release of the TRC final report, Supreme Court Chief Justice Beverley McLachlin named residential school history a cultural genocide. Sean Fine, "Chief Justice says Canada attempted 'cultural genocide' on aboriginals," *The Globe and Mail*, last updated May 29, 2015, accessed June 4, 2015, http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/chief-justice-says-canada-attempted-cultural-genocide-on-aboriginals/article24688854/.

patterns that emerge about the residential school experience in survivor testimony across the nation.

In chapter 2, I invoke official church apologies and publications to illustrate how Christians use a colonial explanation to account for their participation in the patterns and abuses of residential school. I will suggest that though it is right for Christians to acknowledge their historical alignment with the principles of consumer appetite, colonial arrogance and racism, limiting self-reflection to this alignment defers the source of blame for atrocities to a location external to Christianity itself. I anticipate the use of Tillich's understanding of the demonic as a way to analyze the distortions internal to Christianity, and I will do so in this chapter by differentiating the structure of the demonic from the structure of ambiguity. Referencing Tillich, I will argue that the inherent fragility of existence weaves through and frames the symbol systems we use to make meaning of the world. Words, images and ideas are repositories of meaning mediated to us through the finite, and therefore capable of both good and harm. By making this argument, I caution that if we insist that a particular symbol consistently or inherently propagates goodness, we deny the ambiguous, dynamic nature of a world in time and space and open ourselves to illusion. Despite the existential structure of ambiguity, symbols afford a resonance and potency that Tillich ascribes to what he calls the principle of participation; in other words, symbols are not just a label or sign, but participate in the reality to which they point.[11] As I prepare to introduce the idea of the demonic as an analytical lens for the horrors of residential school, I will suggest that the structure of ambiguity and principle of

[11] In chapter 2, my understanding of the principle of participation comes directly from Tillich. He begins talking about participation in *Systematic Theology I*, 174.

participation make it possible for a symbol, especially a religious symbol, to become distorted to such a degree that it becomes a source of destruction.

In chapter 4, I will track the source of the destruction described by residential school survivors to the Christian symbols of Emmanuel (God-with-us) and divine condemnation. To these symbols I will apply Tillich's understanding to the absolutizing structure of the demonic, which makes infinite something that is finite. Beginning with examples gifted by survivors through the live Truth and Reconciliation Commission events, I will suggest that the fruit of ambiguity, such as cultural genocide and student death rates, is not benign. Ambiguity is dangerous. I will extend this argument to suggest that survivor testimony of radical cruelty and abuse exemplifies a distortion of Christianity that exceeds the structure of ambiguity and descends into a structure of the demonic. I will garner Tillich's observation that the holy as the favored place of the demonic in order to illustrate the way non-ultimate aspects of two Christian symbols are made ultimate, both with destructive consequences.[12] I chose the symbols of Emmanuel (God-with-us) and divine condemnation because of the frequency with which survivor testimony reflects the exclusion and othering of Indigenous people and unrelenting condemnation. I will argue that when the church embraced residential schools, racism's cultural erasure met theology's ultimate erasure: divine condemnation prefigured not only as "getting rid of the Indian problem" but also hellish torture. Survivor testimony illustrates that Emmanuel God-for-us comes to mean the 'other' must be erased. Condemnation comes to mean the 'other' must feel its demonic nature through outsized acts of cruelty.

[12] This is a paraphrase of Tillich that will be repeated in later chapters. Tillich, *Systematic Theology III*, 344.

After condemning the demonic structure that distorts otherwise life-giving symbols of love (Emmanuel) and justice (divine condemnation), I will suggest that the history of theology itself offers a different theological lineage to follow. I will track a stream of Christian theology that seeks to identify and renounce the demonic, particularly the absolutization of punishment. Finally, I will argue that we must reject the dominating practices of Christianity as destructive and idolatrous.

Parameters of the project

This dissertation is a Christian project. While I share with other theologians an interest in the way the divine is understood and represented, I do so here from a particularly settler Christian perspective. This means I am drawing on an approach to symbols, texts and doctrinal history that defer to my own western Christian tradition. If I use the word 'theology' or 'theological' in this dissertation, it is with an interest in the broader religious concern about constructions of the divine, but always modified by my training in Christian theology. I should therefore be understood to mean 'Christian theology'. I do not assume that my interpretation of texts and symbols reflects anything but my own tradition, even when my reflections find common ground with other spiritual traditions. I do hope that the specificity of a Christian critique of symbols will instigate conversations across traditions so that we may collaborate towards a more just and loving world as unique communities with diverse resources.

This dissertation is a theological project. I am interested in using the practices of the theological mind to critique the Christian involvement of residential schools. While the lenses of other disciplines, such a sociology, political science and critical race theory, provide an

indispensable focus for any provocative discussion on residential schools, I am limiting my analysis to the theological. This means that while I acknowledge the confluence of colonialism, capitalism, and racism on settler-Indigenous relations, I am particularly interested in way these confluences reflect our assumptions about human persons and divine presence, and our subsequent ethical practices. Therefore, when Doris Young of the Opaskwayak Cree nation stands in front of the National Research Centre Forum audience and says,

> I want to hear from the settlers: how did they know to treat us less than animals? How did they know to colonize us? We need to know their secrets because if we don't …how do we undo (this)? How do we hear their stories so we understand how they did what they did?[13]

I receive this as a theological question. I will recall Doris Young's question throughout this dissertation, and allow her voice to guide my inquiry into how a community of Christians can function out of assumptions of the human person and divine presence so different than my own.

This dissertation is limited in scope and reach. I have intentionally bound this theological project to an analysis of the demonic distortion of the Christian symbols of Emmanuel and divine condemnation. The queries of this dissertation, from Tillich's understanding of ambiguity and participation to the alternative construction of these symbols in the history of Christian thought, serve the particularity of my theological analysis. I have both practical and ethical reasons for leaving out a full analysis of divine compassion and goodness, and for leaving out a clear delineation of implications.

[13] Doris Young is a member of the Survivors National Committee with whom the TRC Commissioners consult. All the members of the Survivors Committee spoke at the National Research Centre Forum in Vancouver, March 2011.

In other words, this dissertation does not attempt a full analysis of the Christian symbols of Emmanuel and divine condemnation when they are *not* demonically structured, though my introduction to the principle of participation and to the symbols of Emmanuel and condemnation gesture to my understanding that the love of God as the clearest window to the divine. I do not extend this understanding of love into an outline of what loving, de-colonized practice looks like. I do point to the good work of Steve Heinrichs of Mennonite Church Canada whose community engagement exemplifies the Christian possibility of living into new relations. Though I will gesture toward the future in my conclusion, I wish to honor the critique of western solution-based analyses offered by my Indigenous sisters and brothers.[14] They ask that the settler communities begin the process of reconciliation with listening to others, particularly those others who have suffered. I intend my careful and systematic analysis of the problem to exemplify a practice of listening. The Indigenous community itself has come up with a list of actions to be taken in response to the TRC findings, and the theological practices that heed the call to be constructed in community.

Research methods

When I proposed my research interests to the faculty of theology at Emory University, I imagined I would engage in the academic practices suited to a text-based philosophical project. Indeed, I started out this way. I reengaged with Tillich's systematic theology and Simone Weil's essays on suffering. I began to scour newspaper clippings and archives so that I could piece

[14] I credit this reminder to Lori Ransom, staff member of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. We have subsequently had many conversations about this, giving her an opportunity to reflect what she has heard from elders on the need for people to listen to the Indigenous Christians for ideas on how to move forward.

together a timeline of residential schools and compose a historical picture robust enough to apply a theological analysis. The archival research was hard slogging as documentation of people and places left out any mention of residential school. This obfuscation of data became a testament to the ongoing attempt to minimize and erase Indigenous people. Along with this, the government and archives did not house records searchable by school name. Images and reports were located in files related to a town or a church, rather than the school itself. As I write in 2016, I have before me a glossy poster labelling all the schools I labored to find four years earlier. The establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada brought with it an unfolding wealth of data. This not only affected my research method, but also the kind of data reflected in this dissertation.

With the inauguration of Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada and their mandate to gather statements from former students and staff across the country, I scrambled to find a way to attend the live events. Quite quickly, my research shifted from the philosophical to the visceral. Instead of sorting through newspapers in archives, I was sitting beside elders from Innu communities of Labrador -- fetching glasses of water, explaining the schedule, hearing them say they had not slept because they were nervous to give their testimony, nervous about choosing what to say, nervous about crying. The particularity of their bodies unexpectedly gave form to 'data,' and I was being called to hear the story of residential school through their wounds, their strength, their silences. My library became words spoken in aisles, anger

resonating over a crowd, the collapse of voice or posture… none of which will become a part of the archive.[15]

One of the characteristics of this 'library,' both embodied and on paper, is that it is unfolding in real time. This dissertation draws on the handwritten notes that I took at TRC National Events between 2011 and 2015, for which I received IRB approval. The documentation style of these notes reflects the live nature of this resource. Within the last six months, recordings of all Commissioner's Sharing Panels have been uploaded to the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (NCTR) website.[16] Except for the testimony of Casey Eagle Speaker, whom I cite extensively in chapter 2 and 3, I do not consult the recorded version of these statements. This means that there may be errors in my notes that a future researcher will uncover by listening to the original source. It also means that my documentation will not reflect the archival numbers given to the testimony on the NCTR.

The implication of the 'real time' unfolding of the history of residential schools also means that new, updated findings are being reported all the time. My historical chapter, for example, was constructed before the release of the final report, and does not adequately reflect all the data gleaned from Alberta schools who were the last to contribute to the commission. Likewise, the data available on the residential schools on the Blood Reserve contain discrepancies that may become sorted out as survivor testimony becomes archived by location. A reader should

[15] The language of the 'unarchived' comes from Dr. Angelika Bammer who teaches (at Emory University) the value of the 'unarchived' and its place in memorialization. Dr. Angelika Bammer, Emory University, post-class conversation, 2012.

[16] The National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation will be referred to as NCTR. The online sources I refer to can be found at www.nctr.ca.

expect the availability of new information that will serve to amplify and correct my own study, and she should expect to modify data I present here when new materials are available.

I will note here the intentional use of spelling and language that employ in this dissertation. There is ongoing contention over the language used to refer to unique communities, particularly our first nations. I expect that the evolution of language will render some of my terms outdated as time goes on, and ask that new readers translate in a way most respectful to the day. For now, I reference the term 'Aboriginal' in its constitutional (and therefore legal) meaning, designed to reflect three distinct people groups: First Nations, the Métis and Inuit. I make reference to Indigenous communities, but for some, this term leaves out the Métis. Wherever possible, I will refer to the specific nation of a speaker or political figure. I use the word 'settler' to refer to non-Indigenous people, though this term is contested as well.

On the matter of punctuation, my choice to capitalize some words and de-capitalize others acknowledges certain ethical commitments of scholarly communities. Therefore, I will write Aboriginal in upper case. However, I will not aggrandize residential schools and antisemitism, which I will write in lower case.

Truth-telling

Despite the parameters of this dissertation where I sustain focus on atrocity and the demonic, and despite the dynamic, evolving nature of this research where I encounter the raw vulnerability of survivor experience, this dissertation speaks to the way of love. The kind of love that believes that bringing darkness into the light breaks its power. Christianity is a tradition

forged through an experience of horror.[17] But through that horror we understand that we are not alone, God is with us, Emmanuel, and the darkness does not have the final word. We believe that the path we are on is a path toward light. This dissertation will argue that the light of love is never fully extinguished in theology, and I will invoke a lineage of Christian orthodoxy that rejects the image of an angry God. I vowed at my baptism to renounce the devil and all his works.[18] My protest comes from inside the Christian tradition, as an act of faithfulness and as an act of reconciliation with those I have harmed. May the burden of truth-telling no longer rest on the shoulders of Indigenous people.

[17] Marilyn McCord Adams speaks of our embodied existence as making us vulnerable to horrors, and suggests that Christ came to save us not from sin but horrors. See Marilyn McCord Adams, *Christ and Horrors: The Coherence of Christology*. (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 37.
[18] This phrasing in taken from the 1928 Common Book of Prayer: Catechism.

Chapter 1 - History

> Relationships, good intentions and love is not enough. Truth is the beginning of reconciliation, and it has to be the truth from those who have suffered.
>
> -Truth and Reconciliation Commissioner Marie Wilson[19]

In early 2011, I attended the National Research Centre Forum in Vancouver, Canada, an event designed to plan a future for the materials that would be gathered during the Truth and Reconciliation process. The Research Center was a part of the mandate of the TRC, as was the national events that would be held around the country. The Commission was in the process of implementing national community events that would welcome statements from any person who felt they had been affected by the legacy of residential schools. People from all over the world attended the event, eager to contribute their experiences of genocide, history keeping and memorialization. It was my first time hearing the stories of former residential school students, and the experience affected me deeply. I knew from my work with Holocaust history that first person testimony witness was a rare and precious gift. I also knew that something important was unfolding before me. The TRC steering committee of residential school survivors was asking the Canadian public to come, and to listen. And so I did.

What I present in this chapter is the history of residential schools that emerged from my own study of newspapers, articles and texts that began before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada was formed. I also present the history of residential schools as narrated

[19] Commissioner Marie Wilson, Call to Gather, TRC Vancouver National Event, September 19, 2013.

by the survivors, whose stories I listened to over several and from all parts of the country. Aside from the Research Centre Forum, I attended the TRC National Events in the Atlantic region (2011), Saskatchewan (2012), Montreal (2013), Vancouver (2013), Edmonton (2014) and Ottawa (2015). When I was able, I watched the live broadcasts of smaller remote statement gathering sessions that preceded the National Events. Out of the outpouring of testimony that fills my mind as much as the notebooks that pool around me, I am able to reflect only a handful of voices. Within each voice that I disclose here is the echo of a hundred more. I hear that echo, and honor it as much as I honor the silence of those who did not survive. This 'history' that I tell has gaps that will be filled in by others as we join together in conversation and encourage people to speak.

Part I: National Narratives

National apology

In July of 2008, the Canadian government issued an official apology for the existence of residential schools:

> In the 1870's, the federal government, partly in order to meet its obligation to educate Aboriginal children, began to play a role in the development and administration of these schools. Two primary objectives of the residential school system were to remove and isolate children from the influence of their homes, families, traditions and cultures, and to assimilate them into the dominant culture. These objectives were based on the assumption Aboriginal cultures and spiritual beliefs were inferior and unequal. Indeed, some sought, as it was infamously said, "to kill the Indian in the child." Today, we recognize that this policy of assimilation was wrong, has caused great harm, and has no place in our country.[20]

[20] As of the release of the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada in 2015, this is now considered a policy by the highest lawmakers of Canada as cultural genocide. See Sean Fine, "Chief Justice says Canada attempted 'cultural genocide' on aboriginals."

> To the approximately 80,000 living former students, and all family members and communities, the Government of Canada now recognizes that it was wrong to forcibly remove children from their homes and we apologize for having done this. We now recognize that it was wrong to separate children from rich and vibrant cultures and traditions that it created a void in many lives and communities, and we apologize for having done this. We now recognize that, in separating children from their families, we undermined the ability of many to adequately parent their own children and sowed the seeds for generations to follow, and we apologize for having done this. We now recognize that, far too often, these institutions gave rise to abuse or neglect and were inadequately controlled, and we apologize for failing to protect you. Not only did you suffer these abuses as children, but as you became parents, you were powerless to protect your own children from suffering the same experience, and for this we are sorry."[21]

National process

The residential school system in Canada operated from the 1880's, and continued until the last decades of the 20th century. The last residential school, Gordon's School in Saskatchewan, closed in 1996.[22] The system was set up by the Canadian government with the objectives of both educating Aboriginal children and assimilating them into Euro-Canadian ways.[23] The government asked the churches to administer residential schools. Because both reservations and residential schools were sequestered away from the living spaces of dominant culture, few knew about their existence, save for those directly involved in their upkeep or

[21] The Interim Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which was the report available at the time of writing, notes that "The apology and the settlement left out those who attended day schools, as well add the Métis and Inuit. The TRC is including all Aboriginal groups in their testimony gathering even when there have been no reparations designated for them." "Truth and Reconciliation of Canada: Interim Report," Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, accessed on January 3, 2014. http://www.myrobust.com/websites/trcinstitution/File/Interim%20report%20English%20electronic.pdf.

[22] Gordon's school was a day school. This is why some, like John Milloy, cite the last 'residential' school as 1986. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada received testimony from former students of day schools, though they were not included in the official settlement agreement. John S. Milloy, *A National Crime: The Canadian Government and the Residential School System, 1879 to 1986* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1999).

[23] We have come to think of the project as assimilation through education. I will use this phrase throughout this dissertation.

those affected by their presence. Schools were often built away from main roads, beyond easy sight lines. Legal anthropologist Ronald Niezen notes that when the existence of the schools started to make its way into public awareness, the ethics of forced assimilation generated little interest or sympathy from non-Aboriginal Canadians. Stories of abuse surfaced in the legal system and media most prominently in 2005 which led Phil Fontaine, then National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations, to initiate what became the largest class action suit for cultural redress in legal history. [24] The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada exists as a mandate of the settlement agreement based on terms set by the recipients of the agreement (i.e. survivors). It is the first Truth and Reconciliation Commission to be established as an outcome of civil litigation. The TRC gathered information at national events in every region of the country, and a multi-volume summary of findings has been released by the Commission as of 2015.[25] All statements received and articles submitted to the TRC are in the process of being archived at the newly established National Research Centre for Truth and Reconciliation located at the University of Winnipeg. Most materials that came out of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission will be available for education and research purposes.[26] The Truth and

[24] In 2005, Arthur Plint was convicted of 16 accounts of Indecent Assault. He was a dorm supervisor at Port Alberni Indian Residential School. It is worth noting that mainline news links to this have disappeared. An online journal quoting journalism on the trial can be found here: Susan Lazaruk, "77-year old pedophile sentenced to 11 years," Aboriginal Multi-Media Society, Volume 13, Issue 2 (1995), accessed August 10, 2016, http://www.ammsa.com/node/20552.

[25] The TRC final report was released in the fall of 2015. At the time of writing this chapter, the final statistics and reports had not been submitted. The information here is what was available prior to the release of the report, and particularly the statistics published in the interim report. See "Truth and Reconciliation Commission Interim Report," http://www.myrobust.com/websites/trcinstitution/File/Interim%20report%20English%20electronic.pdf.

[26] Survivors sign a consent form when issuing a statement to the TRC. Though their statements will be archived at the TRC and searchable, survivors can choose to remove any personal information from the statement to protect their identity. Clear guidelines are outlined on the TRC website and given to all interested in providing a private or public statement. "Statement Gathering: Frequently Asked Questions," Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, accessed January 14, 2014, http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/File/pdfs/SG%20and%20FAQ_en.pdf.

Reconciliation Commission of Canada's 'hearings,' which occurred in every major area that housed a school prior to official National Events, were not judicial in nature. The Canadian TRC was part of the terms of the settlement agreement, and therefore not tribunal in nature. Given the hidden history of the schools and the destruction or withholding of records, all statements received are public domain and used for filling in the gaps of history.[27] To date, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission has collected 6,256 statements from all regions in the country.

While the colonial mandate of assimilation hovered over the consciousness of Canadian self-awareness for some time, it was stories of sexual abuse that created a shift from apathy to attention in the general public. The thousands of personal accounts of the residential school experience reflect a diversity you might expect due to differences in location, differences in staff, differences in denominational approaches, and differences in access to sustaining resources. However, some common experiences emerged. In all regions of gathered testimony, Aboriginal children were separated from their homes and families for extended periods of time, many of whom were taken by force and with the aid of RCMP, government workers and railways. [28] Children's hair was shorn and clothes removed. They were then dressed identically. Students of all ages were forbidden to acknowledge their aboriginal culture or speak their languages. The punishment for speaking their own language was swift and harsh — as was the punishment for any rules broken. In all regions, testimony described lack of food, over-crowding, practices of shaming, the separation of siblings, the absence of nurture, and physical, psychological and sexual abuse. Even when schools had experienced staff, the children were

[27] This is why the Truth and Reconciliation of Canada has sessions of 'statement gatherings' and not hearings.
[28] The term Aboriginal word is a constitutional term that refers to three distinct people groups: First Nations, Inuit and some Métis.

provided with an inferior education, deficit nutrition and dangerously inadequate living conditions. Some deficits were the result failing resources (funding cuts, poorly maintained buildings). Other deficits, such as inadequate food, was often the result of cruelty (staff eating well within sight of children eating poorly) or medical experimentation.[29] Residential school students were forced to provide manual labor to support their school by means of agriculture, light industry and domestic work. Survivor testimony across the nation describes the immediate intergenerational effects of residential schooling such as the bitterness children held toward parents for letting them be taken away and the affect the complete absence of children had on communities, parents and grandparents. It also describes the long term intergenerational effects of children raised on violence and lack of affection because former students learned to raise their children in the same way as they were raised.

There was not an entire vacancy of good workers in the residential school system, many of whom experienced poor living conditions and slim resources as well. However, points of kindness and fruitful instruction operated within a larger regime of assimilation forged between the government and the Church. This collaboration of religion and politics is part of what makes the Canadian residential school system different from its just and counterpart in the United States. Up to five generations of children were raised by institutions in the name of God, and were given divine value insofar as they resembled settler culture.

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[29] Shirley Waskewitch, Commissioner's Sharing Panel, TRC Saskatchewan National Event, June 23, 2012. Shirley Waskewitch's account will be referenced later. The medical experimentation on children is referenced in articles such as the one by journalist Jody Porter, "Residential school nutrition experiments explained to Kenora survivors," CBC News Thunder Bay. Last modified July 29, 2015, accessed October 29, 2015. Initial findings of the TRC Commissioners were also reported by CBC News. "Aboriginal children used in medical tests, commissioner says," CBC News, last updated August 1, 2013, accessed August 11, 2013, http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/thunder-bay/residential-school-nutrition-experiments-explained-to-kenora-survivors-1.3171557.

The Truth and Reconciliation process is necessarily limited to collecting testimony from those who attended residential school in its final era. Of this small representation of former students, we hear only from those who survived. At the time of this writing, statistics are still being compiled, but current sources cite some schools with a death rate of over 50%.[30] Of those still alive, we hear only from those who are able to articulate their stories. Of those who are well enough to speak, we are further limited (in the public hearings) to a twenty-minute summary of what they wish to convey. This may be why the public testimony of former students offers so little of the positive memories of the school experience that non-aboriginal people are so eager to hear.[31] It is worth noting that many of the survivor statements I use in this study come from former students were not only lucky enough to survive but had the ability to go on to have positions of prominence in society. We hear from the best. The stories of those who cannot speak, the stories of those who died, leave a gap in our understanding of the history.

[30] These statistics are reported by Milloy (91) who is the first person to write about Chief Medical Officer P.H. Bryce's investigative findings and reports. Milloy cites conversations between Vankoughnet to Dewdney (June 2, 1890) about the increased death rates every year. We are only now receiving data on comparative death rates which I mention in a later chapter. Milloy's citation of later reports from the 1920's suggests that the Department of Indian Affairs saw the conditions of the schools and nutrition as subpar to other 'white' schools. As I will mention in the pages ahead, Bryce called the schools a "trail of disease and death" and "a national crime," and spent his career trying to bring this to the attention of authorities at great cost to his own person. In 1920, Inspector of Indian Agencies W. Ditchburn noted that the schools accepted 'robust' children who became so sick they had to be sent home on sick leave. Corbett, a physician commissioned by Scott, notes that in the school on the Blackfoot reserve, conditions were so poor that 70 percent of the children were affected by ulcers and sores (often tuberculosis). Milloy, *A National Crime,* 91-99.

[31] I have heard complaints launched at every national event by fellow Christians who criticize former students for not telling the positive parts of the stories that they themselves have heard from teacher parents, etc.

Assimilative structure

Despite the differing interpretations of the timeline of Canada's governmental policy over the Aboriginal education, the Aboriginal healing project *Where are the Children?*[32] offers a helpful overview of the shifting tactics in the project of cultural replacement:[33]

1840 - 1910 Assimilation: The governmental mandate in this era is to teach Aboriginal children the skills needed to take part as laborers in the mainstream Euro-Canadian economy so that they can become amalgamated with the white population and self-supporting members of society.

1911-1951 Segregation: As amalgamation procures little success, the focus of governmental policy shifts to removing Aboriginal children from their own communities and immersing them into the "civilized" ways of white society. The goal of this is that they might return to their home communities as "good Indians"[34] and have a colonizing effect on others.

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[32] "Bookcase Chapter One: Government Policy," *Where are the Children*, accessed January 4, 2014, http://wherearethechildren.ca/bookcase. Kindly note that *Where are the Children* has integrated former 'bookcase' information into its other sections. There are current websites, such as NCTR.ca, that house the archive and historical record of residential schools.

[33] The phrase "cultural replacement" is used by Nock in *A Victorian Missionary and Canadian Indian Policy* (Waterloo: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 1988), 4. This phrase is used by other writers, though my research suggests that it does not appear to be employed in original reports. It is more common now to use the phrase "cultural genocide." See note 2.

[34] These are the words of the *Where are the Children* campaign, part of the Legacy of Hope Foundation. The website has been updated, and new resources can be found here: http://wherearethechildren.ca/timeline/research/. *Where are the Children*, Legacy of Hope Foundation, accessed January 4, 2014, http://www.wherearethechildren.ca.

1951 - 1970 Integration: Governmental policy shifts again toward placing Aboriginal children in the same schools as other Canadian children. Because of the lack of success thus far, this approach offers "the best hope of giving the Indians [and other Aboriginal Peoples] an equal chance with other Canadian citizens to improve their lot and to become fully self-respecting." This shift inaugurates the long process of shutting down the residential school system (except in the far North).

1969 - today Self-Determination: As part of the movement toward Aboriginal self-government, governmental policy ostensibly aims to give Aboriginal people control over the education of their children. As of 1969, attendance at residential school is no longer mandatory. Eventually, tribal entities, with the Federal support, take over the administration of the schools.

The Gradual Civilization Act (1857)

Before Canada became a dominion, there were dozens of nations across the northern lands, blurring the borders that now exist between the U.S. and Canada. The first Europeans were interested in commerce and proselytizing. Early European explorers and entrepreneurs formed alliances with the First Nations in order to advance the fur trade. J.R. Miller argues this was a mutually respectful arrangement because "nativeness" was needed, and many families were forged in these alliances.[35] The children of the English or French and First Nations became the original Métis. Many of the Métis children could speak numerous languages and had highly

[35] J.R. Millar, *Shingwauk's Vision: A History of Native Residential Schools* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 62.

developed skill sets, some bolstered with advanced European education. Elizabeth Cook-Lynn notes that non-Aboriginal history romanticizes the role of the Métis as a "buffer race." From the perspective of the First Nations best interests, these alliances, particularly in the Plains region, caused enmity and violence in the tribal groups and the loss of tribal women.[36] Farther east, however, First Nations considered themselves to be allies of the Crown. It is a complicated era, certainly not a paragon of equality. However, compared to the colonial era that follows, pre-Confederation Canada boasts a measure of beneficial relationship between First Nations and the North West Mounted Police (NWMP) as well as between the First Nations and Christian missionaries. Both the NWMP and Christian missionaries were known to mediate disputes between tribes and keep communities from being looted.[37] It is not until the economic viability of the fur trade shifts, and European settlers arrive in the country, that our relationship with the Aboriginal peoples degrades sharply. No longer a means to an ends, the First Nations become an "obstacle to the newcomers achievement of their economic purpose."[38] The Indian becomes irrelevant.

The inchoate dominion of Canada struggled with two things: how to fortify the Empire, and what to do about the Aboriginal population. Of course, the two went hand in hand. On the matter of what to do with the Aboriginal population, historian John Milloy confirms Cook-Lynn's

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[36] Elizabeth Cook-Lynn, *Why I Can't Read Wallace Stegner and Other Essays* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1996), 35.

[37] The most obvious example of this that comes to mind is the letters written by Isapo-Muxika (sometime referred to as Crowfoot) of the Blackfoot Confederacy of Alberta (*Siksikaitsitapi, Siksika First Nation)*. Ironically, early respectful relationships with the missionaries and the North West Mounted Police led him to trust the Canadian government in treaty negotiations. Even within his lifetime, Isapo-Muxika saw the dissipation of trust and apparently died forlorn because of his people's loss. This is referenced in a letter from E. Dewdney to John A. Macdonald. See microfilm C-1597, p. 90546, John A. Macdonald fonds, Library and Archives Canada. https://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/sir-john-a-macdonald/023013-7010-e.html.

[38] Elizabeth Cook-Lynn, *Why I Can't Read Wallace Stegner*, 35.

suspicion of the fur-trade era freedoms by noting that it was with the establishment of the British Indian Department in 1755 that the assimilative policy first took shape. The Gradual Civilization Act of 1857 envisions the British Indian Affairs' programs of 'civilization' as a way to include the original peoples into the new national structures and economy. This policy of assimilation offers an arguably more virtuous vision of co-habitation than the neighboring American policies of extermination. Even with the original intention of Indigenous self-sufficiency, The Gradual Civilization Act is a policy that seeks the visible erasure of the First Nations culture.

On the matter of how to fortify the Empire, the colonial enterprise is consistently straightforward: we want the land. While it is not true that every First Nation in (current day) Canada was nomadic and while it is true that most First Nations had specific territories, the concept of land ownership is distinctly colonial. The treaties negotiated in the former Upper Canada for land allotments involved willingness and agency on the part of the First Nations, but were not equitable deals.[39] Of course, successful colonization of the land relied on having surveyed, organized places for new settlers to live, with enough accessible resources for them to survive.

The Gradual Civilization Act (originally named "The Act for the Protection of the Indians in Upper Canada" in 1839), melded the need for land with the need for civilized Indians. The Act made compulsory the enfranchisement of all Aboriginal males over the age of 21 who were

[39] For example, the land that is now the city of Toronto was bought for 10 shillings, the equivalent of a day's wages for a foot soldier. This appears to be unusually cheap, however it may be typical of prices for the day. For a comparison, see the amount cited as bribery money that John A. Macdonald received for his campaign needs. For further reading, see P.B. Waite, "The Pacific Scandal," Historica Canada, last edited March 4, 2015 accessed April 10, 2016, http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/pacific-scandal/.

"able to speak, read and write either English or the French Language readily and well, and … sufficiently advanced in the elementary branches of education and … of good moral character and free from debt".[40] Enfranchisement required that an Aboriginal male choose an approved surname by which he would be legally known from that point on. It also required that he would no longer be a member of his tribe (and not retain the "legal rights and habilities of Indians") and would "no longer be deemed an Indian" but a British subject. An Aboriginal women was enfranchised only through marrying someone enfranchised.[41] Once enfranchised, men were entitled to a portion of land (there was 'special' land reserved only for Indians) and some money, both of which became his personal 'property'. [42] By accepting this, the newly enfranchised would "forego all claim to another further share in the lands or moneys then belonging to or reserved for the use of [their] tribe, and cease to have a voice in the proceedings thereof."[43] Milloy emphasizes the profound impact of the Gradual Civilization Act

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[40] "Routing Used to Enslave the Sovereign Indigenous People: 1857 - Gradual Civilization of the Indian Tribes - Enfranchisement Scheme," Signatory Indian, accessed January 11, 2014, http://signatoryindian.tripod.com/routingusedtoenslavethesovereignIndigenouspeoples/id10.html. This site provides scanned pages of the original political documents. The document I reference here is "An Act to Encourage the Gradual Civilization of Indian Tribes in this Province, and to Amend the Laws Relating to Indians," 3rd Session, 5th Parliament, 1857.

[41] This sexist portion of a racist policy causes a number of problems for women residential school survivors. One former student from Vancouver speaks of how she lost her status when she married a non-status Aboriginal man. After her divorce, she still had no status and could not return back to her first nation as a full citizen. It "successfully" performed an erasure of her identity.

[42] The aboriginal man was to receive "a piece of land not exceeding fifty acres out of the lands reserved or set apart for the use of his tribe" as chosen by the Superintendent of Indian Affairs. Though this particular area of research is not in the scope of this project, it is worth noting that it seems that land allotment for other settlers was 100 acres, with more negotiable. There were also stipulations for new settlers, but it seems they didn't require being debt free, educated or morally upright. "*"I, John Doe, do promise and declare that I will maintain and defend to the utmost of my power the authority of the King in his Parliament, as the Supreme Legislature of this Province."* Settlers who neglected this declaration were *"turned off"* their property. "Quebec Land Grants," The Quebec Family History Society, accessed January 10, 2014, http://qfhs.ca/cpage.php. See also "Land Allotment & Registry Offices," Historical Narrative of Early Canada, accessed January 10, 2014, http://www.uppercanadahistory.ca/lluc/lluc1.html.

[43] "An Act to encourage the gradual Civilization of the Indian Tribes in this Province and to amend the Laws respecting Indians," accessed January 11, 2014, Wikisource,

on the construction of identity and language. Functionally, enfranchisement shifted the emphasis of "civilize" away from the original emphasis of tribal self-sufficiency and into assimilation of the individual.[44] With this came a new set of goals mandated by the Department, measured entirely by the reduction of First Nations through enfranchisement. The means became tribal dissolution, pursued primarily through residential schools.

The Indian Act (1876)

In 1860, jurisdiction was divided. The Department of Crown Lands assumed responsibility for the care and administration of aboriginal peoples in Canada East and Canada West (Ontario). The Hudson's Bay Company still constituted Britain's negotiations with the First Nations for everything north and west of Ontario. At Confederation (1867), the newly formed department of Secretary of State took over managing the government's role with the original peoples. This shifted over to the Department of Interior in 1873. Under the brief Liberal leadership of Alexander Mackenzie, government passed the Indian Act of 1876 which codified (and codifies to this day) the jurisdiction of the government over Indian and Inuit affairs.[45] However, The Indian Act went further than the Gradual Civilization Act and abolished self-government while at the same time giving overarching control of reserves (regulating both

https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/An_Act_to_encourage_the_gradual_Civilization_of_the_Indian_Tribes_in_this_Province,_and_to_amend_the_Laws_respecting_Indians.

[44] Milloy, *A National Crime,* 19.

[45] Treaties #1-6 were signed between 1871 and 1876. First Nations in western Canada say the relationship they have is not with the Indian Act but with the treaties, because the Act came after the treaties. This sentiment is shared by the like of Chief Isadore Day in a statement on the 140th anniversary of the Indian Act. "Ontario Regional Chief Isadore Day statement on 140th anniversary of the Indian Act," *Turtle Island News*, last updated April 12, 2016, accessed June 14, 2016, http://theturtleislandnews.com/index.php/2016/04/12/ontario-regional-chief-isadore-day-statement-140th-anniversary-indian-act/.

private and public life) to the federal government by way of Indian Affairs.[46] The Department of Indian Affairs, even in its modern, revised incarnation, ostensibly bears responsibly for carrying out government obligations to Canada's Aboriginal (First Nations, Inuit, and later the Métis) people. "Civilizing" took on the appearance of Christianity entirely as a technology of power in managing the First Nations.[47] Treaties formed between colonial Canada and various tribal nations across the country moved under the umbrella of The Indian Act. Now, the government could (and would) declare certain traditions, social and political organizations as "obstacles to Christianity and civilization." In an amendment to the Indian Act in 1885, the potlatch and Sundance, for example, became legislated criminal behavior. Taxonomies of identity allowed the government to decide who was an Indian, and who wasn't — determined by measurements of "status" that still hold to this day. Human status across Canada became both gendered and racialized.

Indian Affairs becomes a department

Milloy looks to these early eras, before the structural shift to the proliferation of residential schools, as providing the fertile ground in both context and rationale for Canada's most tenacious colonial system. It was Nicholas Flood Davin's 1879 report "The Report on Industrial Schools for Indians and Half breeds" that necessitated new tactics, and charted a path for a fundamental change of approach to assimilation. Though I will look at the contents of the

[46] Milloy, *A National Crime,* 21.
[47] This is a classic example of Foucault's biopower. For a discussion of Foucault and biopower, see Lynne Huffer's chapter "Foucault's Eros: For an Ethics of Living in Biopower" in *A Companion to Foucault*, eds Christopher Falzon, Timothy O'Leary and Jana Sawicki (Hoboken: Wiley, 2013), 436-453.

report in the pages ahead, I will note that Davin's recommendations arrived at a moment when the government was eager for sustainable assimilative success. Davin had been commissioned by re-elected Prime Minister John. A. Macdonald to research the achievements of Industrial School in the United States as a possible 'solution' to what became infamously known as the "the Indian problem."[48] Davin was impressed with the American efforts toward Indian education, and recommended the creation of similar "experiments" in Canada. In 1880, Indian Affairs was given full departmental status. Cloaked in the language of care, Canada through the Department of Indian Affairs, orchestrated a system "that marginalized Aboriginal communities within its constitutional, legislative, and regulatory structure, stripped them of their power of self-government, and denied them any degree of self-determination."[49] The Department of Indian Affairs operated in autonomy for fifty-six years, after which it was reverted to branch status.

The necessities of dominion

While the evolution of official policy offers a glimpse at the mechanical shifts necessary for the proliferation of residential schools, a step back to the larger landscape of the inchoate

[48] "The Indian problem," first referenced in the introduction, is a now-famous phrase belonging to Duncan Campbell Scott in a report given in his role with Indian Affairs in about 1920. It has since been used liberally -- read backwards and forwards into the history of colonization. The progression to the phasing at this point is important; it represents a shift in the particularly racist nuances of colonialism and the strategies employed as a result. It is important to trace the roots of language based policy discrimination. Residential Schools, National Archives of Canada, Record Group 10, vol 6810, file 470-2-3, vol. 7, pp. 55 (L-3) and 63 (N-3), retrieved October 23, 2015. For a more accessible source see John Leslie, *The Historical Development of the Indian Act*, second edition (Ottawa: Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Treaties and Historical Research Branch, 1978), 114.
[49] Milloy, *A National Crime,* 8.

nation of Canada, and her characters, provides additional information about residential schools and settles were compelled to support it.

Macdonald

Sir John A. Macdonald had a political career spanning 50 years and served in political office for 19 years (terms 1867–1873 and 1878–1891). When Macdonald took office as the first Prime Minister of Canada under the guidance of the Constitution Act, the Dominion of Canada existed as far west as Ontario only. The United States was aggressively expanding and moving towards monopolizing natural resources such as fishing rights in northern waters. The U.S. government had accrued Alaska, and there was legitimate risk that western Canada would be taken by the Americans as well. With the shifting identity of Canada away from its roots in the Hudson's Bay Company, the Prime Minister and his government successfully negotiated with Britain to transfer Rupert's Land and North-Western Territory to the Dominion of Canada.[50] Macdonald needed to find a way to unite the western territories with (eastern) Canada. Recognizing the particular urgency in securing an outlet to the Pacific Ocean, Macdonald promised to assume the colony British Columbia's sizable debt and build a railroad that would connect their coast with the new provinces and the rest of eastern Canada. It was a bold and costly offer, and the railroad became Macdonald's focus for a bi-coastal physically united nation.

[50] Rupert's Land was the original name given to the area that now covers Manitoba, most of Saskatchewan, southern Alberta, southern Nunavut and parts of northern Ontario and Quebec. North-Western Territory covered the rest of modern day Saskatchewan, northern Alberta and British Columbia, Yukon, mainland North-West Territories and northern Nunavut.

Macdonald wanted to distance Canada from reliance on the United States by finding a way to transport resources, and by keeping the railroad within anticipated borders.

Macdonald faced obstacles. The western Aboriginal people were a concern because of the beginning efforts to settle the land, the diminution of the buffalo and the smallpox epidemics. The Métis were a concern because they were no longer needed to accrue capital as paid guides, and were not convinced the Canadian government would make decisions with their interests in mind. During his first term, Macdonald's vision for the railroad was stalled during by both the Red River Rebellion of the Métis in modern day Manitoba, as well as by the negotiations needed to ameliorate disputes (notably deep-sea water disputes) between America and Britain (Canada).[51] The Treaty of Washington was signed in 1871 under the name of the British Empire, though Macdonald's (not entirely happy) presence in the U.S.-British negotiations was a step toward allowing Canada to resolve its own problems and its recognition as a nation by the United States.

As the second national election approached, Macdonald had yet to formulate a railroad policy and secure funds for building. Instead of adopting a railroad plan that cut through the hospitable terrain of Iowa and Minnesota, Macdonald proposed a route that cut directly through the Canadian Shield region of Ontario, making the project audacious in both vision and

[51] The Red River Rebellion of 1869-70 is our first introduction of Louis Riel, who led the Métis people to establish a provisional government after Macdonald bought Rupert's Land from the Hudson's Bay Company. Macdonald had appointed an English speaking governor who opposed the (mostly) French speaking Métis. When a pro-Canadian faction threatened to kill Riel, the Riel government executed their leader. Canada and Riel's government actually negotiated an agreement, and in 1870, the Manitoba Act was passed that allowed the Red River settlement to enter the Confederation as the province of Manitoba. Canadians in Ontario were still upset about the execution. After the successful negotiation, the government of Canada sent militia to Manitoba to arrest Riel and suppress the 'rebellion'. Riel peacefully withdrew from Fort Garry, but when he was denied amnesty, he fled to the United States to reappear when called upon during the North-West rebellion of 1885. A good overview of the Métis and the Red River Rebellion can be found here: http://indigenousfoundations.arts.ubc.ca/home/community-politics/metis.html.

cost. Alongside this, Macdonald needed to secure votes in the western territories. In an era where votes were publicly declared, bribery was a particularly effective strategy for garnering needed loyalties. Macdonald and his crew awarded the railway charter to the Allan group in late 1872, a decision fueled by their need for capital. While Macdonald was elected for another term, on the first day of Parliament in 1873, a Liberal MP accused the Conservatives of accepting party bribes in exchange for the railway building contract. The allegations proved true: Macdonald and his party accepted upwards of $190,000 in campaign funds from the Allan group in what became known as the Pacific Scandal. The scandal briefly interrupted Macdonald's run as Prime Minister, and Alexander MacKenzie and the Liberal Party took leadership.

Elected again in 1878 with the Indian Act and railway plans underway, John A. Macdonald instituted a national policy that would introduce high tariffs designed to keep industry demand within Canada. Though the Conservative government found a syndicate willing to undertake the transcontinental railroad project, the government heavily subsidized the undertaking. At the time there was no income tax, and the only way the government accrued funds was through tariffs imposed at the border. In 1880 when Canada took over Britain's remaining arctic territories, Macdonald needed to unify the nation as well as attract newcomers to the land, which was not particularly easy. Colonization required settlers; the logic of individualistic economy, property rights and citizenship, along with the national railway, was the gateway to making this happen. The only thing impeding the route to colonial progress was Canada's original peoples. The railway proved increasingly costly and treacherous, cutting through the

Rocky Mountains and the sinking muskeg of Ontario, and the CPR nearly went bankrupt several times before 1885. Indigenous lands for new settlers was the logical colonial leap forward.

Even as the railway neared completion amid desperate financial challenges, the Northwest and her Métis once again rose up in protest over land rights. This time, Macdonald was able to use the railway to transport troops into the area and suppress the Métis. The Northwest Rebellion of 1885 remains one of the most controversial battles in Canadian history. Macdonald arrested their leader, Louis Riel, and tried him for treason. Riel was sentenced to be hanged, a move that made the French Catholic province of Québec indignant (Riel was Catholic) and loosened any Conservative-French alliances. The night before Riel was hanged in Regina, Saskatchewan, he was interviewed by a journalist who gained presence with Riel because he disguised himself as a Catholic priest. The famed interloper was Nicholas Davin.

Davin

Nicholas Flood Davin was one of the first strategists to make the connection between upheaval in the west and the utility of residential schools. Davin was commissioned by Macdonald to research the logistics and success of Indian Industrial Schools in the United States to see if they might be a viable experiment for Canada. Davin himself is a bit of a tragic character. Despite being a spellbinding orator, an accomplished writer, and lauded by one historian as a "champion of the rights of the less fortunate citizens of his day."[52] Davin never achieves the positions of political affluence that he sought. He took his own life in 1901.

[52] Koester was a clerk assistant in the House of Commons at the time of writing his biography on Davin. Walter Hildebrant, “Manitoba History: Review: C.B. Koster, *Mr. Davin, M.P.:* A Biography of Nicolas Davin,” The Manitoba

A lawyer by training, Davin worked as a parliamentary journalist before coming to Canada from Ireland. While working in London, he was given the project of writing commentary on the possible annexation of Canada by the United States. Once he emigrated to Canada — it is rumored that he lost his job for showing up raucously drunk — he made a name for himself with a rousing rebuttal to a speech by an American lecturer who spoke on the rise and progress of the United States. Davin denounced American materialism and lauded the unsullied figure of the sovereign. In many ways, he was the quintessential immigrant: full of vigor and hope that Canada could provide a new start, free from the violent divisions of Protestant and Catholic that marred his native Ireland. Davin was not particularly religious himself, but believed that the new Constitution, if unimpeded, could provide a better way for both religion and people. He made a plea in writing for the Irish to consider that the Catholic and Protestant divisions from home had no relevance in the new Empire.[53] John A. Macdonald liked his plea, and Davin was bold enough to reach out to Macdonald and ask for a post. Davin campaigned for Macdonald's upcoming election with a vision of the glory of "a great self-contained country" teeming with success made possible only through a "protective policy." Davin's mesmerizing presence on the campaign trail was rewarded with a short lived appointment to the Conservative government. It was during this time that he was mandated with the task of researching the viability of the American system of industrial schools for Canada. Curiously, the two reports he wrote while in government — one that launched Indian residential schools as policy, and the other on Chinese

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Historical Society, last revised on August 13, 2011, accessed on December 20, 2013, http://www.mhs.mb.ca/docs/mb_history/03/davin_nf.shtml.

[53] Davin was raised in Ireland, but studied law in London. He was a champion of the British master writers. It is my guess that Davin was Irish Protestant and not Irish Catholic. Further information can be found here: "Residents: Davin, Nicholas Flood," *Regina Infinite Horizons*, accessed June 3, 2012, http://www.regina.ca/residents/heritage-history/historical-biographies/biography-davin/.

head tax — are either not mentioned at all or shuffled over briefly in the numerous one page biographies that describe his life and career.[54]

On January 28, 1879, Davin was given the one-person investigative task of researching Indian industrial schools in the U.S. to see if they might be a viable option for Western Canada (the then North-West Territories).[55] Davin visited the Indian industrial schools at the Cheyenne and Arapaho Agencies (Mennonite), White Earth Agency (Minnesota, government run and Catholic) , and Hampton, Virginia (Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute).[56] Despite his political disdain for all things American, his report, submitted March 14, 1879, applauded this American effort and recommended the same "experiment" in Canada.

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[54] See, for example, John Herd Thompson, "Davin, Nicholas Flood," *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 13, University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2003–, accessed December 14, 2013, http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/davin_nicholas_flood_13E.html. The Chinese were used to build the Canadian railroad. They were paid one-third to one-half of what was given to their non-Chinese co-workers. After the Chinese were no longer needed, Macdonald passed the Chinese Immigration Act of 1885 that was meant to discourage Chinese from immigrating to Canada by subjecting them to a hefty fee for entering. This was not abolished until 1923. Further information can be found here: http://www.library.ubc.ca/chineseinbc/exclusion.html.

[55] There are a surprising number of articles that suggest that Davin travelled to consult Captain Richard H. Pratt in Pennsylvania. Pratt, whose phrase "kill the Indian save the man" is quoted prolifically in the rhetoric of the history of Canadian residential schools. I can't find any evidence in the archives that Davin had a connection with Pratt. This does not mean the rhetoric didn't shape the schools he did visit, but the conflation is unsubstantiated. Wayne Spear's article in the National Post begins "When the politician and aspiring poet Nicholas Flood Davin visited Captain Richard H. Pratt's Carlisle Barracks, in Pennsylvania, the Carlisle Indian Industrial School was only weeks along in its operations." Wayne K. Spear, "Wayne K. Spear: Ottawa's Indian policies stick with tried and tested failure," National Post, last modified August 9, 2012, accessed August 12, 2012, http://fullcomment.nationalpost.com/2012/08/09/wayne-k-spear-ottawas-indian-policies-stick-with-tried-and-tested-failure/.

[56] "Hampton School and Carlisle School were both somewhat successful in the process of educating the Native Americans during the 19th century. The attitudes and practices that these two schools shared have a lot common, but the schools have also exhibited significant disagreements which were vitally important at the time and which continue to animate the issue of cultural difference and assimilation today (Fear Segal 325). The ideals found at Hampton were based on a biological theory of social development while the ones found at Carlisle were based around an egalitarian view of society. These differing viewpoints crucially affected the way the students were taught and the way they experienced the American education process. Although the two schools taught the same things Carlisle may have been a better experience because they got the students at a younger age and the school's underlying theory was based around a belief in universal human capacities." Booker Evans, "Differing Approaches: Native American Education at Carlisle and Hampton," Trinity Banter, accessed July 5, 2013, http://commons.trincoll.edu/edreform/2012/05/2562/.

> The experience of the United States is the same as our own as far as the adult Indian is concerned. Little can be done with him. He can be taught to do a little at farming, and at [live] stock-raising, and to dress in a more civilized manner, but that is all. The child, again, who goes to a day school learns little, and what little he learns is soon forgotten, while his tastes are fashioned at home, and his inherited aversion [avoidance] to toil [work] is in no way combated [stopped].[57]

It is important to note that Davin's report does not mark the origin of residential schools in Canada nor the civilizing impulse behind the protection offered by the Crown. Prior to 1879, both the Roman Catholics, Anglicans and the Methodists had been educating the First Nations, and four "manual labour" schools existed: The Mohawk Institute (1831), Wikwemigong, Mount Elgin, and Shingwauk.[58] The First Nations of Ontario and Quebec have a long history with the relationship with British and French, and some tribes embraced in good faith both the teachings of the Christian missionaries and the changes initiated by the shifting cultural landscape. Chief Shingwauk (Anishnaabe) is a good example of this. Shingwauk expressed his support for Indian education as one of the best resources for his people.[59]

While the government was supporting education as an effective means of cultural replacement -- a different mandate than that of the churches -- the ecclesial rhetoric about Indian education was entwined with the language of civilization. The Reverend Edward Wilson

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[57] What we refer to as "The Davin Report" can be accessed online in several places. Nicholas Flood Davin, *Report on Industrial Schools for Indians and Half-Breeds* (Ottawa: Publisher not identified, 1879), 14, accessed January 3, 2013, Open Library Classic Ebook Collection, https://openlibrary.org/books/OL23345637M/Report_on_industrial_schools_for_Indians_and_half-breeds.

[58] There is at least one government funded Indigenous school that operates in Ontario to this day.

[59] Missionary Wilson quotes Chief Shingwauk as saying "the time is passed for my people to live by hunting and fishing as our forefathers used to do; if we are to continue to exist at all we must learn to gain our living in the same way as white people." Shingwauk, and his brother Bukhwujenene, were both converts to Christianity and were devoted to the missionary effort. In a report given by Wilson, the tribes they visited in this Ontario area with "methodist, catholic and non-believer," but I have not found documents by "non-believer" elders from those first nations. Nock, David A. *A Victorian Missionary and Canadian Indian Policy: Cultural Synthesis Vs. Cultural Replacement* (Waterloo, Ont., Canada: Published for the Canadian Corporation for Studies in Religion by Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1988), 78.

(Anglican) writes an account of his activities in 1886 that includes a trip to England with Chief Buhkwujjenene (Anishnaabe) from Garden River. During a visit to the Anglican church, after the Chief impressed everyone with his self-assurance given the novelty of his traditional dress, he delivered an impassioned plea for the parishioners to send more missionaries to Canada.[60] The following day when Reverend Wilson made a visit to the Missionary Society, he explained that the Secretary, Reverend Henry Venn "hoped that the Committee, whom we were to meet on the morrow, would agree to continue their support of the mission at Garden River, and to assist us in our proposed scheme for the advancement and civilization of the Indians; he feared, however, we might have some difficulty in the matter, on account of our proposed plans not being strictly in accordance with the main object of the Society, which is to carry the Gospel to the heathen."[61] Likewise, the Catholics of the Shingwauk school were originally interested in having an aboriginal church as well as a school "available" for interested tribal people. They tried it out, and failed to attract many people to the church or the school. Their lack of success compelled policy makers to see compliance to colonial ways as the missing element in transforming Aboriginal Christians into 'good' Canadians (and good Indians). Good, in this context, became a cultural duplication of European ways, which were, of course, conceived of as Christian. This example provides a glimpse into the conflation of civilizing with the advancement

[60] Wilson's account includes a speech of Chief Buhkwujjenene where he says, "We know that our great Mother Queen Victoria, loves her Indian subjects; often have we fought for her and we are ready to fight her battles again. We have readily given up our hunting grounds to you, and all that we ask of you is that you will help us in improving ourselves and in educating our children." In Janet Chute's *Shingwauknose*, there are accounts of the Chief's thoughts and he is cited as being disillusioned with the lack of respect for the authority of "the ancient chiefs" and the self-interest of the white man. (page 213) Janet Elizabeth Chute, *The Legacy of Singwaukonse: A Century of Native Leadership* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), 213.

[61] Rev. Edward F. Wilson, *Missionary Work among the Ojebway Indians* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1886), chapter 17, accessed January 10, 2014, http://anglicanhistory.org/indigenous/ojebway_wilson/17.html.

of the First Nations, *and* is part of the reason why church involvement made so much sense to Davin's vision for the structural process of assimilation. The new policies of the Confederation shed the values of cultural exchange and mutual learning that made an appearance in the early accounts of Aboriginal education. (Even the Reverend Wilson was given an Anishnaabe name and received some of the traditional practices. The colonial relationship was complicated, however. Wilson describes the photographs taken in England of Chief Buhkwujjenene in this way: "Several likenesses were taken--representing him as a Christian Chief in his ordinary dress; and as a Chief of former days in feathers and Indian costume.")[62]

Davin's report, even before his recommendations, pinpoints some of the rationale that will link Christianity to the colonizing enterprise of children's education. Apart from the useful imaginative conflation of civilization with Christianity, Davin's reasons are functional. The First Nations are spiritual people, recognizes Davin, and stripping them of their own religion would create a kind of spiritual vacuum. Davin observes that the effort to civilize adults have had a limited effect. In order to successfully imbed civilized ways into the Indian, Davin recommends that the government target children, preferably at an early age.[63] He notes that the American day school model was flawed insofar as the Indians became culturally bilingual, which is not the Imperial goal. "The wigwam has stronger influence than the school," and therefore Davin proposes that children need to be removed from their Indigenous environment and educated within a complete immersion experience. Davin's idea of immersion is conceived of as

[62] Edward Wilson, *Missionary Work*, chapter 16, accessed January 10, 2014.
[63] He continues by saying, "and their (missionaries) testimony, like that of the school teachers, like that of the authorities of Washington is, that if anything is to be done with the Indian, we must catch him very young." Edward Wilson, *Missionary Work*, chapter 16, accessed January 10, 2014.

"educating them in industry and the arts of civilization." Davin reports that his investigation of the four American Agencies suggests that religious schools were the most successful at accomplishing this goal.

> The importance of denominational schools at the outset for the Indians must be obvious…The Indians have their own ideas of right and wrong of "good" Indians and "bad" Indians, and to disturb this faith, without supplying a better, would be a curious process to enlist the sanction of civilized races whose whole civilization, like all the civilizations with which we are acquainted, is based on religion.[64]

Davin goes on to recommend that no more than four industrial boarding schools be opened at first, and proposes specific locations in (current day) Saskatchewan where the government can make use of relationships already established by the regional churches. Davin carefully examines the resources available on the proposed land to ensure that sustenance would be viable. In his report, Davin charts out all livestock and supplies needed, and suggests offering wages substantial enough to "induce good men to offer themselves." Davin adds that "the advantage of calling in the aid of religion is, that there is a chance of getting an enthusiastic person with, therefore, a motive power beyond anything pecuniary remuneration could supply. The work requires not only the energy but the patience of an enthusiast." While Davin discloses that the "brightest and most successful" Indians he met in America were of mixed (with white) ancestry, he does implore the Canadian government to oversee the worthwhile work of educating the Indigenous people. He also recommends that the government should be unnecessarily distracted by this project, and should leave the daily work to the church so that the government can get on with doing what the government is called to do.

[64]Davin, *Report on Industrial Schools for Indians and Half-Breeds*.

Davin recommends giving Aboriginal families an increased ration of food for volunteering to send their children to school. The four experimental residential schools were established.

Education as social control

When in 1885 the Métis rose up again in what was known as the second Riel rebellion, settler anxieties took a new turn. Davin's rhetoric of education as peaceable social control and his suggestion that problems posed by western Aboriginal people could be solved by instruction in "self-reliance and industry" became all the more potent. Churches started stepping forward, lobbying the government for schools. In December of the Riel rebellion, the Presbyterian church petitioned for the school that would become Regina Indian Industrial School. It is the pictures of Thomas Moore Keesick from that school that were published in the Department of Indian Affairs *Annual Report of 1904*. There are side-by-side pictures of the young Thomas Moore, "before and after" tuition.[65] In the first we see the young boy in braids, dressed in what looks like traditional regalia (is he holding a pistol?). In the second picture, Thomas Moore is a vision of progress with short hair and a formal suit. His stance is confident and humble, leaning against a railing on one elbow, his ankles crossed, a vision of Davin's "self-reliance." The pictures of Thomas Moore served as an icon of educational success.

[65] A publication of this image can be found here: Kerry Benjoe, "Thomas Moore Keesick more than just a face," *Regina Leader-Post*, last updated December 22, 2015, accessed January 3, 2016, http://leaderpost.com/news/local-news/thomas-moore-keesick-more-than-just-a-face.

Scott

Davin's report on education as social control was taken up by politicians who claimed wide support for the idea.[66] You can see the shift in language reflected in official policy by 1910 when Duncan Campbell Scott, Superintendent of Indian Education said "without education and with neglect the Indians would produce an undesirable and often dangerous element in society." The government self-interest of the state married with the church's sense of selfless duty inspired a proliferation of schools that saved children "from evil surroundings."[67]

> I want to get rid of the Indian problem. I do not think as a matter of fact, that the country ought to continuously protect a class of people who are able to stand alone… Our objective is to continue until there is not a single Indian in Canada that has not been absorbed into the body politic and there is no Indian question, and no Indian Department, that is the whole object of this Bill.[68]

In 1911, the Canadian government negotiated contracts with various churches to run the schools. In 1920, Scott advised an amendment to the Indian Act that made it mandatory for all First Nations children between the ages of seven and 15 to attend school, with the primary option as Residential School.[69] Another amendment was made to the Indian Act in 1927 that prevented anyone (Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal) from seeking funds for Aboriginal legal claims without first obtaining a license from the Superintendent of Indian Affairs.[70] This impeded Aboriginal legal representation meaning, generally, that Aboriginal people were unable to act on

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[66] J.A. Macrae to Indian Commissioner, 18 December 1886, Regina (Saskatchewan, Canada), Record Group 10, Vol. 3647, File 8128, MR C 10113, National Archives of Canada.

[67] Milloy*, A National Crime*, 33. The annual reports Milloy referenced can now be accessed online. See the report for 1911 found here: http://archives.algomau.ca/main/sites/default/files/2010-011_001_045_Part1.pdf.

[68] Residential Schools, Record Group 10, vol. 6810, file 470-2-3, vol. 7, pp. 55 (L-3) and 63 (N-3), National Archives of Canada.

[69] Overt racism in Canada was prevalent by this point as Milloy points out that there were also Industrial Schools for lower class children in B.C., who made it a point to keep non-Aboriginal schools so that the kids weren't badly influenced by the non-white children. See Milloy, *A National Crime*, chapter 1.

[70] Ronald Niezen, *Truth and Indignation* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013), 27.

grievances and, specifically, that they could not access legal action on behalf of their children in residential schools.[71] Duncan Campbell Scott was a poet and a lauded civil servant, eventually promoted to Superintendent of Indian Affairs, a post in which he remained for the entirety of his working life. Upon retirement in 1932, he was widely praised for his capable administration of assimilation policies.

Christian-run education

Christian religious leaders garnered the power of language to facilitate assimilation. Language seemed the obvious link between the children and their communities and culture, and radical means were used to eliminate Aboriginal languages from the children's vocabulary.[72] The loss of language fostered a break with student's home communities where parents and grandparents did not necessarily speak English and Indigenous language preserved traditional knowledge and practices. Even with the forced replacement of language, the church-run education and vocational skills training provided very few assimilated jobs for departing students. Not only did the schools fail to have a viable placement system, but non-Aboriginal communities did not want to work alongside Aboriginal people. Many former students returned to their home communities with no work and no connection with their cultural heritage, and with an ingrained sense that their traditional family members were inferior human beings. They carried socialized shame for being Indian or Inuit.

[71] Niezen notes that Indian Act was amended again in 1951 removing this. Niezen, *Truth and Indignation*, 27.
[72] Apart from general severe punishment, beatings and shaming, some Cree in Saskatchewan report having their tongues shocked electrically when they spoke their language. This is based in live testimony I heard at the Saskatchewan National Event in 2012.

Between 1911 and 1951, the number of residential schools across the country increased to 80. The contracts signed between the government and the churches lapsed after five years and were never officially renewed. With no legal agreement to bind the parties, the laissez-faire administration left students even more vulnerable than they had been in the past. Churches began to petition the government independently for funds when the per capita grants to the schools (designed to force the schools into greater fiscal responsibility) fell below actual operating costs. Wages for teachers needed to increase, and aging buildings needed repair. Despite these petitions, persistent underfunding of the schools forced dependence on student labor.

After the First World War, there was a slower rate of growth in residential schools. It was the enthusiastic churches who pushed the government to open schools in the few areas across the country that remained untapped.[73] The Great Depression of the 1930's, flanked by the two World Wars, strained the government's finances. While many of the government's obligations suffered during this period, the lives of those in decaying residential schools were particularly hard hit. As far back as 1908, F. H. Paget, Inspector to the Department of the Interior and of Indian Affairs, submitted his findings on the condition of the schools, documenting that they were riddled with disease and "unfit for human use." Duncan Campbell Scott responded with great concern, but no action was taken to change the reported situation. Sixteen years later, the school Paget was referring to on the Blood Reserve was still in use. Similar reports followed. Milloy notes that there were at least five reports presented to the government, all citing health

[73] Milloy cites as an example correspondence between Rev. Ferrier and D.C. Scott on July 8, 1920 (National Archives of Canada, Record Group 10, Vol.6040, File 160-3A, Part 1 MR C 8153, retrieved October 23, 2015). Milloy, *A National Crime,* 102.

concerns. Chief Medical Officer for the Department of Indian Affairs P.H. Bryce reported that of the children not sent home because of illness, 24% of previously healthy children were dying in residential schools. Bryce also reported that anywhere from 47% (Peigan Reserve, Alberta) to 74% (File Hills School, Saskatchewan) of discharged children died upon returning home.[74] Bryce reported on the abysmal medical conditions for sixteen years, calling the schools "a national crime." According to findings in 2007, large numbers of Aboriginal children never returned to their home communities because they either ran away or died; and it was common that parents were not informed when their children went missing.[75] Similar dire warnings were issued about corporal punishment being administered by the schools. Given higher level of social acceptance physical punishment endured in that era, the official reports of excessive punishment stand out. Milloy cites numerous incidents that were perceived as abuse when they were originally reported.[76] The extent to which the Department of Indian Affairs and church officials were aware of the abuse in the schools is a matter of debate. Both The Royal Commission of Aboriginal Peoples and John Milloy conclude that officials knew of the extant abuse and living conditions in residential schools.[77] And with that knowledge, both government and church

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[74] Milloy, *National Crime, 91.* As mentioned earlier, Bryce worked the entirety of his career reporting on the terrible conditions at residential schools. His reports were suppressed until Milloy was granted access to the archives. Milloy is the first person to publish Bryce's findings. Dr. Bryce is an example of resistance and truth-telling, and he ended up losing his job and being ostracized from his profession.

[75] Our access to helpful statistics will improve as the Commission gathers more data. There is a Missing Children and Unmarked Graves project that began in 2007 to research disappearances and commemorate loss. See this report prepared by the TRC's The Working Group for Missing Children and Unmarked Graves: http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/File/pdfs/Working_group_on_Mis_7456E0.pdf.

[76] Milloy, *A National Crime,* 140.

[77] The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples was launched after the Oka crisis of 1990. The Oka crisis is a land-claim dispute that led to a military siege of the Mohawk community Kanesatake, and galvanized many of the Treaty grievances of Aboriginal people across the country. The RCAP was launched to research how to improve relations between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples across Canada. You can access the contents of the reports of this Commission here: http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/.

continued to garner children for the schools. "In 1922, the issue of Aboriginal people had long since been swept into the darker reaches of national consciousness. The deaths, and the condition of the schools pricked no collective consciousness, wrought no revolution in policy, or even any significant reformulation."[78] By 1945, there were 9,149 children in residential schools across Canada.

During this era of the residential school system, the academic education of the children was limited. There was a system in place that mandated a divided school day where students would spend half the day in classes and half the day occupied by vocational work. Vocational work was not necessarily the kind training in industry that Davin had in mind, and usually amounted to chores necessary to keep the school open during financial hardship. When the government realized that cultural assimilation was failing despite these and other extreme tactics employed by residential school staff, they needed a new way to justify the existence of the schools.[79] Consequently, the Aboriginal education policy shifted from societal assimilation to segregation, and graduating students were returned to reserve lands to become farmers, and granted a re-payable loan for farming equipment. The lack of appropriate education did not provide the young Aboriginal graduates with the skills needed for success anywhere, and most former students did not have the knowledge and resources to sustain a farm.

[78] Milloy, *A National Crime,* 102.
[79] The Aboriginal Healing Foundation is the sponsor of the *Where are the Children?* educational site cited earlier. http://www.wherearethechildren.ca. At the time of writing, their website houses a report of the failures of both education and assimilation during this time.

Churches fight to keep schools open

Pressures from both inside and outside the system pushed the government to revisit its Aboriginal education policies. The government, shifted again toward integration, adopted a day-school model as the numbers of students between 1951 and 1970 continued to rise. The day school model was attractive to the government because it reduced costs per child, it allowed for a new version of assimilation as children were in schools with (though still segregated from) non-Aboriginal students, and it appeased the pleas of Aboriginal groups who were pushing for integrated education. While the government's goal was to phase out residential schools all together, full board residential schools stayed open in communities where children lived too far to go home for the day school model, or where children needed boarding houses in order to attend Provincial schools. The residential schools that did not shift to the day school model became repositories for Aboriginal "orphans and children from disrupted homes". Therefore, despite the change in policy eliminate the residential school model, the schools were *not* phased out during the integration period. This is due in large part to Christian churches who fought tenaciously to keep the schools open in direct opposition to the government's policy of integration.

It is worth noting that as residential schools were starting to wind down in the lower reaches of Canada, new residential schools were opening close to the homes of the First Nations, Métis and Inuit students from the North West Territories.

Most of the first person survivor testimony of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's statement gathering process comes from students who attended residential and day schools of this era. The government ended its official partnership with the churches in 1969.

It took four decades to close residential schools. Those children designated as coming from problem homes still endured the system and lived at schools until many of the them were placed in foster care through new child and family services agencies. The last reserve-run school closed in 1996 in Saskatchewan. As of the time of writing, there are an estimated 80,000 former residential schools students still living today.[80]

Means to an end

Even before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission started receiving first person testimony about the living conditions at the schools, repeated themes of abuse and neglect emerged in published residential school narratives from across Canada. Initially, these claims were met with disbelief. The resistance to the harmful aspects of residential school history lends a particular importance to the act of statement gathering which, according to Marian Kaplan, Professor of Modern Jewish History, "challenges the myth of political innocence."[81] Kaplan writes how Holocaust testimony "confront(s) the way German history is remembered and told."[82] In the case of Canadian residential school history, testimony forces upon us the recognition of an oppressive structure the challenges the way we recall Christian mission. The findings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the public journalism that has followed afford us insight into the conditions at the school and how those conditions affected the lives and families of the children. In the pages ahead, I will recount portions of first person witness in

[80] TRC, *Interim Report*, 7.
[81] Marion A. Kaplan, *Between Dignity and Despair: Jewish Life in Nazi Germany*. Studies in Jewish History (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 9.
[82] *Ibid*.

a structure modeled after the categories in the TRC Interim Report that roughly traces a conceptual chronology of the moment children leave home until graduation: arrival, care, food, education, discipline and sexual abuse. It should be obvious that this is very small sample of what I heard at the National Events.

Part II: Survivor Narratives

Arrival

The stories of arrival at residential school vary across the country. Residential schools survivors have described to the Commissioners tearful farewells at train stations and horrific separations of children from parents, with children often taken against the parents will. One survivor from Haida Gwai tells to the story of being picked up by an Indian Agent and put in the back of a truck with fifteen other boys. None of the families knew what had happened to their children, and the parents walked the beaches every day looking for signs of life, wondering if a body would wash up on shore.[83] Survivors told stories of being loaded in cattle cars, being pushed into Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) vehicles, and being escorted in small planes. Travel to schools was sometimes hundreds or thousands of kilometers, which meant that most parents could not travel to see their children and that children could not go home for holidays or breaks. Many of the children from far communities did not see their parents for their entire growing up years.

[83] This was testimony from the Vancouver National Event on September 19, 2015. The man said years later, when his father found out he was only 100 km away, he collapsed.

Once the children arrived at the school, survivors tell stories of cold and cruel reception. Former students remember how they were called names and referred to in terms they did not understand, such as “dirty little squaws”[84] and “dirty, no-good-for-nothing savages.”[85] Children were stripped of their clothing and made to stand naked with the other children while being doused with lye and other chemicals used against lice. Those children who were sent off to school with special keepsakes or commemorative items from grandparents (such as handmade dolls and brand new clothes, and even highly valued traditional clothing, regalia and footwear) told stories of all of their belongings and suitcases being taken away from them, the contents dumped into a pile, new dresses taken off and thrown out or burned. Their hair, including sacred braids, was shorn. Everyone was given an identical short haircut and style of dress or uniform. It is common to hear adults remember that they were required to march in lines, and were herded into communal showers for cleaning. Many former students speak of how frightening and humiliating these experiences were when they were raised (up until then) with a sense privacy. Children were assigned numbers, and in many cases, children were referred as their number not their name. Many survivor testimony begins with the former student saying something like "I was 66, and that’s all I was known as.”[86] Often their clothing was labelled with the number they were given. “Didn’t matter if shoes were too small or shirt too small, if it was

[84] Nora Hanuse, Commissioners Sharing Panel, TRC Vancouver National Event, September 20, 2013.
[85] This is the testimony of Campbell Papequash on the words spoken just before they deloused him. Minsky’s article also quotes Elaine Durocher recalling her initial greeting at the Catholic School in Kamsack. “We were told we were little, stupid savages, and that they had to educate us.” Amy Minsky, “In their words: What residential school survivors told the Truth and Reconciliation Commission,” *Globe News*, last updated June 2, 2015, accessed June 9, 2016, http://globalnews.ca/news/2031617/in-their-words-what-residential-school-survivors-told-the-truth-and-reconciliation-commission/.
[86] Carol Lucas, Commissioners Sharing Panel, TRC Vancouver National Event, September 20, 2013.

#85, I had to wear it."[87] Chief Fred Robbins recalls how he could hardly sit down his first week at schools because he was whipped so much. "They didn't tell you to fold your clothes; just whipped you."[88] Adults remember that as small children they cried themselves to sleep, sometimes for months. One survivor recalls, "We had to weep silently. You were not allowed to cry."[89]

Care

Childhood and adolescence was spent without physical and emotional care. Former students speak of the transition from loving homes to loveless institutions.[90] "It was a life devoid of love," says TRC Survivor Committee member Barney Williams of his school experience in Port Alberni.[91] Boys and girls were separated, and siblings were punished for trying to talk to each other. One sibling spoke of straining every day to recognize his sister, and of his despair when he was no longer able to recognize and find his sister from afar because all the girls were made to look alike.[92] It was common for children to be punished for waving to a sibling. Another man spoke of how the forced separation from his siblings was so effective that he did not recognize his sisters when they came to his aid as adults when they were all living on the streets, homeless. It is common to hear tales of chronic bed wetting, and how bed-wetters

[87] Chief Fred Robbins, Commissioners Sharing Panel, TRC Vancouver National Event, September 19, 2013.
[88] *Ibid.*
[89] The full quotation from Paul Dixon is: "You hear children crying at bedtime, you know. But all that time, you know, you know we had to weep silently. You were not allowed to cry, and we were in fear that we, as nobody to hear us, you know. If one child was caught crying, eh, oh, everybody was in trouble … they hit you between your legs, or pull you out of bed by the hair … Homesickness was your constant companion besides hunger, loneliness, and fear." Minsky, "In their words."
[90] TRC, *Interim Report*, 5.
[91] Barney Williams, Observations and Reflections from members of the TRC Survivor's Committee, National Research Centre Forum, March 3, 2011.
[92] Dorothy Coyote, Commissioners Sharing Panel, TRC Vancouver National Event, September 20, 2013.

faced extreme shaming and cruelty. Several of the former students spoke of trying to fall asleep on the toilets so they could avoid the beatings they would receive if their bed was wet.[93] One student described how they would have to go to Mass with their wet sheets over their head.[94] Milloy notes that the archived reports of the medical examiners condemn the practice of sick children lying in soiled beds during their recovery.[95] Other aspects of wellness were regularly compromised. Shirley Waskewitch speaks of her critical medical needs that were met with derision instead of care: "…Had a purple oozing scabs with puss and still have scars because they weren't attended to. Had scabs on my bum, and nun lifted my nightgown so all the girls could see. Turned me over so everyone could see my bum, but no one gave me medical attention." Shirley Waskewitch and a number of others were so badly infected they were eventually sent to the hospital. She recalls the shame as much as the illness: "When the nun exposed my body to everyone, she exposed me as a person. We never did that at home...never exposed ourselves. Never gotten over it."[96] Ray Silver describes the one time he was allowed to see his little brother before his brother died lying alone in the infirmary. He was devastated that his brother didn't recognize him. Neither Ray nor his parents were informed when his brother died which is a sorrow that Ray bears to this day.[97] These early experiences figure prominently in survivor testimony, and many former students explain how they directed their anger toward their parents for 'letting' them go, and how that bitterness lasted their entire lifetime. Students

[93] Margaret Paulette, Commissioners Sharing Panel, TRC Atlantic National Event, October 27, 2011.
[94] Rose Miller, Commissioners Sharing Panel, TRC Vancouver National Event, September 19, 2013.
[95] Milloy, *A National Crime,* 142. Another early article on illness, with a brief interview of Milloy, can be found in Bill Curry and Karen Howlett, "Natives died in droves as Ottawa ignored warnings," *The Globe and Mail*, last updated August 22, 2007, accessed May 4, 2012, http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/politics/natives-died-in-droves-as-ottawa-ignored-warnings/article4309756/.
[96] Shirley Waskewitch, Commissioners Sharing Panel, TRC Saskatchewan National Event, 23 June 2012.
[97] Minsky, "In their words."

speak of how letters from home were withheld, leaving children with the impression that they had been forgotten entirely.[98] Often too late, they came to understand that it had not been their parent's choice (during the forced attendance era) or that their parents were trying to provide a good education for them.

Food

"I was always hungry," describes one man from the Shubenacadie school.[99] The food the children were offered in schools was unfamiliar, different than the food they were used to at home. Students speak of how they were punished severely if they hesitated in front of what was placed before them, even when the food was poorly prepared or rotten. Chief Robert Joseph speaks of black worms and insects moving in their morning porridge. "We were so hungry we would try to the pick them out."[100] John Milloy cites a reported incident of a young girl who ran away because she was forced to eat rotten meat.[101] One former student of St. Anne's, now a minister in the Anglican church, spoke of vomiting the spoiled lunch he had been required to eat. He was then forced to eat his own vomit.[102] Marie Doyle, on the other side of country, tells the same story. Ms. Doyle also describes the games nuns would play with their

[98] In the case of Elizabeth Ottereyes, who attended Shingwauk (Ontario), the letters she received from home had large portions blacked out that the priests did not want them to read. She said she has been able to forgive the physical abuse she received for three years at the hands of a supervisor, but she can't forgive this. Elizabeth Ottereyes, Commissioners Sharing Panel, TRC Quebec National Event, April 26, 2013.
[99] Bernard Knockwood, Commissioners Sharing Panel, TRC Atlantic National Event, October 27, 2011.
[100] Chief Robert Joseph on his experiences in Alert Bay, quoted in Michael Turner, "Witnesses: Art and Canada's Indian Residential Schools," *Canadian Art*, last accessed August 11, 2016, http://canadianart.ca/reviews/witnesses-belkin/.
[101] Here Milloy cites the store of Christine Haines. Milloy, *A National Crime,* 143.
[102] Rev. Andrew Wesley from his time at St. Anne's residential school. Andrew Wesley, Commissioners Sharing Panel, TRC Saskatchewan National Event, June 23, 2012.

food. “Instead of passing out apples, they'd throw them at the children.”[103] The big kids would learn how to catch. The small ones would be hit and left without food.[104] One former student from Saskatchewan spoke of sitting in front of inadequate meals and seeing carts of cakes and breads rolled past them and taken to the nuns.[105] As an act of resistance, some students became adept at stealing from either the kitchen pantry or the communion vestibule, often to feed smaller children who were hungry. Several said that their residential school experience is where they learned to steal and drink. One woman in Vancouver described how they figured out how to make their own moonshine. Another former student from Nova Scotia spoke of learning to sneak out of the dormitory window and go to the barn where she would milk the cow so she could feed some of the little children in the dorm. She fashioned long tubes that she would slide into the legs of her pants for holding the milk. One of the kind teachers caught on to what she was doing, and made sure she was never seen by other staff. Not all staff were so accommodating. Some schools provided no access to water for the children at night which forced them to drink out of the toilet bowls. When caught, the nuns locked the bathrooms.[106] Research now confirms that most children were receiving an inadequate amount of nutrition at residential school. In 1942, when government researchers were sent to northern Manitoba (Norway House, The Pas) they found a whole population that, devoid of adequate income after

[103] “Mi’kmaqs recall hunger at residential school,” *CBC News Nova Scotia*, last updated July 18, 2013, accessed June 15, 2016, http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/nova-scotia/mi-kmaqs-recall-hunger-at-residential-school-1.1337440.
[104] I took notes at the TRC Vancouver National Event of Eugene Arcand of the Survivor’s Committee mentioning that there were so many abuses to talk about that they didn’t talk much about the mental games the clergy and staff played. He referred to them as “divide and conquer” games. He went on to speak about how that abusive dysfunction gets carried over in their tendency to “attack their own.” Eugene Arcand, Commissioners Sharing Panel, TRC Vancouver National Event, September 21, 2013.
[105] Shirley Waskewitch, Commissioners Sharing Panel, TRC Saskatchewan National Event, June 23, 2012.
[106] This is the account of Ron Windsor. Minsky, “In their words.”

the demise of the fur trade were lucky to receive a diet of more than 1500 calories per day. The report claimed that the traits of being shiftless, indolent and inert, "so long regarded as inherent or hereditary traits of the Indian race" were the result of malnutrition. When the government received the report, instead of increasing support and solving the problem of hunger, they used the malnourished Aboriginal population to conduct nutritional experiments — living test cases for budding theories about nutrition.[107] Most of the experiments were conducted on children in residential schools. In 1947, the government had approved experiments on 1000 children in six schools in Port Alberni (B.C.), Kenora (Ontario), Shubenacadie (Nova Scotia) and Lethbridge (Alberta).[108] As of the time of writing, documents on medical experiments used in Aboriginal communities have not been released by the Government of Canada.

Education

Parents were told that their children were being sent to school to receive an education, but many former students spoke of how little time they spent learning in the classroom. For some, the labor they were required to do in order to support the school financially took priority over lessons unless those lessons were religious. Even after attending school for a decade, many students did not have skills adequate to get a job or to carry on with further education. One

[107] There are several articles available on line that cite nutritional experiments. I recommend “Aboriginal national experiments approved had Ottawa’s approval,” CBC News, last updated July 30, 2013, accessed June 1, 2014, http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/thunder-bay/aboriginal-nutritional-experiments-had-ottawa-s-approval-1.1404390.

[108] “Hungry aboriginal people used in bureaucrats’ experiments,” *The Canadian Press*, accessed January 2, 2014, http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/hungry-aboriginal-people-used-in-bureaucrats-experiments-1.1317051.

former student shared that she is currently trying to get a high school diploma through night school so she can find a better job. She attended residential school for 12 years. Philip Morin of the Ballantyne Cree Nation in Saskatchewan said "we received rudimentary education and intense religious training. Government didn't provide enough funding for operation so missionaries and children had to work to keep it running...four hours a day work and only two hours of education."[109] At the end of his eight years, he could not read. Dr. Elsie Basque was sent to school by her father so she could receive a “good education” and go on to have a professional career. She was an older girl when she arrived, and remembers that she thought it was strange that the first thing staff did when she arrived was take her books away. Dr. Basque said her whole town was waiting anxiously for her at home, and when she returned during a break she was asked, "so, did you grade?" "I had to tell them 'no'," she explained. She had to tell her community that she had been at residential school two years, four months and nine days, and that there was only half a day of education per month. Dr. Basque’s father was furious, and unlike most parents, was able to have his daughter removed.[110] As mentioned earlier, John Milloy notes that on top of deficit academic instruction, many students did not receive thorough enough industrial training to survive outside of residential school.[111]

A number of former students speak of the meaningful role that arts and sport played in their survival, with a special mention of boy’s hockey. Though Philip Morin did not learn how to read, he did learn how to play hockey, and loved the experience of sports which were taught

[109] Philip Morin, Commissioners Sharing Panel, TRC Saskatchewan National Event, June 23, 2012.
[110] Elsie Basque, Commissioners Sharing Panel, TRC Atlantic National Event, October 29, 2011.
[111] *Ibid*.

external coaches not interested in Christian conversion. "There was a man in LeBret that treated us with respect, and we worked hard for him."[112]

In the presence of a dedicated teacher, some former students were able to experience the joy of learning. One former student from Spanish school in Ontario lost his ability to speak his own language, but boasts of his ability to speak English, French and Latin.[113] Despite his experience of abuse, he held a deep reverence for the priest at his school whom he went to visit when the priest was on his death bed. Philip Morin made special mention of Sister Brigmire." She came at age 18 and worked in residential schools for 63 years. She is 98 now and is so old that I don't want to hurt her. That was one nun that understood our needs and helped."[114] Such teachers show that it was possible to resist the attitudes and theology that dehumanized Indigenous children.[115]

Even when school subjects were taught adequately in the residential school classroom, former students speak of the shame they internalized about their own language and culture. They passed this shame on by refusing to teach traditional ways to their own children in an attempt to prevent them from experiencing a similar humiliation. Others survivor's experienced shaming on the other side of their education — from home communities who didn't accept them after they lost their tribal knowledge. An Inuit man from Yellowknife testified to how

[112] Philip Morin, Commissioners Sharing Panel, TRC Saskatchewan National Event, June 23, 2012.
[113] This is based on information from a friend's father, who has refused to speak about his experiences at residential school to the Commission.
[114] Philip Morin, Commissioners Sharing Panel, TRC Saskatchewan National Event, June 23, 2012.
[115] I make special mention of former residential school teacher Margaret Dodson, a personal friend, who was such a teacher for her students. Margaret was hired as a young student. As an adult she went on to study anti-racist education, and facilitate the first residential school focused sermon at Norman Kennedy Presbyterian Church in Regina, Saskatchewan in 1997.

much he had benefitted from the education he received at residential school.[116] Adame explained, however, that while he was at school, he lost the skill of building an igloo and was ashamed to return home to his elders. When he did, he was ridiculed for wearing traditional clothing without having the traditional ways, and ”was humiliated by my people for getting a white education."[117]

Discipline

Within the often truncated time students spent in the classroom, there are stories of particularly harsh teacher discipline. It is common place to hear students speak of being hit with a ruler or having their ears boxed. The Commission's Interim Report notes several places where discipline crossed into abuse in the classroom: boys beaten to the point of injury, girls whipped. Several survivors experienced permanent hearing loss from being hit so hard in the head by nuns. A former student from Shubenacadie received x-rays for an unrelated injury as an adult, and his doctor disclosed that the kind of broken bone indication his X-ray revealed is seen only in survivors of extreme abuse.[118] There are stories of nuns and priests forcing children to beat other children, even their own siblings. There were often special places of punishment: children locked in closets with bread and water diets, their heads shaved. Saint Morris described his punishment as being taken to a dark room and forced to kneel from 7 a.m. until 10 p.m. without

[116] Adame (he spoke that the Inuit did not traditionally have a surname) also spoke of the government coming to the northern community and slaughtering all the dogs, which was their only means of livelihood. His father never spoke of this, but was never the same again. Adame said they had no choice but to take the government up on their offer to go to school as there was nothing left. Adame, TRC Atlantic National Event, October 28, 2011.
[117] *Ibid.*
[118] Joseph Augustine, TRC Atlantic National Event, October 28, 2011.

food or water. To this day he cannot sleep without a light on.[119] An elder in Vancouver recalls being told that his father (also a residential school survivor) stood up to the Captain at his school after the Captain beat up one of his friends. The father was then taken out to the animal shed, stripped naked and splayed in the air, his legs and arms strapped to side boards. There his genitals were electrocuted repeatedly with the cattle prod.[120] A man from Schefferville (Quebec) spoke about one particular priest who he saw "a number of times" beating up Innu persons for whom he took a special dislike. This same man spoke of the sexual abuse he experienced at the school, and his feeling of enormous responsibility to try and protect his brother. He spoke of the whole list of responsibilities he took on as a small child, and how overwhelming they were. "We were always praying. Knew a God of vengeance. Had to kneel down and recite Hail Mary's. Every time someone would do something wrong, everyone would get punished…Got to know injustice quite young. And violence."[121]

The collected testimony of physical abuse and the inability to get any traction when these abuses were reported echoes the cases documented by John Milloy. The girl mentioned earlier who ran away after being forced to eat rotten meat was Christine Haines from the Williams Lake School. When she was caught, she was locked up in a cold, dark room by one of the nuns, given bread and water to eat, and strapped. Other children as well as Christine made this allegation of abuse. Milloy notes from the reports that the staff of the school were unanimous in rejecting

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[119] Yolanda Cole, "Residential school survivor's share their stories at Truth and Reconciliation event in Vancouver," *The Georgia Straight*, last updated September 21, 2013, accessed March 10, 2015, http://www.straight.com/news/428331/residential-school-survivors-share-their-stories-truth-and-reconciliation-event-vancouver.

[120] This is the testimony of a man whose name I did not record from Haida Gwai. Commissioners Sharing Panel, TRC Vancouver National Event, September 19, 2013.

[121] Jean-Guy Pinette, Commissioners Sharing Panel, TRC Quebec National Event, April 26, 2013.

the accusations of the children. "The Sister responsible for the girls denied any brutal treatment but admitted that "sometimes girls [were] shut up in a room for serious faults for periods varying from a few hours to ten to twelve days - this is the longest time."[122] This latter has happened only once." Another Indian Agent, J. Waddy, reported the brutal punishment of a young boy named Arthur Dorion at the hands of Reverend E. Bird. Even when Bird admitted that he had "marked" the child, the church exonerated him, saying the punishment was warranted. Milloy tells the story of John Bull from the Red Deer School who needed surgery after being hit so hard on the head that after three months his wound still had not healed. John Bull's injury was reported by an Indian Agent, D.L. Clink, as was another incident by the same teacher when the teacher pushed a young girl completely across the room. Clink made the argument that such behavior on the part of a teacher would not be tolerated in a white school. "Clink found, however, that he was alone in his outrage." The Christian Principal's response to Clink's report was to make John Bull apologize to the teacher for retaliating. Clink was warned against making any further inquiries and was told by the Principal at Red Deer, "We run the school."[123] Clink, like Bryce before him, pursued reporting these (and other) instances of abuse. The Methodists who oversaw the school turned his plea for intervention on behalf of the children into a request for a larger per capita grant for the school. This is not the only incident where the clergy, when not abusers, block the means of protection of the students. Department of Indian Affairs Agent W. Graham reported several severe abuses over a number of years. In 1919 he added another to the file that included the case of Georges Baptiste who ran away from the Anglican Old Sun's

[122] Milloy, *A National Crime,* 143.
[123] *Ibid,* 140.

School. According to the report, when Georges was brought back, he was "shackled to a bed, had his hands tied, was stripped and was 'most brutally and unmercifully beaten with a horse quirt until his back was bleeding.'"[124] The accused staff member defended his use of a whip and shackles and admitted that the boy "might have been marked". When Graham recommended that the staff member be fired, it was the Canon of the Missionary Society that came to the abusers defense. Canon S. Gould's argument that this is what happens "more or less, in every boarding school in the country" was questioned but accepted by Duncan Campbell Scott. The teacher retained his post. Graham went on to report numerous other abuses from physical assault to indecent sexual advances, and records his dismay that nothing would likely come to any of it. "Unfortunately, Graham was proven right, 'excuses from incompetent Principals' backed up by their churches would have the greater priority." Both the churches and the Department of Indian Affairs acted not on behalf of its wards, but on behalf of its own self-interests. Milloy cites a statement made by the Department's Inspector of Schools in 1937: "Any incident of harsh treatment may be highly exaggerated in the press, and give a very false idea of the work we are trying to carry out in this Province for our Indian children."[125]

Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse was also rampant. In statements gathered at for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission events, former students speak of being sexually abused within days of arriving at school. In the testimony I have heard, sexual abuse occurred as often at the hands of nuns as it

[124] *Ibid,* 146.
[125] *Ibid,* 149.

did by priests and other staff members.[126] After a childhood of abuse, it was common for older students to become sexual predators. Many former students speak of growing up being abused continually by other girls and boys, which made unsupervised dormitory nights particularly terrifying. Alongside this, statements to the Commission are filled with stories of students looking out for one other. One older woman spoke of how she is riddled with guilt to this day because she could not fit more little girls in her bed at night to protect them.[127] She said that she is haunted by the screams of those girls that she couldn't reach, and who had no one to look after them. "Yes, I protected some of the little ones," Ms. Ingram said in Halifax, "but so many, I couldn't protect yous, and I want to say I'm sorry. I'm sorry I couldn't get out of bed and help you."[128] An older man spoke of how Brother Brown would take all the male and female students out to the lake to go "skating", and the expectation was that the boys would take the girls behind a bush and rape them. Johnny Mae would always pick his friend from home and protect her from sexual assault.[129] The would have to made the branches rattle so the priest would not expect their ploy. The two have remained friends to this day. Some children attempted to run away after experiences of abuse, but explain how their attempts often made the situation worse. Sometimes the RCMP who would search for students and bring them back. Some who tried to get away during winter died in the cold. Adults today speak of how they did not want to talk about the abuse with their families and with their children nor talk about their residential school experiences with their families. Philip Morin described the physical and sexual

[126] In the case of physical and emotional abuse, I heard more tales of nuns than priests.
[127] Marilyn Ingram, Commissioners Sharing Panel, TRC National Atlantic Event, October 28, 2011.
[128] *Ibid.*
[129] Marie Knockwood told this story of Johnny Mae. Marie Knockwood, TRC Atlantic National Event, October 28, 2011.

abuse he received at residential school in Saskatchewan, but also described how in his culture of respect, his parents did not believe the priests were capable of doing such things because of their position, which was considered next to God. [130] "So they didn't take us seriously and didn't disrespect them."[131] Helen Quewezance spoke of being excited to go to school because she felt like a big girl, but when she got there she was separated from her brothers and immediately assaulted by a nun. "(I was) taken upstairs and thrown into a tub by the nun and called me a little savage. That nun started molesting me...putting her fingers up my ass and vagina. I called for my mom and she pushed me under water and slapping me. I was just a little girl. Five. She hurt me bad. I called for my mom and kokum and there was no one there. She called me a dirty little savage, that I was ugly."[132] Another former student testifies how she went to a nun for help, saying she was tired of being molested by one of the Brothers. She was forced to go to the priest and apologize.[133] One survivor was regularly assaulted by a nun, and then called a whore. Another was called "a dirty little girl." Both were six or seven years old.[134] Raynie Tuckanow of the Qu'Appelle School in Saskatchewan describes that he saw school staff tie a boy up by his ankles after which "they tied him to the [heat] register and they put him out the window with a broomstick handle shoved up his ass. And I witnessed that."[135] At the statement gather session

[130] Philip Morin describes the pedophile priest that would have three to four little girls in his bed at one time, and would threaten those who had followed him and looked through the keyhole to his room. He would also abuse the boys. The easiest place was on the pilgrimages he took them on. Philip Morin, Commissioners Sharing Panel, TRC Saskatchewan National Event, June 23, 2012.
[131] *Ibid*.
[132] Helen Quewezance, Commissioners Sharing Panel, TRC Saskatchewan National Event, 22 June 2012.
[133] Carol Lucas, Commissioners Sharing Panel, TRC Vancouver National Event, September 20, 2013.
[134] Lillian Howard, Commissioners Sharing Panel, TRC Vancouver National Event, September 19, 2013.
[135] Minsky, "In their words."

in Regina prior to the Saskatchewan National Event, I heard the recipient of this abuse give his testimony.

Notable schools

As residential school testimony accumulates, schools begin to stand out for their particularities. If someone mentions they attended Shubenacadie (Halifax), I would think immediately of think of Father Mackay. There is a cascade of testimony that speaks to the vile sexual abuse that comes from his reign over the school, with the seeming indifference of a knowing staff. The same association is made when someone mentions LaTuque (Quebec), Port Alberni (British Columbia), and Beaval (Saskatchewan).[136]

When someone references St. Anne's (Ontario), stories of food and cruelty come to mind. In 1956, Edmund Metatawabin was the first of 10 siblings to attend St. Anne's in Fort Albany, Ontario.[137] In an interview with CBC news, Metatabawin recalls being sent to the bathroom while his father spoke with the nun after they first arrived. In the bathroom, he watched his father walk away, looking very sad. "I hear, 'Come out of there, that's enough, your daddy's not here to protect you no more!' As soon as I opened the door, she grabbed my shoulder, gave me a vicious slap across the face from behind. And I hit the wall on the other side." Metatabawin was seven years old. He describes being ill, and throwing up one morning in his bowl of

[136] A 73 year-old former dormitory supervisor was recently convicted of 10 accounts of sexual abuse ("indecent assault.") This is the third time he has been to court, with a previous conviction for his sexual abuse at a school in Inuvik. He was sentenced to three years in prison, eligible for parole as he is considered unlikely to reoffend. "Paul Leroux gets three years for residential school abuse," *CBC News Saskatoon*, last updated December 2, 2013, accessed June 4, 2015, http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/saskatoon/paul-leroux-gets-3-years-for-residential-school-abuse-1.2461629.

[137] Karina Roman, "St. Anne's Residential School: One survivor's story," *CBC News,* accessed 10 February 2013, http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/st-anne-s-residential-school-one-survivor-s-story-1.2467924.

porridge. He was on bed rest for three days. On the fourth day when he was well enough to join the other students for breakfast, everyone but him was getting a bowl of porridge. Metatabawin explains "And then I hear the sister and she came behind me … and said 'Here, finish that. You didn't finish it last time.'" Metatawabin also describes St. Anne's handmade electric chair that the nuns and priests used for punishment and entertainment. As a seven year-old, his feet didn't touch the ground when he was in the chair. He describes being forced to hang onto the metal handles on the chair, and nuns, priests and all the boys lined up to watch him as the power was switched on. "And my feet were flying in front of me and I heard laughter. The nuns and the brothers were all laughing. Thought it was funny that my feet were flying around, I guess." St. Anne's is one of the schools whose police records the government has not yet released. The government was issued a court order in January 2013 to release to the Commission all documents related to residential schools without which, says Commissioner Justice Murray Sinclair says, the mandated final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission could not be a 'truthful' report.[138]

St. Anthony's residential school (Saskatchewan) brings to mind Sister Ludevick, and her notable practices of cruelty. Shirley Waskewitch speaks to the Sister's reign of terror: "Sister Ludevick lived for punishing the students at St. Anthony's. Lied about tooth ache to get away from the nuns when the dentist was there. Ludevick knew the dentist had left already and asked what the problem was. Made me show her. I picked a tooth and she grabbed pointed pliers and jammed it in my mouth and twisted and cracked that solid tooth that didn't want to come out.

[138] "Aboriginal children used in medical tests, commissioner says," *CBC News*, last modified August 1, 2013, accessed December 5, 2013, http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/aboriginal-children-used-in-medical-tests-commissioner-says-1.1318150.

Twisted my head all around, shards cracking an drouth bleeding all over. No medicine. It is still affecting me to this day what sister Ludevick done to me. It's always fear."[139]

Grollier Hall (Inuvik, NWT) invokes the memory of Father Martin Houston, otherwise known as "the devil of Grollier Hall." Norman Yakeleya tells how the students at the Oblate school were given numbers, not names, and raised like cattle. He kept his experience of sexual abuse secret until after her left in 1979. He describes hearing that the RCMP had one complaint of sexual abuse (issued by Yakeleya's cousin) which in turn led to further complaints. The RCMP interviewed over 150 boys, including Yakeleya.[140] "I was so mad at my cousin for making me speak about what I needed to forget."[141] In the end, 28 boys gathered their courage and pressed charges against four supervisors, including Houston.[142] Of those 28 boys, several had committed suicide by the times the trials finished in the late 1990's. Yakelaya spoke of how they were required to be silent after they gave evidence, and before the trials finished. He spoke of the power of sexual abuse and the power of shame. He spoke of the elders who laughed at them for trying to press charges against the church as grown men for something that happened to them as children. He spoke of how the church refused to believe that abuse had happened to them, even when they sat in front of them as a group with tears in their eyes. Father Martin went on to be convicted, stripped of his status with the Oblates, and serve 10 years in jail. When he was released, he entered Seminary again and was sponsored for ordination in Manitoba

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[139] Shirley Waskewitch, Commissioners Sharing Panel, TRC Saskatchewan National Event, June 23, 2012.
[140] Another online source suggests the RCMP interviewed 432 people. See http://www.theinquiry.ca/wordpress/accused/charged/houston-father-martin-houston/grollier-hall-the-devil-of-grollier-hall/.
[141] Norman Yakeleya, Commissioners Sharing Panel, TRC Alberta National Event, March 29, 2014.
[142] The same online source above quotes different numbers: 29 boys. Slightly different dates. In my account, I am staying with the memory of the survivor. See http://www.theinquiry.ca/wordpress/accused/charged/houston-father-martin-houston/grollier-hall-the-devil-of-grollier-hall/.

despite discouragement from his previous posts. In 2004, Father Houston was charge and convicted again of sexual abuse. Norman Yakeleya and his school mates are known as the Grollier Hall Boys.

Conclusions

Upon their completion of residential school, some students speak of the useful skills they learned, particularly their ability to speak English in a mostly English speaking country.[143] Some former students enjoyed and went on to excel in sports (Commissioner Wilton Littlechild) and art (Faye HeavyShield), and in numerous other professions for which they see their time in residential schools equipping them. Some former students reference their inability to find meaningful (if any) work after residential school, and their failed attempts to earn their high school diploma. This would indicate that the education of residential school fell short of the standards of public education, denying even the original vision of Davin who hoped for "educat(ion) in industry and the arts of civilization." The Commission's Interim Report is careful to recount the words of former students who speak to the ways in which their school experience is not just a part of the past. The sights, sounds, foods, and characters of their residential school years remain a vivid part of their daily lives, often triggering painful memories and visceral reactions. Former students speak of how their experiences left them hardened and conditioned to show as little emotion as possible in the face of pain or sorrow. They speak of how jail was of little consequence to them after a childhood of feeling locked up and isolated. Students referenced their difficultly in showing love, and how as abused as children, they went

[143] Or, I am assuming, French in Quebec. Though I didn't personally hear testimony that talked about this.

on to become abusers themselves. Often a portion of their testimony allotment was spent apologizing to people they had hurt. Survivors articulated that they often chose to stay abusive situations because of a sense of understanding of the brokenness of everyone involved. "What happened to me, Canada?" asks Andrew Fourstar from Birtle Residential School in Manitoba. "You killed my spirit. In its place you put hatred. You put bitterness, anger, revenge — that's what you put there."[144] Helen Quewezance speaks, "I am 62 years old. I am not a model citizen...and if that is civilization, I don't want it. I don't want it. I can't hold a job. I am educated ... In the fall I will get my doctorate degree and I am still pitiful. I had a heart attack two weeks ago and was afraid I might collapse, but I had to tell my story."[145]

According to Corrections Canada at the time of writing, 4% of the current Canadian population is Aboriginal, and 24% of the federal inmate population is Aboriginal (for women, 41% are Aboriginal). In the last decade, over-representation of the Aboriginal population in Canadian Corrections has continued to grow. [146] As of 2012, almost 50% of children under the age of 14 in foster care are Aboriginal children.[147] Though survivors are angered by this, and see this as the direct legacy of their oppression as children, they also speak of their healing journey. They speak of not being able to express love to their children, but how their grandchildren have opened a way for them to express love. It is the former students who have charted the path of

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[144] Tyler Clark, "Residential school survivors share their stories," *Prince Albert Daily Herald*, last updated January 31, 2012, accessed December 4, 2013, http://www.paherald.sk.ca/Local/News/2012-01-31/article-2882517/Residential-school-survivors-share-their-stories/1.
[145] Helen Quewezance, Commissioners Sharing Panel, TRC Saskatchewan National Event, June 22, 2012.
[146] "Office of the Correctional Investigator, Backgrounder: Aboriginal Offenders: A Critical Situation," *Government of* Canada, accessed June 12, 2016, http://www.oci-bec.gc.ca/cnt/rpt/oth-aut/oth-aut20121022info-eng.aspx.
[147] Michael Woods and Sharon Kirkey, "Tragic' number of aboriginal children in foster care stuns even the experts," Postmedia News, Canada.com, accessed March 1, 2014, http://www.canada.com/health/Tragic+number+aboriginal+children+foster+care+stuns+even+experts/8354098/story.html.

reconciliation, and have called both the government and churches to join them. At the National Event in Vancouver, one of the invited witnesses was familiar with the Truth and Reconciliation process in South Africa, and how they had to subpoena perpetrators to come in and be a part of the process. "This Commission has done something entirely different and unique to bring the Indigenous and non-Indigenous together for the process. It is unheard of. It is the triumph of the human spirit over rage."[148] Chief Robert Joseph led the Walk for Reconciliation in British Columbia. Many others like him and leading us into change. Verna Flanders, whose residential school experience was filled with shaming and abuse, lived homeless for many years. She attempted suicide many times, and says she was full of anger and fear. She concludes her testimony by saying, "I will not let the residential school experience destroy life any more. I was a weak, lonely child. But I am not lonely any more. I have all of you. I love you all."[149] Norman Yakeleya concludes his testimony about Grollier Hall saying, "The price we paid is worth it for what is happening today. In 1996 no one was there, like there is here."[150]

Questions of 'balanced' testimony

Andrew Wesley, a former residential school student, social worker and now Anglican priest, is one of the survivors present at all the TRC National Events. He echoes the invitation of the Commission to have not only former students provide statements, but also former workers and federal representatives. Anglican interviewers posed a question to Wesley (Cree) and

[148] From personal notes at the TRC National Event in Vancouver, September 20, 2013. It is worth reminding readers that the recipients of the settlement agreement, the survivors themselves, mandated the use of their own settlement money to create the Truth and Reconciliation Commission for Canada.
[149] Verna Flanders, Commissioners Sharing Panel, TRC Vancouver National Event, September 19, 2013.
[150] Norman Yakeleya, Commissioners Sharing Panel, TRC Alberta National Event, March 29, 2014.

Gordon Peters (Turtle Clan of the Delaware Nation) about whether "their group" was willing to listen to the stories of those who had a positive experiences at residential school.[151] Peters responded to the interviewer that all stories are welcome. The conspiracy of the negative blocking the positive remains one of the most commonly voiced church and Christian/Settler held suspicions about TRC statement gathering process. It is certainly true that there are former residential school students who had a good experience at school. But such a truth does not erase the six thousand incidents of dehumanization that we now know did occur. I will address the reasons for erasing or denying the harms of the schools in the chapters ahead, but I do want to emphasize again that we, for the most part *are* hearing the healthy voices of residential school survival. Of the former students whom I reference in this chapter, Bobby Joseph, Philip Morin and Barney are chiefs. Edmund Metatawabin is the head of an influential organization dedicated to social change. Andrew Wesley is a professional and a priest. Elsie Basque is a retired doctor. Helen Quewezance and Shirley Waskewitch both have graduate degrees. We bear witness to the stories those who fared well. The remaining voices are gone. As Helen Quewezance approached the table and microphone in Saskatoon, unlike most everyone else, she sat alone. "Nobody behind me because they are all buggered up. All drunks. All addicts. All in prison or dead." "In my family of 13, I am the lucky one. Friend said 'how can I tell on the devil?'. My dad was a medicine man and my strength, and said, 'Tell on them. If they laugh at you for the sexual abuse, let them laugh more.'"[152] The stories we have of residential school

[151] Marites N. Sison, "Toronto native group launches community-based truth commission," *Anglican Journal*, accessed March 2, 2014, http://www.anglicanjournal.com/articles/toronto-native-group-launches-community-based-truth-commission-8155.
[152] Helen Quewezance, Commissioners Sharing Panel, TRC Saskatchewan Event, 22 June 2012.

affiliates such as P.H. Bryce, D.L. Clink, Sister Brigmire, and my friend Margaret Dodson shows us that in a climate of cultural genocide, resistance is still possible.

Chapter 2 - Ambiguity

> I want to hear from the settlers: how did they know to treat us less than animals? How did they know to colonize us? We need to know their secrets because if we don't …how do we undo (this)? How do we hear their stories so we understand how they did what they did?
>
> – Doris Young of the Opaskwayak Cree Nation, March 2011

> For now we see in a mirror, dimly…
>
> — I Corinthians 13:12a

The history of residential schools in Canada requires us to see a relationship between Christian theology and human evil. This collaboration has been documented extensively as it relates to the horrors of the Inquisition, slavery, antisemitism and European colonial expansion.[153] I wish to explore the nature of this collaboration in the particularity of the Canadian residential school context.

The abuses rendered on children at the hands of the multi-represented church over a span of four generations suggests that there is something in Christianity itself that merits interrogation. Canadian scholar of Indigenous governance, Paulette Regan, reads a deep enmeshment with colonization into the habits and structures of non-Indigenous Canadians, and suggests that we must go through our own process of decolonization in order to stop the

[153] There are numerous good sources on Christian collaboration with evil. My own thinking has benefited from the work of Christine Caldwell Ames, M. Shawn Copeland, Paul Tillich and Deborah Lipstadt (both speak to the Christian participation in antisemitism) and Steve Newcomb. See Christine Caldwell Ames, *Righteous Persecution: Inquisition, Dominicans, and Christianity in the Middle Ages*. University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011). M. Shawn Copeland, "Wading Through Many Sorrows: Toward a Theology of Suffering in a Womanist Perspective," in *Womanist Theological Ethics*, ed. Katie G. Cannon, Emilie M. Townes and Angela D. Sims (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2011). Steven T. Newcomb, *Pagans in a Promised Land: Decoding the Doctrine of Christian Discovery* (Golden, Colorado: Fulcrum Pub, 2008). Paul Tillich, *Essential Tillich*. Deborah E. Lipstadt, *Denying the Holocaust*: *The Growing Assault on Truth and Memory* (New York: Free Press, 1993).

perpetuation of colonial harms.[154] Theologian Steve Jungkeit theorizes the importance of space, and the (mostly unconscious) influence of the expanding European colonialism and nationalism, on theological formation.[155] With this previous work in mind, I argue that a Christian response to the history of residential schools that provides *only* a colonial explanation of our actions fails to take seriously the testimony of residential school survivors and as such, is an example of illusion. While the colonial analysis of residential school places Christianity's participation in Canada's "hegemonic imagination" on the table for everyone to see, testimony of former students illuminates the ways Christian clergy, teachers and affiliated workers exert a dominance that *exceeds* the degrading harms of colonial privilege.[156] The presence of Christianity in the colonial regime of residential schools degenerates the already dehumanizing project into base abuse and sadism. The work of this chapter anticipates claim I will make in chapter 3 that the Christian symbols of Emmanuel, God-with-us, and divine condemnation take on a demonic structure over the history of residential schools that is inflected by but surpasses colonialism itself.

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[154] Paulette Regan has worked with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. Her book, *Unsettling the Settler Within: Indian Residential Schools, Truth-telling, and Reconciliation in Canada* published after the first TRC national event, provided a colonial framework for reconciliation that many churches have found indispensable. Paulette Regan, *Unsettling the Settler within: Indian Residential Schools, Truth Telling, and Reconciliation in Canada* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2010).

[155] Steve Jungkeit interrogates spatial influence on Schleiermacher, but goes on to construct possibilities for theology today. I am particularly indebted to his method of understanding the relationship between place and culture, and how they affect the imagination. I do not see my own argument as a negation of Jungkeit's observation. On the contrary, his understanding of how space was rendered in colonial Europe is particularly cogent for the Canadian setting. We also see vast open spaces as ours for the taking. I am also not suggesting (nor does Jungkeit) that our cultural milieu shapes us negatively. I am concurring with Jungkeit's constructive approach that we exorcise theology that is hampered by unexamined influences. See Steven R. Jungkeit, *Spaces of Modern Theology: Geography and Power in Schleiermacher's World*, 1st ed. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

[156] This is the phrase used by Emilie Townes in her volume, "Womanist Ethics and the Cultural Production of Evil." In the pages ahead, my analysis will agree with Townes who argues that we fall prey to the illusion that the hegemonic imagination resides external to ourselves. This is the point that I will make in the next chapter in the section on "Emmanuel, God-with-us." Emilie Townes, *Womanist Ethics and the Cultural Production of Evil* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006).

To access the theological dimension of the residential school abuse, I will rely on Paul Tillich's distinction between ambiguity and the 'demonic.' Through his analysis of the essentially ambiguous quality of human existence, we see more clearly the human vulnerability to illusion and evil. In this chapter, I will focus primarily on dynamics of ambiguity and illusion, and in the next chapter track theology's role in the degeneration of these into active forms of evil (the 'demonic'). I turn to the theological concepts of existence and participation as the conceptual backdrop for my claim that Christianity is susceptible to illusion. Both concepts are foundational to our Christian story of origins, which support's Tillich understanding that everything in the realm of existence is capable of both creation and destruction. Using Tillich, I will argue that this structure of ambiguity makes possible the symbol of the demonic that I see at work in residential school history. I will also argue that part of Christianity's susceptibility to illusion includes the inability to recognize the hiding places of the demonic in our own religious habits. For this reason, I conclude this chapter with examples of ambiguity in the history of residential schools in order to differentiate the structure of ambiguity from the structure of the demonic.

My understanding of ambiguity relies on Paul Tillich's theory of existence and participation. The comparison of ambiguity and the demonic that unfolds in chapters ahead allows me to meaningfully engage with residential school survivor Doris Young's query about our "secrets."[157] I begin to share my secrets by explaining our Christian story of origins, following the protocols modeled by elders during the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada pubic events. Elders explain that where we come from shapes how we exist in the

[157] This is a reference to the epitaph that opens this chapter. I will be referring back to this epitaph throughout this dissertation.

world. If I wish to engage with Doris Young and the many others who share her questions, the story of our land and creatures and ancestors opens the way toward insight. Like Tillich, I will examine the mytho-poetic qualities of the story of the fall in Genesis in order to provide clues to our "secrets."[158] Through an analysis of our biblical story, I am able to explain that we come from a beginning structured by a deep fragility, and this fragility conditions our desires and shapes how we exist in the world. But I will also explain that we come from a place where the essence of Good participates in who we are as creation. Despite our existential anxiety that limits our perception of the world around us, we remain forged in a way shared by the rest of creation: in the divine image, by a power whose economy is love. Given the dynamics of the fragile structures of existence and our participation in the divine image, I will suggest that life's structure of ambiguity provides the lens through which we view the tools that we make in order to navigate our existence. These tools include the images, language and symbols that gather us nearer to our Source which draws us nearer to each other. However, without an acknowledgement of ambiguity, we deny the capacity of these symbols to be used for good or ill, and in so doing, deny the traces of demonic as they occur. My analysis of ambiguity in this chapter and the demonic in the next does not result in a comprehensive answer to Doris Young's questions. "How did they know to treat us less than animals?" cannot be adequately explained by a sequence of theoretical observations about wounds and illusion. There is an incomprehensibility to the descent into the demonic, a gap in logic that does not account for acts of domination and horror. I do not wish to suggest that there is a logic the Christian legacy

[158] "Secrets" is a taken from the epitaph I have used by Doris Young that opens this chapter. I use Tillich's interpretative framework throughout. See the beginning of Book Two for Tillich's use of The Fall. Tillich, *Systematic Theology II*, 23.

of abuse. As I hope is clear in the pages ahead, the shift from ambiguity to the demonic is more like jumping tracks: something happens that is completely off, and the cruelty of the demonic needs to be acknowledged for its unknowability. I sense this incredulity from Doris Young as well. From inside the mystery, I hope my writing may honor Doris Young's plea with an attentiveness to my own tradition and to my own complicity with evil so that the beauty and wisdom of all God's creation may show itself.

Part I: Tillich and the Principle of Ambiguity

Existence and participation

Post World War 2 theologian Paul Tillich describes existence as estrangement.[159] By doing so, he is acknowledging the shared conditions that constitute our human experience. [160] We are estranged from divine reality, from others, from our own self. Estrangement speaks specifically to our interconnection with all of life, and recognizes how other shared conditions of existence, such as finitude, anxiety and conflict, obscure a deeper truth of our closeness to the divine and our relation to all living things. God, the creative ground of life, is nearer to us than we are to ourselves, and yet we lack awareness of this nearness and of our interconnection to all of life.[161]

[159] Tillich says, "The state of existence is the state of estrangement." Tillich, *Systematic Theology II*, 44. He argues later that "Estrangement is not a biblical term but is implied in the symbols of expulsion from paradise, in the hostility between man and nature, in the deadly hostility of brother against brother, in the estrangement of nation from nation through the confusion of language, and in the continuous complaints of the prophets against their kinds and people who turn to alien gods." Tillich, *Systematic Theology II*, 44.

[160] Tillich notes that humanism fails when it overlooks the human predicament and its existential estrangement. See *Systematic Theology II*, 86.

[161] Tillich makes this point in his discussion of estrangement. "Although man is actually separated from the infinite, he could not be aware of it if he did not participate in it potentially." Tillich, *Systematic Theology II,* 9, 10.

This interconnection with all of life finds its cause in what Tillich calls principle of participation. Like the concept of the demonic to which this study leads, a theological understanding of participation weaves through Tillich's *Systematic Theology*. Despite the interpretive debates over Tillich's multivalent use of participation, Tillich makes clear that participation finds its source in the divine origin of life.[162] "The divine life participates in every life as its ground and aim. God participates in everything that is; he has community with it; he shares in its destiny." The rhythm and exuberance of the Hebrew creation story — with its breath and repeated refrains and living things piling onto living things — imbeds the lessons of the Creator deep within us.[163] God's participation in whatever *is* (whether dirt or ribs or *nothing)* calls life into being and defines its essential nature. We, the created, bear the divine image. This is our fundamental inheritance. And it is declared 'good'. Divine goodness cannot be separated from divine participation.[164]

There are three obvious repercussions of God's participation in creation. First, there is no part of the divine image that can be removed from us. It is our essential nature, and as such, we

[162] Ryan McAnnally-Linz offers the best survey of Tillich's use of participation that I have read. I am indebted to his inclusion of Tillich's sermon from the volume *The Eternal Now* which links the idea of participation to creation. Ryan McAnnally-Linz, "The Multivalence of Participation in Paul Tillich's Systematic Theology," The Journal of Religion, Vol. 92, No. 3 (July 2012), pp. 373-391.

[163] I have been taught by elder Stan MacKay that the drum is the sound of creation, a sound you can feel — a beating heart.

[164] Tillich does not use the language of goodness liberally in his Systematic Theology. In the context of his discussion of the ambiguities of life, Tillich raises the difficulty of using the idea of goodness because it means something different socially than it does personally. To offer a broad parameter of meaning, Tillich suggests "the good" is "the essential nature of a thing and the fulfillment of the potentialities implied in it. However, this applies to everything that is and describes the inner aim of creation itself." Tillich, *Systematic Theology III,* 67. I am using my understanding of his principle of participation to align with what Tillich says in his section on the ambiguities of life. "There is nothing that God rejects as strongly as half-goodness and every human claim based on it. The impact of this message, mediated by the Spiritual Presence, turns the eyes of man away from the bad and the good in himself to the infinite divine goodness, which is beyond good and bad and which gives itself without conditions and ambiguities." Tillich, *Systematic Theology III*, 226.

are eternally united to the divine nature. There is nothing that we can become or can do that is less than the divine image. Second, as equal participants in the divine image, the very exuberance and diversity of creation reflects God. Tillich strengthens this point by critiquing the idea of "undifferentiated oneness" indicating that our separateness from one another affords us glimpses of the vast creativity of the divine.[165] The phenomenon of "being" offers an estuary of logic that meets and flows from different directions. This value of plurality will emerge again in my analysis of "Emmanuel" in the following chapter. For now, I wish to note that our story of creation teaches that union with the divine and union with each other is a union that occurs *through* separation, not in spite of separation.[166] Diversity, then, is a basic reflection of the divine in Christian theology. Third, all things created have the divine image in common. Tillich's argument for the participation of God in every creature necessarily means the participation of us in each other. Tillich found pastoral import in this truth, preaching that, "There is an ultimate unity of all beings rooted in the divine life from which they emerge and to which they return. All beings, non-human as well as human, participate in it. And, therefore, they participate in each other."[167]

The story of interconnection and estrangement is narrated through the character of Eve. As her essential created self, Eve experiences the seamlessness of participation: a closeness with the divine presence as with all living things. When the serpent counters Eve's recital of the prohibition on eating the fruit (which she had received second-hand) by claiming that "you will not die," the serpent speaks a kind of truth. A truth that rings truer, perhaps, than God's own

[165] Tillich, *Systematic Theology I,* 94.
[166] *Ibid*.
[167] Paul Tillich, *The Eternal Now*, "The Riddle of Inequality" (New York: Scribner, 1963), 45.

promise of death. “For God knows that when you eat of it, your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God” (Genesis 3:5). Eve embraces the half-truth of the serpent. And her eyes are opened to the transitory, fragile nature of life. The story of Eve bears witness to the split that occurs between essence and existence, and for ongoing human experience, “Their existence stands out of their essence as in a ‘fall.’[168]

As Eve’s fall from essence to existence unfolds, we see how existence and participation reside in dynamic tension. Nothing essential has changed; the divine life still participates in Eve’s life as in the life of all that surrounds her. Yet the shock of the awareness of finitude unfurls Eve away from both her divine and human companions. We watch Eve cover herself and hide from Yahweh. Within the instability of finitude, Eve's anxiety obscures the essential truth that she is *not* cut off from God. Nor are we. Eve’s story is our story. This means that the lens through which we once saw the interconnection of all created things refracts in error, and our perception, like Eve's, becomes mired in experiences bent by their similarity to truth. In other words, the conditions of existence support a perspective of life as my eyes do without corrective lenses: astigmatically and myopically. The apostle Paul describes by saying that we see as in a mirror dimly.[169] This dim sight, which we now inherit along with the divine image, is the root of what I identify in the history of residential schools as illusion. Within the confines of existence, there is a split between our myopic experience of finite reality and the deeper truths that hold us. This split is the wellspring of ambiguity. Illusion and ambiguity are the byproducts of the tension between existence and participation, and they give rise the possibility of the demonic.

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[168] Tillich, *Systematic Theology II*, 23.

[169] I Corinthians 13:12. This is in the ‘love chapter,’ and Paul’s observation indicates dim sight impairs out ability to love.

In Eve's story, we also witness the tension between existence and participation as it results in suffering. Dim sight and its distortions are not benign. They frighten and wound.[170] Eve not only separates herself from the divine presence, but also from her own body, from her symbiotic relationship with land and creatures, and from her closest companion. In the wake of the awareness of finitude, Eve perceives her own experience of the shifting sands of vulnerability as more real than anything else. Fragility provokes an inward turn that places her against the current of participation. In her theological work on suffering, Wendy Farley characterizes this turn as a core element of the human experience noting that, "The "I" that experiences the world so vividly is not a monstrously inflated ego but a raw nerve exposed to a great deal of mental and physical suffering."[171]

If our story of origins tells us who we are in the world, we, like Eve, experience fragility. We, like Eve, habituate to dim sight and accommodate to its similarity to truth. Even as precious bearers of the image of God, our capacity for illusion not only leads to an obfuscation of the principle of participation, but also establishes the principle of ambiguity. Our own bent vision and myopia allows us to only ambiguously recognize what is before us. Is the world gift and teacher? Or is it threat? We experience joy and creativity, but we cannot be sure that they will be free from pain.[172] We extend ourselves outward, outside of our own fragile selves, but there is "no guarantee that our moral decisions enact the law of love."[173] Nothing escapes the fragility

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[170] Tillich uses the phrase "existential threat" particularly in terms of the existential threat of non-being. He does not use the language of 'wound,' but does use language such as "the threat of non-being" to indicate the vulnerability we experience as we become aware of our own finitude. See Tillich, *Systematic Theology I*, 64.
[171] Wendy Farley, *Wounding and Healing of Desire* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005), 51.
[172] We participate in both good and evil.
[173] This is a phrase that I recall David Kelsey using in his Tillich lectures at Yale Divinity School, Spring 2004. I included this phrase in my personal class notes.

of finitude — no institution or belief or practice. "Life at every moment is ambiguous."[174] Tillich observes that life is always a mixture of essential and existential elements. [175] In other words, we know the goodness of love and beauty, but only through its ambiguous manifestation. This ambiguity, however painful at times, is not the demonic. Tillich reminds his readers that the realm of the potential is partially visible and partially hidden.[176] Eve exemplifies for us how difficult it is to navigate the instabilities of impermanence. Hers is the story of existence, not the story of evil.[177]

Participation, ambiguity and symbol

In order to apply the ideas of ambiguity and the demonic to the history of church involvement in residential schools, I need to bridge the split at the root of ambiguity with Tillich's understanding symbol. I have suggested through the narrative of Eve that divine participation is the creative force that calls the world into being. But God is not just the principle of participation, but is the power of participation. Tillich says it this way: "the divine participation creates that in which it participates."[178] When we are told that we are made in the image of God, we understand that we, the finite, bear the image of the infinite. As created we participate in the Creator because Creator participates in the created. As an extension of this, as

[174] Tillich's full quote is as follows, "Every life process has the ambiguity that the positive and negative elements are mixed in such a way that a definite separation of the negative from the positive is impossible" "life at every moment is ambiguous." Tillich, *Systematic Theology III,* 32.
[175] Tillich speaks of the myth of the Fall as the transition from essence to existence. This is the way I use both of these words in this study. Tillich, *Systematic Theology II*, 29.
[176] Tillich, *Systematic Theology III*, 30.
[177] Martin Buber suggests evil finds its root in the story of Cain. It is common in the Christian tradition to suggest the root of evil is found in the serpent, but in my telling, the serpent is the root of ambiguity and estrangement. For further reading see Martin Buber. *Good and Evil, Two Interpretations: I. Right and Wrong; II. Images of Good and Evil* (New York: Scribner, 1953), 85-89.
[178] Tillich, *Systematic Theology I*, 245.

persons, we participate in everything created as co-bearers of the divine image. Our essential self finds its home in the divine love that forged us. Participation means that this love is not something external to ourselves.

Despite this, estrangement creates a gap between the finite and the infinite, created and uncreated.[179] This gap bears down on our structure of mind as we orient our heart toward God and communicate our experience to our own self and to others. We have at our disposal the tools of existence — language, images, rituals, things — through which we can access the traces of the infinite and express our relationship to it.

> We could not be in communication with God if he were only 'ultimate being.' But in our relationship to him we encounter him with the highest of what we ourselves are, person. And so in the symbolic form of speaking about him, we have both that which transcends infinitely our experience of ourselves as persons, and that which is so adequate to our being persons that we can say, "Thou" to God and pray to him.[180]

Participation, as Tillich understands it, is what gives religious symbols their potency. Symbols garner images, words and concepts that access the connection between creator and created in a meaningful way. Tillich differentiates his use of the term symbol from 'sign' which points "to something foreign to itself."[181] A symbol "is neither a thing nor a sign. It participates in the power of what it symbolizes, and therefore, it can be a medium of the Spirit."[182] Part of

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[179] I am gleaning this understanding from the broad understanding of Tillich's writing. He uses the language of "cleavage", as in when he talks about the symbol of gods which represent "…expressions of ultimate concern which transcends the cleavage between subjectivity and objectivity." Tillich, *Systematic Theology II*, 214.

[180] Paul Tillich and F. Forrester Church, *The Essential Tillich: An Anthology of the Writings of Paul Tillich* (New York: Macmillan, 1987), 51, 52. Taken from Paul Tillich, "Religious Symbols and Our Knowledge of God," *Christian Scholar* (September 1955), 189-197.

[181] Tillich, *Systematic Theology III*, 122.

[182] Tillich uses the Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation as an example of a sacrament that transforms its object into a 'thing'. Tillich also speaks of the use of reformed doctrine of the sign as an example of how his view of symbols is different because of the principle of participation. *Ibid,* 123.

the work of the theologian and spiritual guide is to allow our created symbols to be translucent to the infinite goodness they wish to mediate. Symbols and constructed symbol systems are our doorway into the divine just as they are a doorway into our own selves. A religious symbol "opens up reality and it opens up the soul."[183] Symbols make a way for us to make sense of our experience of God and our experience of the tension between participation and existence. This is because the symbol can "represent something that it is not itself, for which it stands and in the power and meaning of which it participates."[184] To say that our knowledge of God is symbolic or analogous in no way communicates that this is a lesser form of truth. There is a kind of numinous power inherent in genuine symbols, a kind of logic of permeability that defies a complete split between world and divinity, existence and non-existence, finite and infinite. Real symbols beget the spirit of the divine.

The words and images of sacraments exemplify the way we experience an ordinary thing as the bearer of the holy. The liturgy, the bread, the water witness[185] to the "sublimity of life beyond the subject and object."[186] When Tillich says symbols hold power and meaning, he is indicating that symbols are not just placeholders, but say something about the reality of God. Symbols reflect back something that is true about the ground of life. In this way, participation also holds meaning. When God declares creation good, this says something about the God who participates in that creation. Therefore, seeing the good in the created testifies to the presence

[183] Tillich and Church, *The Essential Tillich: An Anthology of the Writings of Paul Tillich*, 48.
[184] *Ibid*, 47.
[185] For Tillich, when the symbol grips the subject instead of allowing the subject to bear witness to the goodness beyond the symbol, something has gone awry. This anticipates my later use of Tillich's symbol of the demonic.
[186] Tillich, *Systematic Theology III*, 252.

of the divine. I say all of this to illustrate the logic of knowing the tree by its fruit: we can know if a symbol is a 'medium of the Spirit' by its mediation of divine goodness.

How, then, do we account for symbols that fail to mediate goodness? What if symbols do not mediate goodness?[187] While symbols offer meaning because of participation, symbols inherit ambiguity because of existence. "Religion, as everything in life, stands under the law of ambiguity, 'ambiguity' meaning that it is creative and destructive at the same time."[188] There is no guarantee that the tools of our existence — the same language, images, rituals and things mentioned above — will mediate goodness. There is no guarantee that a symbol will continue to meaningfully effect the law of love given the plurality of cultural contexts and the distortions of sight to which we fall prey. "Symbols and myths must be criticized on the basis of their power to express what they are supposed to express, namely, the New Being in Jesus as the Christ."[189] As we will see in the next chapter, the power of symbols to create and destroy can make theological symbols dangerous.

Participation, ambiguity and colonization

The way we must learn to read and criticize religious symbols applies to all life processes. "Every life process has the ambiguity that the positive and negative elements are mixed in such a way that a definite separation of the negative from the positive is impossible."[190] In other words, Tillich's understanding of ambiguity resists the polarization of good from bad that

[187] Or just as bad, as referenced above, "half-goodness." *Ibid*, 226.
[188] Tillich and Forrester, *The Essential Tillich,* 50.
[189] Tillich, *Systematic Theology II,* 152.
[190] Tillich, *Systematic Theology III*, 32.

appears to emerge in hindsight. Take our current perspective on colonialism, for example. We are startled by our own arrogance and short-sightedness when we read the colonial rhetoric of our fore-bearers. We are angry when we understand that an entire people or group was deemed irrelevant — their wounds treated as the collateral damage of nation-building.[191] Time has shifted the looking glass, and the choices made by early settlers seeking to establish identity and order look appear distorted from the perspective we enjoy now. The structure of ambiguity, however, illuminates why capital progress, settlement and railway building made sense to a struggling group of politically charged occupiers.[192] There is a certain straightforward logic to the economic impulse behind Canadian colonial history: unite the land, build a trade route, establish borders, create jobs. Our current political landscape heralds the same goals today. The principle of ambiguity teaches that this vision, in itself, is not inevitably evil. There was a way to channel the idea of progress into creativity not destruction. The treaties were relationships. Trains offered access to protection and supplies. At its best, the principle of ambiguity tempers an unchecked certainty about potential outcomes by insisting that every choice, strategy and encounter has the capacity for harm as well as for good. When Tillich advises us to assess the ongoing efficacy of symbols, he assumes ambiguity's paths of creation or destruction will make themselves known. He also assumes that ambiguity will produce a blend of good and bad, and this blend is reflected in the residential school experience itself.[193]

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[191] Not just the Aboriginal nations were considered irrelevant, but also the Chinese immigrant population used to build the railroad, etc. See chapter 1 for a reference to this aspect of Canadian history.

[192] This is the Stó:lō word for the settler nations.

[193] I raise this point for two reasons. First, because the Truth and Reconciliation Commissioners made a point to elevate the aspects of the residential school experience where students found resilience and freedom. For many, this was sport, and the role of hockey has been acknowledged for its life-saving elements. Second, because there are expressions of shame and feelings of alienation from some former students who value their residential school

This does not imply that we resign ourselves to the bad. We learn to read the signs and identify the fruit so that we can turn and choose the path that reflects the better way. Tillich's analysis of ambiguity suggests that the problem lies in our ability to assess the good: good for whom? The principle of participation — that which tells us that we participate in each other through God's participation in us — alerts us to the understanding that what is good for one is necessarily good for all. Our existential anxiety trains us to recognize what is good for our own self while obscuring the larger reality with which we share our identity. Looking back at the element of progress in colonialism, we see that we chose what would bolster the success and viability of settler reality.

Just as progress is an ambiguous goal, so is education. Unlike colonial progress which we have come to identify with 'evil,' we identify education with 'good.' However, the history of residential schools prompts us to interrogate education in the same way we interrogate any other colonial endeavor: good for whom? At what cost? The early supporters of residential school mission were groups of older women who convened around cups of tea and plates of cookies, knitting mittens and delegating funds. These dedicated women would gather to assess what practical needs presented themselves, and where their efforts could be of most use. It is believable that they would want to work to support the education of children, especially when the complications of ambiguity are pushed aside by the fervor of good works. We are not in the habit of taking stock of the collateral damage of our 'good works.' Nor was the collateral damage anticipated by the parents who supported the western education of their children. The

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experience for the education they received. Ambiguity helps us to understand that the experience of good is not a betrayal or erasure of harm. We should expect there to be a mix of both in all life processes.

hope of a 'good' education is why there were Aboriginal communities who supported the idea of school. Chief Buhkwujenene was one of many who recognized the long-term viability of cultural bilingualism in an age of change. Parents who gave their children to the church did so in the hope that their children might flourish in any landscape. Parents assumed that flourishing would be recognizable by particular markers: health, happiness, increased freedom. And, of course, actual education.[194] Parents who were supportive of the project of education did not have in mind cultural condemnation when they sent their children off to school. They did not have in mind that the dresses and toys and traditional artifacts given to their children would be confiscated and removed. The did not imagine their children would be humiliated and hungry, that schools would run out of funding and enlist the children to perform manual labor in order to provide income for the institutions. We now recognize the kind of 'goodness' intended by the faithful women's groups as paternalism. Outside the common sense of ambiguity, they saw education as 'good,' and they assumed the rituals and the service of the church was automatically holy. Dim sight distorted their analysis of the school as good for everyone. Racism renders this as 'good for white people.' Good for the missionary women's society. Good for those who framed the diversity of culture and religion as "the Indian problem."[195]

[194] There were many schools whose formal education were limited to one to two hours per day. See my section on education in chapter 1.

[195] See the chapter in chapter 1 that referenced Duncan Campbell Scott and his now famous description of "the Indian problem."

Ambiguity and inherent risks

Given the capacity for ambiguous symbols and life processes to create or destroy, and given our own capacity to become attached to the active of service or the symbol rather than to the reality to which it points, how are we to proceed? Given the destructive fruit produced from the Christianity of residential schools, how are we to think about our track record of dim sight? One way to move forward is to become aware of the inherent risks associated with the 'good' that unfolds before us. This includes the risks associated with the words we use to speak of God and the images we employ to open our hearts toward Love. While language and ritual deepen our insight into divine, they also limit it. The nature of Beyond Being is not structured by the subject-object awareness that beings encounter as we relate to one another and comprehend new information. Our words flounder when we are called to articulate consciousness structured by non-duality. Our mind struggles to find tools to help us imagine Beyond Being. Reaching with words and images, we attribute meaning to the Ground of Life. Yet "the mental act of attribution is an imperfect way of orienting the heart toward the Divine."[196] Medieval theologian Marguerite Porete writes, "For everything one can say or write about God or think about Him, God who is greater than what is ever said, [everything] is thus more like lying than speaking the truth."[197] Confined to the word and images that help our minds move into them, symbols are dangerous in their propensity to "replace that to which they are supposed to point,

[196] Wendy Farley, *Gathering Those Driven Away: A Theology of Incarnation* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2011), 72.
[197] Marguerite Porete and Ellen L. Babinsky, *The Mirror of Simple Souls* (New York: Paulist Press, 1993), 194-5.

and to become ultimate in themselves. And in the moment in which they do this, they become idols."[198]

In light of this, Tillich's encouragement to risk the danger of symbols seems surprisingly transgressive. "Dangers are not a reason to avoid a serious demand."[199] Tillich is not particularly rattled by the imperfections of our faith, for it is natural that our faith is bound to unworthy images.[200] Likewise the constraints imposed by finitude are no reason to throw out the enterprise of meaning making. Constraint is not necessarily a hindrance to bounty. Within limitation, tethered to the conditions of existence, mind can flourish and be transformed, responsive to new ways of seeing and living. When Simone Weil describes the creation narrative, she argues that God's act of creation, the breath that calls life out of the deep, is not an act of divine self-expression but an act of divine constraint. Even within the wonders of light and shape and motion, "God and his creatures are less than God alone."[201] Even so, the Genesis story's 'constraints' delivers exuberance and transformation as our founding story. We can assume, then, that when we navigate constraints, we experience an 'echo' of Love's creative act.[202] At their best, language, symbols and stories orient us to Love's ways; they keep us afloat and remind us of whose we are; they give us the spunk to enter into the depth of mystery that Tillich refers to as the "numinous quality of the holy."[203] Ambiguity is a structure of existence

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[198] Tillich and Church, *The Essential Tillich,* 50.

[199] Tillich is speaking here of symbols and their propensity to no longer communicate with the same potency in an earlier context. This comes from a section on method where he explains that his systematic theology is an attempt to interpret the symbols of Christian faith in a way appropriate to his own culture. Tillich, *Systematic Theology III,* 4.

[200] Wendy Farley writes in *Gathering Those Driven Away*, "If we must be idolaters, let us be idolaters of love: love is the last name of the Divine before it slips beyond the help of language." Farley, *Gathering Those Driven Away*, 39.

[201] Simone Weil, *Waiting for God*, trans. Emma Craufurd (New York: HarperCollins, 1951), 89.

[202] *Ibid,* 89.

[203] This is Tillich gleaning the energy and language of Rudolf Otto. Tillich, *Systematic Theology I,* 216.

whose inherent risks cannot be avoided. However, the demonic can be avoided. It is not inevitable that the harms of an ambiguous wrong turn and descend into the utter destruction of the demonic.

I raise the issue of risk and constraint so that an explanation for the outsized abuses of residential school are not tracked back to the reasons of ambiguity or limitation alone. Tillich does not avoid the capacity for danger, but calls for a practice of ongoing assessment and reform. He advises us to risk the dangers of symbol and story and to forage for the good that springs from within limitation itself. The problem lies not with danger or constraint, but with absolutizing a perspective or a tradition that is non-absolute. This is why Tillich interprets the work of the prophet as training religious practitioners to transcend our own finite symbols. In our dim sight and in our longing, we mistake the medium for the content that it illuminates.[204] Our "representations of man's ultimate concern - holy objects - tend to become his ultimate concern."[205]

Participation, existence and the demonic

For Tillich, the elevation of the non-ultimate to the status of ultimate is the root cause when ambiguity degenerates into the demonic. The demonic arises as a result of the gap between the infinite and the finite. When we take what is conditional and make it unconditional, when we take what is finite and make it infinite, we wield the demonic. Tillich

[204] Tillich speaks at length about the claim of Jesus to be the Christ only in so far as Christ empties himself and reflects only the divine. It was his transparency to the divine that makes his claim not demonic. "The claim of anything finite to be final in its own right is demonic." *Ibid,* 134.
[205] *Ibid,* 216.

notes that the demonic is particularly vigorous in the realm of the holy because of "the claim of the church to represent in its structure the Spiritual Community unambiguously."[206] He notes that the temptation to "self-affirmed greatness" is common to both religious institutions and the individuals who inhabit those institutions.[207] Just as the fruit of participation yields goodness, the fruit of the demonic produces an absolutization that is "destructive of life in others and the meaning of life within themselves."[208] The goal of this section on the theoretical background of participation and existence has been to alert us to the ways ambiguity affects our relationship to the world around us. In the section that follows, I will take the principle of ambiguity and apply it to examples from the history of residential schools. A careful exploration of ambiguity allows us to recognize the difference between ambiguity and the demonic with the goal that the demonic may be confronted and cast out of Christian practice. To make this transition, I offer the following observations from this study thus far. First, existence, with its estrangement and fragility, accounts for the structure of ambiguity alone. Existence in itself does not explain the shift from ambiguity into the demonic. When I bear witness to the destructive forces at work in residential schools, the moment when ambiguity descends into the demonic remains enigmatic. As I will suggest in the examples the follow, to conflate the sadism and torture of children with the dim sight of ambiguity is itself an illusion. Second, participation, with its meaning and power, accounts for the presence of the demonic in holy places. The principle of participation when it relates to the demonic represents the existence of the

[206] Tillich, *Systematic Theology III,* 244.
[207] *Ibid*.
[208] *Ibid*.

negative in the positive. In other words, the demonic is not potent as an eradication of the good.

The reaction of church leadership to the witness of residential school survivors to the 'fruit' of their experience at school offers particular insight into the difference between ambiguity and the demonic. It is to my experience at the Truth and Reconciliation of Canada National Events that I turn now.

Part II: Living Examples of Illusion and Ambiguity

Illusion

Before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada began gathering public and private statements from the survivors of residential schools, my understanding of our shared Canadian history was two-dimensional. Troubling and complex, but flat. With the advent of TRC national events, my theological interest in the complicity of Christian mission in the residential school project could align itself with the call to truth and reconciliation issued by the parties to the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement.[209] As I took my seat in auditoriums across Canada to hear former students, the documents and photographs of the archives assumed flesh and blood, flannel shirts and jeans. The clear faces before me broke into silent tears and gasped for breath. I bore witness to a thousand words as well as to heaving sobs and bodies crumpled under the weight of lived history. Ruptures of speech such as ecstatic prophecies and deep internal moans disclosed an imposed woundedness that evades the

[209] The Truth and Reconciliation Commission officially began on June 2, 2008 and concluded in June 2015. At the time of writing, a summary of findings has been issued by the Commission but comprehensive report had not been released.

detailed transcriptions in my moleskin notebooks and the documentation of facts in my previous chapter. Until those moments, public understanding of residential school history, where it existed at all, came from dominant sources: former teachers, white historians, ecclesial commentary, and a smattering of news worthy media reports. From the embodied margins of Canadian history emerged a complexity of truths that challenged the dominant interpretation of Canadian and church history. Even with my understanding of ambiguity and the recognition that former students had good experiences as well as bad, the history of residential schools as written on the bodies and emotions of former students offered a jarring contrast to the prominent religious reflections on the schools. The sheer incongruence between these narratives left me bereft and theologically exasperated. With a turn toward an understanding of illusion as the fruit of what I have called the 'dim sight' of estrangement, I offer a way to think of illusion as it will relate to Tillich's use of the symbol of the demonic.

The incongruence between dominant and marginal emerges first in representation. At every TRC national event, church denominations responsible for running the schools set up archival display boards that house photographs from official church records, and they welcome families and visitors to rummage through images and identify familiar faces.[210] Those of us hearing testimony naturally funnel through these displays when we leave the statement gathering area. I peer at them blankly, numbed by what I have heard, hoping for a reprieve from

[210] When I use the term 'church' in this dissertation, I am referring specifically to the settler Christian church in Canada and western Europe because of its particular role in this colonial history. This is not meant to erase the presence of other religions and worshipping communities that participated in the Truth and Reconciliation process. It is also not meant to conflate other worshipping communities with the observations I am making with the Christian church, even when the broader observations I am making about Christianity's relationship to harm have been made by other religious practitioners about their own religious tradition as well. The Jewish, Sikh, and African religious communities in particular offered very meaningful and detailed statements of reconciliation to the Commission.

the articulation of suffering. What I find instead only muffles these marginal voices and their stories of suffering. The photographs want to convince me that the mission of residential schools planted a good tree, despite the evidence all-around of the fruit of suffering and destruction.[211] There are pictures of children with identical haircuts in uniforms, sewing or playing ball or kneeling in prayer on their dorm room bunks. In the physical space of the archive, church reflection on residential schools takes center stage and manifests as well placed images and descriptions. Anthropologist Ronald Niezen observes that the United Church of Canada photographs of residential schools offer particularly optimistic descriptions of the residential school archive, with labels such as "Girls with their dress-up hats at the swings on their playground," and "Mrs. G.H. Bennie, President of Saskatchewan Conference Branch, W.M.S. unveiling the cairn to commemorate 50 years of Christian service among the Indians at File Hills."[212] Had I not known that church representatives received private testimony from former students prior to the formation of the Truth and Reconciliation, I might have assumed that archivists labelled pictures with colonial markers of success because of a dearth of information.

As even more information poured in through the TRC processes of data collection, the contrast between live testimony and religious reflection only increased. Catholic archbishop Prendergast's statement for media after the report on the findings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission addresses four years of public testimony and six thousand recorded

[211] In Susan Sontag's book *Regarding the Pain of Others* she writes that "Everyone is a literalist when it comes to photographs" but that the claim to literalism is often contested. In my experience of the photograph archives, I am not just contesting interpretations of the photograph, but contrasting the church interpretation with what was being said about the experience represented in the photographs by the subjects themselves. In other words, Sontag is correct that photographs themselves have an ambiguity that asks for decisions to be made by the viewer. Susan Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others* (New York: Picador, 2003), 47.

[212] Niezen, *Truth and Indignation,* 134. It is worth nothing that File Hills is the school that had a 74% mortality rate in the early 1900's…the highest of any residential school that I have come across.

statements by concluding that "… the churches were caught up in the fact that the government didn't want (Aboriginals) to speak their own language. And I think that's where we started going astray."[213] Prendergast, who was given an advance copy of the Commission's ninety-four calls to action and was present at Commissioners' Executive Summary of Findings in 2015, adds "But many people did benefit from the education that they received…there were good things that happened there as well."[214] The invocation of historical balance is heard again in the statement of reconciliation offered by the moderator of the Presbyterian Church of Canada. The Rev. Dr. Sutherland nods to the Presbyterian complicity in the broader colonial mandate when he acknowledges that he "knew why the schools had been created and that the problem was systemic."[215] However, he leads off his statement by reminding the audience that "we know not every child in the Presbyterian school was abused or mistreated" and "we acknowledge the teachers who did their best."[216] Given the sheer numbers of tortured and abused children brought to light through processes of the TRC, this call to balance by the majority of Christian institutional leaders draws attention to the inability of the institution to hear the crescendo of voices from that rises from the imposed margins of residential school history.[217] I was not the only one for whom the church seemed an entity divided, her loyalty split between the feelings of her own members — some of whom "dedicated their lives" to residential schools — and the

[213] Prendergrast has a lot more to say, and his remarks will come up in the pages that follow. This excerpt is taken from an interview immediately following the release of the TRC final summary report in Ottawa. Dani-Elle Dube, "Archbishop defends the church, residential schools," Toronto Sun, last updated June 4, 2015, accessed June 5, 2015, http://www.torontosun.com/2015/06/04/archbishop-defends-the-church-residential-schools.
[214] *Ibid.*
[215] Notes taken from *Expressions of Reconciliation by the Presbyterian Church of Canada*, TRC Vancouver National Event, September 20, 2013.
[216] *Ibid.*
[217] I speak of survivor voices as the imposed margins of residential schools as a spatial observation rather than a value assessment. Given the power and profile of the predominantly white, colonial Christian church, all else is relegated to the margin of focus by comparison.

accumulation of evidences that demonstrate our complicity in outsized abuse.[218] While a productive theological discussion of the identity of church as institution and the expectations we can and cannot have of institutions is not within the scope of this study, I would like sustain the observation that this jarring contrast between the excess of information from the margins and the deficiency of response from the center suggests Christianity's susceptibility to illusion.

In the case of residential schools, illusion manifests not only as the inability to hear and process the non-dominant voices (some churches, such as Mennonite Church Canada, have taken swift action to bring Indigenous voices to the center of Christian dialogue, working in conversation with our original peoples for reconciliation and land justice), but also as 'dim sight.'[219] Even as the recipients of clear ethical messages (such as "love your neighbor"), Christian leaders illustrate that there can be a barrier to understanding, a misreading of signs, a certain hardness of heart ("who is my neighbor?"). This kind of dim sight translates into the world of Christian piety, where we mistake things like fervor for goodness, and dedication for enacting the law of love. We find an object on which to focus our attention, instead of finding a

[218] Related to this, I was not the only one who noticed that other religions (Sikh, Jewish) and institutions (Saskatoon city police, University of Manitoba, Alberta "Social Workers for Social Change") present did not need to defend their complicity in residential school history and made much clearer statements of acknowledgement of harms. This was particularly evident in the portions of each National Event dedicated Expressions of Reconciliation. Jewish Rabbis present in Vancouver acknowledge the ways their ignorance and indifference did nothing to rebalance a wrong, and offered participation in healing. Saskatoon Police Service gave a long presentation about the harms that have been committed by the Police in Saskatoon (famous for the Neil Stonechild death referenced in chapter 1) and described the dozens of changes they have made in response, including consultation with Elders, a special task force that joins local First Nations on a vision quest, etc.) I cite as example of ambiguity that did not need to generate into the demonic.

[219] The use of the term margin comes from the image of a piece of paper. The margin is set up in order to make the center more visible. There may be all sorts of things filling the margin, but the page is constructed so that the main content stands out, enshrined. When this metaphor is extended beyond the strategies of typesetting, it results in the diminution of anything found outside the center. At best, the margins contain objects, modifiers and descriptors for the main subject.

host of other subjects, human and non-human others. We hear half-truths and cut off our attention too soon.

If Christianity is susceptible to illusion, then our analysis of our own actions and motives is susceptible to illusion. When the official church representatives confess our history of racism and cultural imperialism, we resonate with the United Church of Canada's official explanation that "we were a product of our times."[220] This is true, of course. Partly true. Randal Balmer in his history of American Protestantism traces the cultural mimesis of the western Christian church, a point that correlates with the theological observation that institutions tend to embody the prevailing attitudes and policies of the day.[221] The prevailing policy behind residential schools was cultural annihilation. Christian voluntary complicity with this mandate renders the call to "bring some balance…in public perception" dim and misguided.[222] This call to balance indicates we are still a product of our times. The national Indigenous bishop of the Anglican Church of Canada, Mark Macdonald, speaks of colonialism as "a kind of hypnotism," describing that "many of the assumptions of Christian faith were blunted or obscured by the powerful counterpoint of Western ideas."[223] And they still are. The spiritual practices of decolonization underway by the post-TRC church are necessary for us to regain our vision and read the wisdom

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[220] Reverend James Scott (UCC), *Observations and Reflections from the Parties to the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement*, National Research Centre Forum in Vancouver, March 3, 2011.

[221] Randall Balmer and Lauren Winner, Protestantism in America. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002). See also Edward Farley, *Thinking About Things And Other Frivolities: A Life.* (Oregon: Cascade Books, 2014), 32.

[222] It is worth noting that Christian residential schools embraced and on occasion resisted cultural annihilation. I cited only a few of the examples given by former students, from getting rid of cultural artifacts, to the stripping of clothes and hair to the electrocution of the tongues when their own language was spoken. Catholic missionary work among the first nations has a history of learning and translating the Indigenous languages. Some of this was preserved in residential schools when it served religious purposes.

[223] I do not question the potency of colonial illusions to which we fell (fall!) prey. However, it is the nature of illusion to hide itself from us.

of the margins.[224] But these examples also indicate the continued justification and apology for the schools in the face of overwhelming and heart-rending testimony going on at the same time.[225] The half-truths and turning away feed the illusion that we can find the explanation of harm elsewhere. What we fail to see is the deliberate continuation of the narrative that buttressed the schools all along: that despite what we hear from survivors, the real story is one of Christian help, support, good intentions and self-sacrifice. We obscure, tame, colonize and render invisible the voices of residential school children all over again.

I am suggesting that even the work of decolonization harbors illusion for the Christian thinker. The colonial explanation defers the orchestrating harm to an ideological location external to Christianity. The long and varied list of sadistic abuses recounted by former students suggests that Christians tapped into an avenue of brutalization beyond the sights of the colonialism. Casey Eagle Speaker recalls his arrival at St. Paul's Residential School when he was five and a half years old. He describes how he offered the priest a greeting in Blackfoot as a sign of respect. After his parents left, he was picked up by his ears, taken to the office, stripped naked and beaten unconscious for "speaking the language of the devil."[226] There is no

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[224] Most of the church denominations involved in the TRC research process have designed and implemented practices to help parishioners live more respectfully by identifying white privilege, paternalism, racism. Reverend Ray Aldred and Steve Heinrichs are doing this. The blanket exercise has been a powerful tool for reconciliation for many people. I in no way wish to undermine the necessity of these practices for the Western Christian church.

[225] Paul Russell cites the concerns of the National Post reader base about the skewed perception the media is giving the TRC data, particularly in the amount of deaths accounted for thus far. Russell cites publishes several comments that question the verity of survivor testimony and attribute bias to media. Comments that indicate various forms of denial (Ted DeWolf and C. Lutz) will be quoted in the pages ahead. Paul Russell, "Paul Russell: Could it be that residential schools weren't so bad?" *National Post*, last modified January 11, 2014, accessed July 9, 2016, http://news.nationalpost.com/full-comment/paul-russell-could-it-be-that-residential-schools-werent-so-bad.

[226] Casey Eagle Speaker, Commissioners Sharing Panel, TRC Calgary Regional Event, May 11, 2013. This piece of testimony I cross-referenced with the newly released video archives at the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation. As mentioned in my introduction, all other testimony that I cite comes from my own handwritten notes taken at the TRC National Events unless otherwise noted. "Alberta Hearings 2013," NCTR.ca, accessed July 20, 2016, http://nctr.ca/scripts/mwimain.dll/14431/2/5/282?RECORD&DATABASE=VIMS.

indication in the writing of Nicholas Davin that he had this kind of dehumanization in mind when he honed the colonial vision of residential schools. Some particular avenue for cruelty is opened and traversed because of the of the religiosity of residential schools, beyond the vision of the founding villains. In the previous chapter, I reference letters issued by external evaluators decrying the harsh treatment occurring at the schools.[227] Instead of intervening, church affiliates, clergy and heads of denominations defended the harsh treatment of children and protected the clergy perpetrators.[228] We know that the motives of colonialism are disturbingly clear: we want your land. Likewise, the assumptions of racism are irrationally precise: you are not as important as I. It is one thing to steal land and create policies of cultural assimilation.[229] It is another thing entirely to take an object of our disdain and torture her. In light of this, I am not convinced that Doris Young, the survivor that authored the query of my opening epigraph, will consider "we were a product of our times" a satisfactory answer to her question "How did they know to colonize us?…How did they know to treat us like animals?…How do we hear their stories so we understand how they did what they did?" It takes a theological sleight of hand to portray Christian theology as only *justifying* the dehumanizing behavior of colonialism and racism. The excess of wisdom that comes from the marginalized voices of survivors insists that there is something in Christianity itself that made acts of hatred tenable. Christian theology does not only justify the dehumanizing behavior of residential schools, it inflames it.

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[227] I reference the reports of Indian Agents Clink and Bryce, whom John Milloy notes were alone in their condemnation of the treatment of children at the schools. Milloy cites other reports of abuse as well, including one from a nurse whose report so incensed Duncan Campbell Scott that he wrote a directive to the school himself. See my commentary in chapter 1, and Milloy, *A National Crime,* 140.

[228] Milloy speaks at length about this, citing that "Head office, regional, school and church files are replete with this," (meaning records of abuse). *Ibid,* 141.

[229] The writings of Davin and Pratt indicate that both saw the assimilative educational project as a humanizing endeavor.

Summary

The story of Eve and the creation of the world speaks to the larger, shared struggles of existence and illuminates why our ambiguous structure of life gives rise to 'dim sight,' luring us into Bishop Mark Macdonald's "hypnotic trance." However, the testimony of residential school survivors suggest that this is not the kind of illusion that accounts for the atrocities they experienced as children.

I have recounted four specific illusions at work in the history of residential schools. First, the inability of the center (in this case, the Christian institution) to see the margins (the voices of former students) — even now. Second, Christianity's susceptibility to the hungers of colonialism. Third, Christianity's vulnerability to accepting the half-truth of colonialism as the whole theological explanation. Here we harness the power of illusion to use the good work of decolonization to mask the ways that dehumanization is embedded in Christian language and concepts. We know this because there is a fourth illusion: the inability of the colonial Christians to see Indigenous people as fully human. From the perspective of this illusion, I will describe in the following chapter how the withholding of full humanity justifies the sadistic treatment of children. We recognize the core of these illusions in Nazi antisemitism and American racism: the refusal to see another as human binds itself to an ideology of hatred that then requires destruction. When the structure of this illusion is offered a particularly theological foundation, the cruelty takes on new form with new fervor. Casey Eagle Speaker, stripped and beaten for speaking his own language, writes that, "Even if abuse wasn't a factor, the act of taking children from their home months at a time, and teaching that their previous way of life was sinful,

created a traumatic cycle that is still seen in today's generation."[230] The ambiguity of colonizing, which has a 'good' justification (jobs, security, transportation) is itself traumatizing and evil. But it is only the beginning. The history of residential schools exceeds ambiguity. The church jumps tracks from ambiguity onto the demonic.

[230] Casey Eagle Speaker is quoted in Trevor Solway, "Telly James: Suicide prevention coordinator uses past to heal struggling youth," *The Calgary Journal*, April 27, 2015, accessed May 11, 2015, http://www.calgaryjournal.ca/index.php/profiles/2821-telly-james-suicide-prevention-coordinator-uses-past-to-heal-struggling-youth.

Chapter 3 - Demonic

> And if this demonic element in the ambiguities of religion is rejected, how can the human spirit be prevented from replacing the impact of the Spiritual Presence with self-creative acts of its own?
> - Paul Tillich

The work of this chapter comes in four parts. In part one, I will explore further what Tillich means by the dangers of ambiguity. Because ambiguity is a feature of existence, it is easy to underestimate the range of harms available to any intent of goodness. By recounting specific harms and erasures present in the conversations about residential school, I draw attention to the close relationship between ambiguity and the demonic. Next, I will look at the symbol of the demonic itself, and place Tillich's understanding of the symbol as absolutizing and destructive in the context of how the demonic has functioned in Christian mythology. This will provide the background for me to analyze two Christian symbols, Emmanuel (God-for-us) and divine condemnation for their role in the transition from ambiguity to the demonic. I have chosen these two symbols because of how often a reference to these symbols manifests in survivor testimony. In part three, I begin by describing the symbol of Emmanuel so that I can analyze what happens when 'God-for-us' becomes absolutized into 'God-for-*us'* (and not for *you).* In part four, I turn the symbol of divine condemnation. There, I will describe how the ideas of condemnation, hell, and punishment evolve in Christian thought. Then I will compare a finite understanding of divine condemnation with a demonically structured infinite version of condemnation.

Part I: Residential School and the Externalization of Harm

The dangers and rejections of ambiguity

If Eve teaches us about the dim sight of estrangement, pointing us toward of the challenges of ambiguity, she also teaches us of its dangers. In the previous chapter, I cited the ways in which ambiguity obscures our relationship to the world around us. This results in failures of seeing. I argued that as a structure of existence, ambiguity places the astigmatism of dim sight beyond the reach of individual moral choice.[231] Eve, with her hungers and fears, provides the insight that our seeing is shaped by desire, and that the processes of desire and interpretation are susceptible to the half-truths of illusion. Our seeing, our cognitive "lucidity," encounters our longing for that which we wish were true. I make this observation because of the way the Christian desire for good accompanies certain strains of resistance to survivor testimony. This desire, in turn, obscures the dangerous outcomes of projects of 'good.' I will flag three examples of ambiguity that illustrate the dangerous intersection of seeing and longing.[232] I wish to acknowledge how the unattended dangers of the ambiguous cause irreparable harm independent of a full descent into the horrific acts of the demonic.[233] I also wish to illustrate how difficult it is to track the slippery and enigmatic transition from ambiguity into demonic destruction in residential school history.

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[231] In Wendy Farley's plenary talk for a regional meeting of the American Academy of Religion, she describes how "Rationality… is always tempted by illusion and is therefore a task or desire more than an accomplishment; it is a vocation rather than a possession." Wendy Farley, "Plenary Talk" (plenary address, Pacific Northwest regional meeting of the American Academy of Religion, Spokane, May 14, 2011).

[232] This is how Levinas described rationality, or our "openness upon the true." His full quotation reads, "Does not lucidity, the mind's openness to the true, consist in catching sight of the permanent possibility of war?" Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity* (Pittsburg: Duquesne University Press, 1969), 21.

[233] This acknowledgement anticipates observations by residential school survivor Casey Eagle Speaker in the paragraphs ahead. Eagle Speaker will make the point that the colonial impulse behind the schools was bad enough to trigger a cycle of trauma. This will allow me to contrast the already bad, which Christians rightly externalize as the fruit of colonialism, to the indescribably bad, which many Christians fail to acknowledge entirely.

The first example of the intersection of seeing and longing invokes the good folks of the Presbyterian Women's Missionary Society. The principle of ambiguity offers a way for these eager philanthropists — whose 50 years of service at File Hills was celebrated on the archives board at the TRC — to interpret their efforts as doing 'good.' The second example invokes Canada's need to establish identity and economic sustainability. Ambiguity explains why building a railroad across Canada made sense to the powers of the day and why a policy of education offered a positive adumbration of futurity. The third example invokes the common Christian commentary on the existence of art, sport and helpful forms of learning at residential school. Ambiguity offers an explanation of why we hear traces of the good in survivor testimony — former students speak French and English (for some of the time), know how to play hockey or sew; many learn to successfully navigate the urban world.[234] Tillich reminds us that "every life process has the ambiguity that the positive and negative elements are mixed in such a way that a definite separation of the negative from the positive is impossible: life at every moment is ambiguous."[235]

However, Christians do not always acknowledge that "life at every moment is ambiguous," and use the presence of the good to negate the bad. This is exacerbated by a longing for good — either to serve the children, to serve the interests of the nation, or to serve Jesus. However,

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[234] Paul Russel's article in the National Post publishes the voices of those who think that the statistics released by the TRC sensationalize the kind of difficulties that were actually ubiquitous. They use the positive to erase the negative. More than one contributor insists on naming the parts of residential school like that former students should be thankful for. C. Lutz from Ontario contributes to the publication by critiquing the recent news coverage of the TR: "Nice work, *National Post*, as you continue to dump on the charitable work accomplished by generations of selfless missionaries, physicians, nurses and teachers of the Canadian North," "[This story] heavily spins out a 'physical and sexual abuse' [narrative] as if 150,000 Indian and Inuit children had gained nothing good from taxpayer-provided white education. At least some of them learned enough English and French to, fluently, play the system and bite the hand that had fed them." I will cite former student Mark DeWolf's critique shortly. Paul Russell, "Paul Russell: Could it be that residential schools weren't so bad?"

[235] Tillich, *Systematic Theology III,* 32.

in the case of the three examples I have provided, this longing for good has an inverse relationship to the quality of sight exhibited by the dominant seers. The selfless work of the Women's Missionary Society obscures from themselves their assumption that Indigenous children needed 'saving' by white culture. The innovations and set-backs of nation-building obscure the collateral damages of residential schools as well as the inequitable valuations of worth. The evidence of certain features of goodness prepares Christians to accept the justifications of "excesses" in an overall "good" project. In all three of these examples, the negative *potential* of the principle of ambiguity is denied, which means the principle of ambiguity itself is denied.[236]

It is certainly true that the truth is painful. Many Christians are in deep mourning when they discover and pay attention to the suffering that has gone on in their name.[237] The structure of ambiguity can lead us to the understanding that "rationality is a constant struggle not only to discern what is going on but to bear it."[238] However, when the truth is pushed out — even the basic truth that the structure of ambiguity holds the potential for harm — the results can be slippery and dangerous. The example of residential school student Mark DeWolf illustrates this point. Mark DeWolf demonstrates a denial of ambiguity under the guise of 'balance' when he shares his testimony with the Commission. DeWolf recounts how his father, who served as the principal of St. Paul's residential school on the Blood Reserve, dedicated his life to the success of

[236] My chapter on history describes the slowness with which both church and government responded to allegations of harm. In the paragraphs that follow, I will discuss the DeWolfs further.
[237] Ron Niezen describes the reaction to TRC findings as "indignation." Ron Niezen, *Truth and Indignation,* Introduction.
[238] Farley, "Plenary Talk." By contrast to all of this, the work of decolonization embraced by those churches in Canada who heed the mandates of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission evokes the capacity for good in the structure of ambiguity, and the willingness to bear the hard work of truth-seeking.

the school, often going early to make skating rink ice for the school kids of which Mark was one. DeWolf recalls that the school staff worked "with the purest of motives and kindness of heart to serve Jesus, and believed that it was their duty to help those otherwise ignored…"[239] What the testimony of hard work and good intention obscures is that a well-run school still pre-supposes taking children from homes, treating their culture as irrelevant, breaking their connection to their language and home communities. Casey Eagle Speaker testifies to his own experience at St. Paul's residential school on the Blood Reserve. He was punished for speaking his language and for collecting sage to create a smudge.[240] Mark DeWolf, who would have heard this testimony, does not register the Christian complicity in what Eagle Speaker names the "traumatic cycle" of colonial domination over Indigenous people.[241] This, in turn, obfuscates the way good intentions, self-deception, ambiguity, negative outcomes, and complicity coincide.

The obfuscations of DeWolf perform another erasure. According to Paul Russel's article in the National Post, DeWolf's public statement is instigated by his outrage at the imbalance of

[239] This was part of Mark DeWolf's public statement describing those who, like his father, worked in residential schools as an expression of Christian ethics. His father worked at a residential school on the Blood reserve in southern Alberta. It would appear to me that is father was an Anglican minister, and I cannot tell from the records if there was more than one Anglican residential school on the Blood Reserve, or if the same school switched names. As the 'real time' nature of history unfolds for us, I am sure someone will find documentation that will clarify this. Mark DeWolf, Commissioners Sharing Panel, TRC Alberta National Event, March 27, 2014.

[240] In this portion of Casey Eagle Speaker's testimony, he describes his punishment as being taken to a room, stripped, and placed in a bucket for 22 days. He was fed bread. I infer from his testimony that this may have been a common punishment because he spoke of how he would purposely do things to be placed back in the bucket. There he was alone, safe from abuse, and able to pray to the Creator. Though Casey Eagle Speaker does not name "St. Paul's", he says he was a student on the Blood Reserve. The final TRC summary video includes an image labelled "St. Paul's Residential School" within his testimony. Casey Eagle Speaker, Commissioners Sharing Panel, TRC Calgary Regional Event, May 11, 2013.

[241] I will suggest that DeWolf can obfuscate harm because of Christian theology. This argument is made in the pages ahead. Casey Eagle Speaker is quoted in the article by Trevor Solway, "Telly James: Suicide prevention coordinator uses past to heal struggling youth."

TRC testimony and subsequent journalistic reporting.[242] When the TRC findings disclose tuberculosis death rates of children at residential school (upwards of 4000), DeWolf argues that reserve conditions were so deplorable that the children were likely dying anyway. [243]

> When so many Canadians rely on publications like the National Post to stay informed on important issues, it is disappointing to see an article like that. How does this figure compare to the number of First Nations children who died outside of the schools? Over 126 years and out of 150,000 students, the figure is perhaps not so surprising, given the deplorable health conditions on some reserves and high rates of communicable illness. More could and should have been done to ensure the health of these students, but let's have responsible journalism, not emotional pandering to readers.[244]

In this article, DeWolf suggests that media "parrots what native leaders, TRC employees, and other aboriginal activists repeatedly say."[245] DeWolf is not alone in this denial of the negative aspect of the ambiguity of residential schools. He accuses the media of "emotional pandering to readers."[246] DeWolf's eagerness to witness to the faithfulness and passion of his

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[242] Journalist Paul Russell published DeWolf's commentary rebutting the National Post article on the findings that 4000 children died at residential schools. Paul Russell, "Paul Russell: Could it be that residential schools weren't so bad?"

[243] Mark Kennedy, "At least 4000 aboriginal children died in residential schools, commission finds." *The National Post*, last updated January 25, 2014, accessed February 20, 2014. http://news.nationalpost.com/news/canada/at-least-4000-aboriginal-children-died-in-residential-schools-commission-finds.

[244] In light of Paul Russell's National Post article that I cited above for his quotations from not only DeWolf but many other people railing against the misleading statistics of the TRC on the deaths of residential school children, I would like to point out that Canadian Public Health Association houses these statistics. Pertaining to the data I have culled for the history section in Chapter One, CPHA cites that tuberculosis came to Canada with European settlers, and that it travelled across Canada after the railway system was established. Lack of adequate nutrition, because of the forced reserve system, made Aboriginal communities even more vulnerable to the disease than the regular population. The statistics at residential schools surpasses even those of the reserves. "Death rates in the 1930s and 1940s were in excess of 700 deaths per 100,000 persons, among the highest ever reported in a human population. Tragically, TB death rates among children in residential schools were even worse — as high as 8,000 deaths per 100,000 children." "TB and Aboriginal People," *The Canadian Public Health Association*, accessed July 23, 2016. http://www.cpha.ca/en/programs/history/achievements/02-id/tb-aboriginal.aspx. DeWolf's full quotation can be found in Paul Russell, "Paul Russell: Could it be that residential schools weren't so bad?"

[245] The full quotation reads: "The last of the Truth and Reconciliation Canada (TRC) national events comes up at the end of March in Edmonton, and I hope to be there," Mr. DeWolf added. "It will be interesting to see if the media just parrot what native leaders, TRC employees and other aboriginal activists repeatedly say, or if the occasion gives rise to some serious discussion of the schools, the harm they did and the more positive aspects as well." *Ibid.*

[246] *Ibid.*

father (which Davin relied on for the successful launch of the schools), his longing for an unambiguous "help for those otherwise ignored" colonizes not only the testimony of survivors, but also the data that conflicts with his own experience of history. The Canadian Public Health Association, who houses actual illness and death statistics, reveals the danger of ambiguity, and the double erasure performed in the denial of ambiguity.

> Death rates in the 1930s and 1940s were in excess of 700 deaths per 100,000 persons, among the highest ever reported in a human population. Tragically, TB death rates among children in residential schools were even worse — as high as 8,000 deaths per 100,000 children.[247]

Mark DeWolf illustrates what the Presbyterian Women's Society and nation-building conceal -- that ambiguity is not benign. The dangers of ambiguity, in the case of the colonial project of residential schools, are 'real' not imagined harms: children, like Casey Eagle Speaker, are abused or dead; Indigenous communities are riddled with unemployment, inadequate living conditions and high rates of suicide shackle opportunity.[248] When racism and paternalism mix with failures of seeing, the legacy of ambiguity produces an *actual* problem in the same way that the high poverty rate in Indigenous communities is an *actual* problem. The tepid, slow Christian and government response to testimony and statistics trivializes the collateral damage of the ambiguous educational project of residential schools when the data represents

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[247] "TB and Aboriginal People," *The Canadian Public Health Association*. It is important to note the systemic nature of racism and injustice that anticipates my use of Gabriel Marcel through the section on the demonic. Susceptibility to illness is not inherent to Indigenous communities. The CPHA cites that tuberculosis came to Canada with European settlers, and that it travelled across Canada after the railway system was established. Lack of adequate nutrition, because of the forced reserve system, made Aboriginal communities even more vulnerable to the disease than the regular population. The statistics at residential schools surpasses even those of the reserves.

[248] According to Statistics Canada, the Aboriginal suicide rate is five to seven time higher than that of the general Canadian population. When I first accessed this data in 2014, the rate was three times higher. Inuit suicide rates are 11 times higher than the general population, the highest in the world. "First Nations and Inuit Health," *Health Canada/Santé Canada*, accessed August 4, 2016, http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fniah-spnia/promotion/suicide/index-eng.php.

communities outside of their own.[249] The destructive result of residential schools is evident not just on the small bodies and minds of the children housed there, but in the current state of Indigenous communities.[250] The legacy of residential schools, therefore, includes the destruction of identity, agency, respectful relationships — even destruction of the land itself.

Beyond ambiguity and colonialism: "How did you know to treat us like animals?"[251]

The problem is this: neither ambiguity nor colonialism is the answer to the question that the history of residential schools asks of Canadian Christians. As I suggested in the previous chapter, it is right to ask how we decolonize our habits of mind and practices, our institutions and our churches. It is right to ask how we compassionately navigate the structure of ambiguity. But when colonization is the authorized answer to the question of the base cruelty and sadism of residential schools, it functions as evasion. When the dangers of our dim sight tip toward evil, they exceed the structure of ambiguity and become structures of destruction. Testimony of

[249] I am indebted to Jewish ethicist Aaron Gross for concept of failures of seeing. Gross theorizes that our ethical failures are failures of perception. We fail to see others as equally important to ourselves. We fail see the suffering of on aspect of life despite the evidence. He speaks to this in terms of animal ethics in his recent book. Gabriel Marcel, in his work *Man Against Mass Society*, describes understanding of the techniques of degradation that the Nazi's use as "a whole body of methods deliberately put into operation in order to attack and destroy in human persons belonging to some definite class or other their self-respect, and in order to transform them little by little into mere human waste products, conscious of themselves as such, and in the end forced to despair of themselves, not merely at any intellectual level, but in the very depths of their souls." Aaron S. Gross, *The Question of the Animal and Religion: Theoretical Stakes, Practical Implications* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015). Gabriel Marcel, *Man Against Mass Society* (South Bend: St. Augustine Press, 2008).

[250] At the time of writing, in the community of Attawapiskat in the Pimicikamak Cree Nation, there have been 140 suicide attempts in the last two weeks alone. There have been six suicides in the last two months. Newspapers report an 80% unemployment rate at the Hydro plant that was imposed on the reserve land, overcrowded housing and past abuse. It cites the Hydro development destroyed the reserve's traditional land, way of live, and cultural identity. Chinta Puxley, "Manitoba First Nation declares state of emergency over suicide epidemic," *The Globe and Mail*, last updated March 10, 2016, accessed March 10, 2016, http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/manitoba-first-nation-declares-state-of-emergency-over-suicide-epidemic/article29113402/.

[251] This is a repeat of the epigraph from Doris Young, former residential school student and representative of the far north on the Commission's Survivor Committee.

former students suggests just this transition from suffering to psychic and cultural destruction.[252] Doris Young continues to ask us, "How did they know how to treat us less than animals?" A tepid appeal to one's kindest motives does not address this central question. The work of the pages ahead is to look for an answer to Doris Young's question internal to Christianity itself in what Tillich will call the structure of the demonic.

There are two reasons why I shift away from an analysis of colonialism and toward Christianity itself. First, colonialism does not account for the sadism that occurred at residential schools. Colonialism wreaks its own havoc with its strategies of cultural genocide. Quoting Casey Eagle Speaker's testimony again, the cultural and personal degradations that came with the colonial regime was enough to trigger "a traumatic cycle that is still seen in today's generation."[253] Former students and children of survivors speak of the loss of language, the loss of growing up in a community, the loss of knowing the practices that bring balance and healing and love.[254] These losses as well as the breaking of treaties and withholding of resources are what we find in the wake of colonialism's version of raw power. They dealt a

[252] Lynda Minoose traces the path of suffering to destruction in her public testimony: "I am a person affected by intergenerational effects of residential school…I come from a culture who loved children, of very strong people who looked after themselves, provided their own food, looked after the old folks. The biggest law given to us by our Creator was to share — we shared food with the less fortunate, cared for the orphans…didn't matter who they were…I am the youngest of 12 girls…all my older siblings (17 in total) were in residential school…All the members of my family became alcoholics when they came home from residential school. Some went to jail, some left for Edmonton and we never saw them again. I was living with an entire family who was traumatized. I will be 65 years old and I work on a reserve of 1500. Only 115 speak and understand the Dene language. And with the loss of our language is the loss of our culture and beliefs…" Lynda Minoose, Commissioners Sharing Panel, TRC Alberta National Event, March 29, 2014.

[253] Journalist Trevor Solway quotes Casey Eagle Speaker's thoughts on Aboriginal suicide in the article "Telly James: suicide prevention coordinator uses past to heal struggling youth."

[254] Richard Behn speaks, after a grueling testimony that I will cite in a later footnote, "The people who abused me, I can forgive that. Talking the land, taking the resources and the thing facade that covers these injustices…I cannot forgive that. When they took me to civilize me as they put it, that wasn't a big deal. But the they took everybody from age 5-15 out of the community, the community collapses." Richard Behn, Commissioners Sharing Panel, TRC Vancouver National Event, September 21, 2013.

strong enough blow to leave our aboriginal people harmed and suffering. But the purposes of colonialism did not need to take five and half year-old Casey Eagle Speaker to a back room that first night, strip him naked and repeatedly sodomize him.

Second, the testimony of survivors unmasks the religious origins of residential school violence. Casey Eagle Speaker describes the theological language that informed his first day at his Alberta church-run school. His Blackfoot language was called the language of the devil. Blackfoot traditional ways were named sinful. Children, Eagle Speaker included, were told that they were going to burn in hell and that "you deserve what you're going through because their driving the devil out of you." After being beaten unconscious for speaking Blackfoot, Casey Eagle Speaker, entrusted to the care of the church, was repeatedly sexually assaulted. He was told that his parents hated him. "And the whole time I am told I am not right. I am an animal. I am a savage. I am a beast." "Everything inside of me died."[255] As his first understanding of Christianity, Eagle Speaker says "I never knew about hell, but that's where hell started for me." The colonialism of the communal elite underwrote the Christianity of residential school, but it was Christianity that enacted the doctrine of hell.[256] Cultural assimilation had little to do with religion for the government and powers of Canada. I have indicated that in the correspondence of Nicholas Davin that his recommendation to create religious schools was entirely pragmatic —

[255] Casey Eagle Speaker, Commissioners Sharing Panel, TRC Calgary Regional Event, May 11, 2013.
[256] This phenomenon is not unique to the residential school experience. Womanist theologian M. Shawn Copeland who describes the relationship of Christianity and slavery when she notes that "slaveholders who beat, tortured and sexually harassed slaved prided themselves on church membership." M. Shawn Copeland, "Wading Through Many Sorrows," 148.

only the religious would persevere though such an "arduous task" because of their need to work for a greater cause.[257]

I am arguing here and in the pages to come that in abuse of residential schools, Christian theology provides the ideas. Theology weaves through the various levels and divides of white society, and this unifying ideological — across class and culture — is necessary for successful mass oppression. The history of residential schools illustrates how the ideas that justify a system, from cultural superiority to divine condemnation, are as powerful as its messengers and enforcers. This stealth violence of ideas can be observed broadly. Enactments of prejudice, such as antisemitism and racism, commonly depend on an alliance between different segments society. Hannah Arendt tracks how disturbingly common "popular support of totalitarian regimes" is, and how leaders of totalitarian programs capitalize on the support of the masses.[258] Deborah Lipstadt sees this same pattern occurring today, explaining that one end of this alliance consists of influential communal elites (think politicians, bankers, entrepreneurs) and at the other end consists of regular folk (think the lower end of wealth and education). The upper class cloak their "prejudice in high minded rationalizations" and the lower classes "appeal to people's most base hatreds."[259] Those in power may never personally abuse or assault anyone, but they create an atmosphere in which others can more freely enact harm,

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[257] Davin does not make clear what it is about working in an "Indian" school that demanded more tenacity than other schools. His designation of the post as an arduous task implies he is working off the assumption that his readers will know what this means without further explanation. The residential schools were indeed unkind to staff and teachers due to their lack of funding and ill repair, however this was not something Davin could know when he made this recommendation. This is an example of a generalization that gives racism content. See my references to Davin in chapter 1.

[258] Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (London: Harcourt, 1966), 326.

[259] Dr. Lipstadt's scholarship is in conversation with Hannah Arendt who speaks to the same phenomenon in *Origins of Totalitarianism*, 326. See also Deborah E. Lipstadt, "In Europe, elites create the atmosphere that allows popular anti-semitism to grow," *Tablet*, January 2, 2014, accessed January 2, 2014, www.tabletmag.com/jewish-news-and-politics/157691/quenelle-and-anti-semitism/.

and even triumph in their harm. This is true in histories of lynching, beatings, and bombings. Also in Canada's colonial policies. I am suggesting that the same collaboration of ideology and practice occurs within the church itself.[260] Not external, but internal to Christianity. Theology provided an ideological underpinning to facilitate what I will describe in the pages ahead as the shift from ambiguity to the demonic; the shift from arrogance to sadism in Casey Eagle Speaker's residential school experience. Theology facilitated this shift, in part, by providing an ideology that linked segments of society across class.[261] Theology facilitated this shift, in part, by offering a justification of abuse, and by preparing us to excuse 'excesses' when we identify ourselves as participating in holy work.[262] In order to examine this shift, I turn to Paul Tillich's understanding of the symbol of the demonic as it relates to Christian theology and residential schools.

[260] Ellen Armour writes about the photographs of military torture in Abu Graib, and compares them to the history of spectacle of lynching. Armour references the public lynchings that were advertised and drew huge crowds of spectators, some "traveling by trains commissioned for just this purpose." While Arendt analyzes the practices of dehumanization in terms of totalitarianism, Armour theorizes the convergence of disciplinary power and biopower. For the purposes of my argument here, I refer to her insight that cruelty directs bio-disciplinary power not only toward the despised target group, but also toward the regular elite who "required disciplining…into their proper roles.' Using her argument that visual spectacle was one way of performing that discipline, I could argue that the photographs of residential schools that appeared on pamphlets for mission and on the TRC archives boards option that same kind of discipline. Ellen Armour, *Signs and Wonders* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016), 130, 133.

[261] As in the totalitarians via Lipstadt and Arendt above.

[262] Such as the Women's missionary efforts and the DeWolfs. I will elaborate in the sections ahead on theology as justification of violence (the unbridled and often sexualized cruelty at work) that I would like to note is different than even the twisted (but common) pedagogy of physically hitting a child to make them obey. As exemplified in the testimony of Casey Eagle Speaker, if theology did not cause the hatred it seems to have opened the gates for sadistic hatred that is very hard to fathom.

Part II: Description of the demonic

In the sections ahead, I will illustrate how survivor testimony suggests that a demonically structured version of the symbol of Emmanuel (God-with-us) and the symbol of divine condemnation disfigures the theology of clergy and staff at residential schools. Tillich's understanding of the destructiveness of the demonic offers a way to gain some kind of cognitive traction through the narratives of the unimaginable childhood abuse that occurred at the schools. However, the symbol of the demonic has been used ambiguously and variously throughout Christian history. In the paragraphs ahead, I will summarize Tillich's understanding of the main features of the demonic, as well as elaborate on the conceptual background, drawing particular attention to the way Tillich relies on the principle of participation to define how and where the demonic functions.

Tillich, in his volumes of post-war *Systematic Theology,* insisted that theology must be attentive to the "workings of evil." He argued that that the way evil manifests in any given time and place may be new, but it will be marked by a certain features: "As structures of evil, [the manifestations of evil will be] structures of self-destruction."[263] For Tillich, this destructiveness was parasitic on a vision of good — the fundamental dynamic of evil occurs when a religious symbol is transposed in such a way that it so absolutizes an idea or action that it becomes free of moral constraint. Though I will fill out this idea of the parasitic nature of destruction using principles of logic and order, I acknowledge again that there is a mystery to the way the demonic manifests. This slip from the dangers of ambiguity into the destructiveness of the demonic is less than clear. While a close reading of the demonic provides some information

[263] Tillich, *Systematic Theology II*, 68.

about the way theology serves to underwrite the practices of dehumanization at residential school, there is still a missing step. A lacuna. Any correlation between the mistaken absolute and violence escapes logic and leaves in its place a gap that is difficult to traverse. Writing theologically about the outsized abuses of residential schools is writing into the darkness. By identifying some of the features of demonic destruction as they occur in the theology of residential schools, I hope to scatter bits of light across shadows and expose the places where Christianity likes to hide behind rhetoric and good intentions. Even as I write to this end, I recognize that the pain and the trauma experienced by my Aboriginal sisters and brothers in the name of God exceeds anything I bring into language by way of description or explanation.

Background of the demonic

In order to come alongside Tillich's perspective on the nature of destruction, it helps to distinguish a Manichaean dualistic version of dark versus light from Tillich's participatory understanding of demonic. Tillich draws on his analysis of existence, participation and ambiguity in order to read the effects of the demonic in history. The principle of participation allows Tillich to theorize that the demonic's parasitic nature makes Christian theology particularly susceptible to the influence of demonic.[264] I intend this outline of the participatory nature of the demonic to alert us to the ways in which theology facilitated the abuses that occurred at residential schools.

[264] The demonic as read through the principal of participation contrasts with the demonic as read as a dualistic tale of good and evil.

In Tillich's own theological writings, the symbol of the demonic is unannounced and pervasive.[265] The demonic functions as a kind of common sense for Tillich, hovering near the margins of any claims we make about divine self-revelation, particularly as manifest in creation and in Jesus as the Christ.[266] The idea of the demonic was particularly important for Jesus and his followers. The gospels showcase stories of Jesus entering spaces of individual suffering and where the fruit of that suffering restricted flourishing. From severe limitation (Jesus interacts with a man who could not speak in Luke 11:14) to disease (Jesus' healing is associated with demons in Matthew 8:16) to some kind of restrictive circumstance (Jesus, Mary Magdalene, and the casting out of demons in Matthew 8:16), Jesus read the kinds of finite limitations imposed on human life, externally or internally, as something worth resisting and healing even when the healing defers to the conditions of existence.[267] In other words, Jesus understands powers that destroy the health and wholeness of people and communities which operate in the finite realm of time and space. 'Salvation' (from Latin, healthy or whole) involves actively excluding these powers. For Jesus, this salvation is related no only to bodily wholeness but to truth and reality; he condemns the demons for the lies they tell about the conditions of finitude (Satan is a liar and the father of lies, John 8:44). The first time Jesus confronts the economy of evil is in the wilderness when the manifestation of destruction is described as that which tempts Jesus to

[265] This makes the demonic particularly hard to track. In scholarship, it is common to find people who reference something that Tillich has said about the demonic, but no one has performed a study of the demonic in the way, for example, that Ryan McAnnally-Linz studied Tillich's equally pervasive understanding of participation. Ryan McAnnally-Linz, "The Multivalence of Participation in Paul Tillich's Systematic Theology."

[266] This is what Christian theology is about for Tillich. Tillich, *Systematic Theology I*, 16.

[267] In other words, we are still likely to die. Tillich associates salvation with healing, and healing with the bringing together of things split apart. "Salvation is derived from *salvus*, "healthy" or "whole," and it can be applied to every act of healing: to the healing of sickness, of demonic possession and of servitude to sin and to the ultimate power of death. Salvation, in this sense, takes place in time and history, just as revelation takes place in time and history." Though I do not make explicit claims about love, goodness, or salvation in this dissertation, it is this impulse of reunion and restoration that I understand as the fruit of love. *Ibid*, 146.

choose the non-ultimate (sustenance, security, power) over the ultimate. As I read gospel stories, I observe that Jesus does not let the finite (oppression) swallow the infinite (the divine image), nor does he allow the infinite (final glory) to swallow the finite (pain). The demonic is real, but not absolute.

The demonic has functioned in various ways throughout Christian history. In the time of Jesus, the demonic was seen as forces or beings to be loosed or bound. Jesus' understanding the demonic as participating in the world as we know it was shared by figures like Paul and Luther. Demons were a particular manifestation of evil that could be pacified, though evil itself was not banished. The thorn in Paul's flesh remained. The destructive forces of God in nature (which he sometimes identifies with Satan) haunted Luther's understanding of the holy.[268] At the cusp between the middle ages and modernity, Luther retained much of the understanding of demons reflect in the theology of Thomas — they were creatures of ambiguous nature, though marked by disorder (as opposed to angels who are marked by hierarchy and order).[269] A shift took place with the inheritance of a post-enlightenment separation of light and dark and a focus on the individual. Post-enlightenment theologians conceived of demons in more individualistic terms.[270] However, in our de-mythologized, post-Auschwitz era, the demonic does

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[268] Paul Tillich, "The Protestant Principle," in *The Essential Tillich,* ed. E. Forrester Church (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 77. I will note that Tillich argues that Luther occasionally identifies "the wrath of God with Satan, the half-divine-half-demonic picture he gives of God's acting in nature and history — all this constitutes the greatness and the danger of Luther's understanding of the holy." Tillich, *Systematic Theology I*, 216.

[269] I refer here to Andrea Begel's fascinating study on the representation of demons in Renaissance and Medieval art. Andrea A Begel, "Giotto's Demons," Notes in the History of Art 29, no. 4 (2010): 3-9, accessed Jun 4, 2016, http://www.jstor.org/stable/23208972.

[270] Dallmayr notes that while Augustine is usually credited for introducing the aspect of the human will into the discussion of good and evil, Immanuel Kant radicalized and popularized the shift in human anthropology from moral freedom to evil. Thus the problem of evil becomes rooted in humanity, rather than cosmology. Fred Dallmayr provides an overview of the shifting view of evil before and after the Enlightenment. Fred Dallmayr, "An End to Evil? Philosophical and Political Reflections," International Journal for Philosophy of Religion 60, no. 1/3 (2006), 173, http://www.jstor.org/stable/27646186.

not need to be conceived of as a literal being in order to communicate the social-structural character of evil. This insight informs the way Tillich uses the symbol of the demonic in his works of systematic theology. Tillich argues that because the very structures of our existence are fragile and uncertain, the presence of evil is inevitable.[271] However, Tillich understands this as a structural expression of destruction — in other words, the demonic functions beyond the moral power of individual will.

I find that the concept of the demonic resonates with listeners when they hear Tillich remind his readers that in Christian story, demons are "divine-anti-divine beings".[272] In other words, they are not some kind of pure negation of the Good, but "participate in a distorted way in the power and holiness of the divine."[273] This opens a deeper metaphysical understanding than offered by the sage figures of my youth who warned that the devil masquerades as an angel of light. More specifically, the devil lives on the light, eclipsing it, rousing our hope that what we see before us might be the light itself. The demonic misrepresents the light. Perverts it. Feeds on it. But the devil does not go skittering off on its own. The negative that the demonic represents has no independent reality but lives on the positive, which it twists and contorts. [274]

I have suggested that Tillich's understanding of participation underwrites the demonic structure as negative in positive. For Tillich, this point is illustrated in the story of Jesus' temptations in the wilderness. Satan, the "principle of negativity,"[275] offers a way for Jesus to

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[271] Tillich suggests that the capacity in everything for good or for harm provides the proper conditions for evil to take hold and limit one's freedom. Tillich and Church, *The Essential Tillich*, 78.
[272] Our story is what Tillich calls our "mythological vision." *Systematic Theology III,* 102.
[273] *Ibid,* 102.
[274] Tillich, *Systematic Theology II*, 172.
[275] *Ibid*.

fulfill the desire for food, acknowledgment and power.[276] All three of these things are ambiguous in themselves, but the demons ask Jesus to activate victory over the conditions of finitude. Had Jesus chosen absolute transcendence over existential estrangement, he would have failed to be the Messiah.[277] Instead, Jesus as Messiah participates in the conditions of existence, representing the principle of positivity. Herein lies the profound insight of Tillich on the relationship of evil to good, and the power of the atonement: if the principle of the negative were to overcome the positive on which it depends for existence, the negative would necessarily destroy itself.

> Satan can never keep the Christ because the Christ represents principle of positivity in existence the principle of wholeness and being, into the conditions of estrangement. The betrayal of Satan is a widespread motif in the history of religion, because Satan, the principle of the negative, has no independent reality.[278]

The death of Jesus on the cross cuts off the power of destruction from its source. In Jesus as New Being, estrangement withers and dies. What once separated us from our Ground of life, from each other and from all living things, is no longer an obstacle. Tillich describes how Jesus' "self-surrendering love" awakens us to the "answering love which is certain that, in God, love, not wrath, is the last word."[279] To insist otherwise is a demonic distortion of the truth, and anticipates my interrogation of the symbols of Emmanuel ("God-with-us") and divine condemnation.

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[276] It is my interpretation Jesus resistance to the desire for acknowledgement while in the wilderness is the same resistance to the acknowledgement offered by the demons in the Gospel narratives who wish to name who he is. In light of my reading of Tillich, I read the gospel accounts of Jesus hushing acknowledgement not as revelations of incarnation, but further examples of the demonic temptation that pops up in the middle of good works.
[277] Jesus counters with a different vocation of participation: the manifestation of the divine participation in estrangement.
[278] Tillich, *Systematic Theology II*, 172.
[279] *Ibid*.

Because the demonic relies on the participation of the negative in the positive, Tillich argues that the "demonic's favored place is the holy."[280] It tempts us from within the very virtues and symbols we hold dear. Because the structure of the demonic is a structure of destruction, it leaves a trace by way of the destruction it causes.[281] Whether looking for "the tale of the snake," the kind of fruit of produced by the tree, or the trace of the demonic, our ability to assess what is going on is obscured by our own dim sight.[282] This failure is manifest in the shaming and abusive rhetoric of teachers at residential schools — they thought they were seeing a trace of the demonic in the student's bodies and culture. So, when a young residential school student goes to a nun because she has an infected burn, the result of manual labor, she is told that the burn is the devil in her.[283] When a Dene boy speaks in his own tongue, he is shamed for his "dirty language" and told that the devil is in his mouth. The trace of the demonic is not Indigenous language. The only thing we see on the tongues of children are the marks of our own torture. This illustrates how the demonic turns its 'trace' of destruction inward, back on itself.[284] Therefore, instead of seeing the 'trace' of the demonic in the destruction of children's lives, church workers see the very destruction they are themselves causing as signs of the demonic in the other.[285] We see this in the example of starvation and abuse in chapter 1: a

[280] Tillich, *Systematic Theology III,* 344.
[281] Here I refer back to the statistics of death and suicide in the aftermath of the schools that I referenced in the first section of this chapter.
[282] This is a core principal of discernment. St. Ignatius of Loyola refers to the trace of the demonic as the tale of the snake. I have referenced earlier the metaphor of the fruit and the tree, and will reference St. Ignatius again in the next chapter. St. Ignatius of Loyola, Ignatius, *The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola*, trans. Elder Mullin (New York: P.J. Kennedy & Sons, printers, 1914).
[283] This testimony is from a survivor whom I failed to name in my notes. See also similar survivor testimony on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada website: http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/File/2015/Findings/Survivors_Speak_2015_05_30_web_o.pdf.
[284] This is one manifestation of what I have cited Tillich as naming the self-destructive nature of destruction.
[285] A typical example of this kind of inversion is the former sexist stereotype that women are uneducable. The proof for this declaration was that women were not educated. Why were they not educated? Because they were

young girl is sexually assaulted, and then called a whore; young boy steals food because he is fed rotten meat, and called a thief. In these examples, like the example of the burn, the demonic cannibalizes its own trace.

Tillich looks for the trace of the demonic not on the tongues and habits of children (which reveal signs of abuse, not demons), but in the violence and destruction that arises when anything finite is granted ultimacy.[286] Tillich writes that the "self-elevating claim to ultimacy is the definition of the demonic."[287] Because matters of ultimacy define the church, Tillich describes the most basic temptation of churches as "the arrogance of finite holiness."[288] We see this in the testimony of Mark DeWolf who defends his father's good and loving residential school tenure. But when does this slide from the realm of ambiguity into the realm of the demonic? When do we being to "identif(y) (our) limited goodness with absolute goodness?"[289] Tillich warns that "If (we) interpret (our) paradoxical holiness as absolute holiness, (we) fall into a demonic hubris and (our) priestly, prophetic and royal functions toward the 'world' become tools of the pseudo-spiritual will-to-power."[290] It is typical of human experience to grant too much authority or purity to our religious institutions. This is part of the structure of ambiguity.

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not allowed in schools. I will provide example of this inversion later on using the example of Gabriel Marcel who makes the same observation of the techniques of degradation in Nazi death camps. Marcel, *Man Against Mass Society*.

[286] Tillich's trace of the demonic as absolutization offers a structure. There is also the tangible effects of the trace seen on the bodies and psyches of former students. In other words, the presence of a demonic structure produces not only the residue of evil, but an asphyxiation of good. Though suffering is inevitable under the conditions of estrangement, demonic suffering results in the degradation of the self, others or the earth. M. Shawn Copeland describes evil as a deprivation of good and observes that "suffering while never identical with evil, is inseparable from it." M. Shawn Copeland, "Wading Through Many Sorrows," 136.

[287] After hundreds of pages of speaking about the demonic, this is the first time Tillich offers a formal definition. Tillich, *Systematic Theology III*, 244.

[288] *Tillich, Systematic Theology II,* 216.

[289] *Ibid*, 51.

[290] *Ibid,* 216.

However, when we interpret the basic Christian symbols (such as God-with-us and divine condemnation) as beyond moral reproach, we facilitate a religiously generated Christian justification of cultural genocide. I will argue in the pages ahead that this kind of absolutization functions to justify the violence suffered by the children, and renders the children (and, to this day, the adults) invisible. I am proposing that the use of theological language and symbols for the degradation of children's bodies indicates the transition from ambiguity to the demonic. In the sections ahead, I will investigate two foundational theological symbols, Emmanuel and divine condemnation for their role in this transition.

Part III: Emmanuel, God-for-us

The symbol of Emmanuel brings good news into the liturgical rhythms of the church. Every year, I can hardly wait for the season of Advent, when the worn seeds of our life together burst with hope, and the story of God-with-us emerges once again in the fullness of its odd and delightfully unexpected narrative. Ours is the story of Love come near, participating in our existence in a particularly potent way. In all of life's joys and sorrows, hopes and ambiguities, God gathers up the shared human experience of estrangement and turns darkness in on itself. Where pain and fear have obscured our nearness to the divine and our shared destiny with all creation, Love comes like a torch. We are not abandoned to our dim sight, to our fragmented experiences of existence. Love, argues Tillich, is "a reunion of things separated," the exact opposite effect of estrangement.[291] We know Love by its ability to draw back together what was

[291] Tillich, *Love, Power and Justice* (London: Oxford University Press, 1954), 50.

never meant to be separated (by hate, by fear, by loneliness.)[292] Love comes for us. Love comes for the world. It is the best of stories, Emmanuel, God-for-us.

When the beauty and capaciousness of God-for-us becomes God-for-*us* — that is, rather than God-for-humanity, it becomes God-for-whatever small fragment of humanity with which I identify — the symbol of Emmanuel takes on a demonic structure. God-for-*us* bends the good news into God for whomever *we* are: our beliefs, our dress, our food, our way of working out our relation to the divine. There is a natural tension built into communal identity because the formal condition of any community is its concreteness. Any community exists through particular conditions that exist over and against other conditions. The religious community of my birth defines themselves by their affinity for the second person of the trinity. The province of my birth defines themselves by their affinity for a particular football team. We wear crosses or green shirts and nod at the folks in the coffee shop who know by our adornments that we are all in this together. Concreteness provides both greatness and distinction for everything from families to guilds to religious denominations.

When a community interprets this concreteness as an attitude of unique holiness which excludes others, particularity descends into the demonic.[293] We see this at work in Christian denominations. Christians who have an insight about Jesus (or the Holy Spirit or the participatory power of the sacraments) may contort their charism into the perspective that their insight is the only way to think about God. They are the only ones capable of receiving this

[292] Perhaps Tillich's clearest description of this is in *Love, Power and Justice*, where he suggests that "Reunion presupposes separation of that which belongs essentially together." And, "The absolutely strange cannot enter into a communion. But the estranged is striving for reunion." *Ibid*.

[293] I am arguing that this illustrates what Tillich describes as "…the demonic's self-affirmed greatness in the realm of the holy…" Tillich, *Systematic Theology III*, 244.

revelation. God has blessed *them.* God has chosen *them.* This version of spiritual exclusivity constitutes a failure of seeing. Tillich argues that the symbol of Emmanuel communicates that "The Christ is god-for-us! But God is not only God for us, he is for everything created."[294] This kind of exclusivity determines a failure of seeing that goes beyond the dim sight of estrangement because of the way we build a wall around our insight and cannot see past it.

More dangerously, the practice of exclusivity shapes our hearts and our minds so that we imagine others as excluded. We harbor the idea that others are not recipients of good news, the image of God, or the gifts of spiritual presence. When we see ourselves as the chosen ones, we see others in three ways: as lost souls for whom we feel compelled by grief to bring into our fold by any means possible, lost souls whose misery or servitude foreshadow the eternal justice of a righteous God, or as a reminder of all the blessings we get to keep exclusively for ourselves. Each one of these perspectives on others render losses or punishments (both temporally and ultimately) as deserved. When we take into our heart the idea that the good news of Emmanuel does *not* apply to certain aspects of the living world, we reject the deeper truth that we are connected not by solidarity or sameness, but by God's participation in us alongside God's participation in every created good.[295]

Tillich describes this danger when he speaks about the relationship of individualization to participation. He claims that it is impossible to become a fully developed individual self without the help of community because the self is constituted by encounter — by bumping up against the experiences, values and exclusivities of diverse others. It is "in

[294] Tillich, *Systematic Theology II,* 100.
[295] I quote Tillich in chapter 2 as saying "The divine life participates in every life as its ground and aim." Tillich, *Systematic Theology I, 245.*

resistance to other selves the person is born."[296] Without others around us to modify reality, we would recess into the illusion that our limited contribution to reality constitutes ultimate reality. "If (the individual self) did not meet the resistance of other selves, every self would try to make himself absolute."[297] Difference, and our experience of difference, keeps us from the destructive consequences of a demonically structured participation in greatness.[298] Just as the individual becomes healthy by being in relationship to others, groups become healthy by their encounter with other groups — not as a demonically separate set of "others," but as another community which can also call God 'Emmanuel.'

The symbol of Emmanuel recesses into a similar absolutizing structure in the sense of the collective self. If particular communities of meaning do not meet what Tillich refers to as the resistance of other communities of meaning, a community, like an individual, is tempted to make itself absolute. In religious communities, this manifests as heteronomy, "the authority claimed or exercised by a finite being in the name of the infinite."[299] We issue strategies to resist equal encounter with others, including the extreme examples of seclusion or force. However, when we remove opposition and absolutize authority, we employ the mechanisms of

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[296] *Ibid,* 177.
[297] *Ibid,* 77.
[298] Tillich, in another place, speaks to the inverse principle by what he refers to as the ambiguity of inclusiveness. The ambiguity of inclusiveness is built into monotheism itself. Tillich observes that the desire to give power and glory to one god "transforms everything else into mere objects", and encourages the denial of the power and dignity of all reality. Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology III,* 90. Another insight of Tillich on this point has to do with the power of questions and answers: "Reality, every bit of reality, is inexhaustible and points and points to the ultimate mystery of being itself which transcends the endless series of scientific questions and answers." Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology III,* 88.
[299] Tillich is writing this specifically to speak about the demonic appropriation of final revelation which he says does not make the claim to power. "Far from being heteronomous and authoritarian, final revelation liberates." Tillich, *Systematic Theology I,* 148.

totalitarian thinking in order to protect our own interests.[300] Under the influence of this kind of thinking, 'mission' becomes less interested in respectful relationships and common good, and more interested in religious (and cultural) domination. Cree theologian Ray Aldred points out that this impulse to treat others as objects instead of subjects — limiting another person's agency and increasing our own, often for their 'benefit' — is the habit that grounds paternalism, a term familiar to many Canadian Christians because practices of decolonization have begun to suss it out.[301] The logic of conversion gains traction (in part) because we imagine uneven ground. We construct ourselves as the anointed. We construct others as diminished, less than, inferior as recipients of divine revelation and goodness. For Tillich, this constitutes a complete reversal of the symbol of Emmanuel; there is no love where subjects are turned into objects because the subject/object structure excludes participation.[302] Without the wisdom of difference, the collective self not only sees itself as the particular recipient of God's good news and the graces that follow, but also creates a conceptual separation between "God-for-me" and everything/everyone else. Womanist theologian Emilie Townes describes this as the "fantastic hegemonic imagination."[303] *We* are on the high ground. *Others* sink so low that they fall out of sight. There are all sorts of harms justified by the segregation of individual and collective selves, including techniques of degradation that I will mention shortly. But I wish to flag that even when

[300] Hannah Arendt provides and extensive and in depth analysis into the mechanics of totalitarianism. Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism.*

[301] This has come up in conversation with Cree theologian Ray Aldred, and anticipates some of the published work I expect him to release in the next few years.

[302] Tillich bolsters Ray Aldred's insight with his observation that, "To the degree in which the subject-object structure is overcome, observation is replaced by *participation* (which includes observation) and conclusion is replaced by insight (which includes conclusions)." Tillich, *Systematic Theology III,* 259.

[303] The full quotation is "The fantastic hegemonic imagination is deep within us, and none of us can escape its influence by simply wishing to do so or thinking that our ontological perch exempts us from its spamming oppressive hierarchies." Emilie Townes, "Everydayness: Beginning Notes on Dismantling the Cultural Production of Evil" in *Womanist Ethics and the Cultural Production of Evil* (New York: Palsgrave MacMillan, 2006), 159.

we as individuals do not perceive ourselves as paternalistic or abusive, we still participate in communities of meaning. Reverend Ted DeWolf, with his love of the children and service to Jesus, was complicit in sustaining the idea of what TRC Commissioner Justice Murray Sinclair describes publically as the irrelevance of Indigenous culture. At the most foundational level, the heteronomous separation of what Martin Buber calls the "I-you"[304] develops in both individuals and communities divisive habits of mind.[305] When individuals and communities imagine themselves as essentially separate, this becomes a pattern ingrained in the imagination that, like all habits, go on to "emerge without permission".[306] Townes argues that it is the normalization of division within our imagination that "holds structural evil in its place."[307]

The practice of divisive habits of mind shows itself in the history of residential schools from its conception. Buber contrasts the mutuality of the I and you with the objectification of the I-it. This I-it split, racially constructed, found a welcome home in the Canadian Christianity that embraced the colonial mandate of assimilative education. "Kill the Indian, save the man"

[304] This is Buber's I/thou; or Levinas's Other. Levinas was somewhat (though respectfully) critical of Buber on this point – more accurately I/thou. See Martin Buber. *I and Thou*, 2d ed. (New York: Scribner, 1958) and Emmanuel Lévinas. *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1992), chapter 4.

[305] Habits work by housing a set of patterns in our memory that a triggered by specific cues. When we develop a pattern of thinking of ourselves as separate, this pattern shapes our lives to such an extent that we no longer have to consciously activate exclusionary behavior. When the symbol of Emmanuel meets the fragility that turns our gaze inward, our actions and thoughts eventually defer to this consolation, even when it blocks the deeper truth of the principle of participation and separates us off as individuals and communities. Charles Duhigg writes that "Habits emerge without our permission." He speaks to how we develop habits, and how we are able to replace habits with new ones. Though he writes from a sociological perspective, I am interested in how these principals apply to ambiguous religious practices. See Charles Duhigg, *The Power of Habit* (New York: Random House, 2012), 69.

[306] *Ibid.*

[307] This is based on an article written by students at Luther College in Deborah, Iowa, on a lecture given by Emilie Townes in 2007 entitled "Some Notes on Aunt Jemima and the Imagination." This is no longer available online. Portions of Townes' lecture made its way into *Womanist Theological Ethics*. Katie G. Cannon, Emilie M. Townes and Angela D. Sims, *Womanist Theological Ethics.*

meant that "Indian" and "man" were mutually exclusive.[308] Our language was right, theirs was wrong. Our religion was good, theirs was bad. Our way of life was civilized, theirs was uncivilized. We were prepared to offer "God-for-you" if "you" were willing to look, talk and act like "God-for-me." Left unchecked, the demonically structured symbol of Emmanuel further distorts into two directions: in a practiced certainty that the finite differences and divisions between us and 'them' will be eternally upheld; and in rendering the promise of good news non-ultimate by adding social or racial conditions to salvation. Through the lens of these distortions, sameness becomes identified with goodness. As Tillich describes, "people have identified their limited goodness with absolute goodness."[309] We not only fail to recognize the beauty of our unique responses to the land and sky, or to the way we forge communities and ritualize change, we also close ourselves off to the exuberance of wisdom and goodness that God's participation in the plurality of creation reveals to us. Closing off to the wisdom of others and absolutizing divisions allows communities to conceive of themselves not only as the *particular* bearers of holiness but also the *only* bearers of holiness -- and others as *not* the bearers of holiness.

The demonically structured symbol of Emmanuel, with its "hegemonic imagination," becomes an incubation space for the symbol of divine condemnation.[310] When our judgment of others is subsumed into God's judgment, we absolutize divisions. Judgment then morphs from the (so-called) pragmatic harshness of assimilation into an interpretation of cultural others as

[308] As per my reference in chapter 1, this is a quotation from American residential school history, Captain Richard Pratt, though it often gets cited as part of the Canadian residential school history.
[309] Tillich, *Systematic Theology II*, 51.
[310] Emilie Townes, "Everydayness," 159.

deserving condemnation simply on the basis of their non-elect existence. Assimilative violence becomes utterly destructive violence, of which Casey Eagle Speaker's childhood abuse is emblematic. Eagle Speaker's experience of cultural degradation descends, his first evening, into a destruction that imitates the eternal condemnation by inflicting *not* a punishment directed at some ostensible good, but a total violence whose aim is the psychic and spiritual unmaking of its victims. This illuminates how viewing oneself as the bearer of holiness has a direct relationship to how we demonize others.[311] We contort what I will describe in the following section as the demands of justice into infinite condemnation. I will argue in the pages ahead that with the idea of eternal damnation, images of God's temporal punishment give way to infinite or utterly unfettered torture aimed at dismantling personhood itself. In the testimony of residential school survivors, the demonically structured symbols of Emmanuel and divine condemnation both draw on the destruction of identity and difference: when hatefully constructed, identity and difference empty into "deserving punishment," unleashing a frenzy of cruelty that is difficulty to understand or imagine.[312]

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[311] Ronald Niezen is the only source I have found who publishes portions of interviews with Oblates about the TRC process. While the early rhetoric of the church, especially the denominational Annual Reports cited by John Milloy, suggests the relationship between mission and the demonization of Indigenous practices (there are many "before and after" pictures used as signs of Christian victory, not only the famous one of Thomas Moore.) One evidence of the continuation of the "us" and "them" orientation of the church is the orientation of either suspicion or outright disdain for survivor stories. Niezen describes the outrage of the priest's he interviewed when speaking on the settlement process, which they say encouraged people to make "false accusations" because of the monetary reparations structure. Niezen asked the group of eight priests, "Do you think the testimony that we are hearing today [at the TRC hearings] is influenced by the compensation regime that it all started with?" To which three replied, "Money talks. There is no doubt about it." "It's money, money, money, money." One spoke in the voice of a recipient of compensation: "Wow! Whoooo! I could buy myself a truck. I could even buy half a dozen!" Niezen, *Truth and Indignation,* 50, 51.

[312] Richard Behn from Fort Nelson describes being taken to residential school at age 5. Not only was he told sitting with his sisters was a sin and sexually abused, but he was also forced to endure the kind of identity and culture shaming I describe in the demonic distortion of Emmanuel. He describes that the supervisors would line all the boys up, and pull them forward one by one. They "started telling us who we were, what we were, and how worthless we are. The only thing they could pin is that because of [the sexual abuse] I had bathroom problems

Part IV: Divine Condemnation

Histories of hell and punishment

I have argued that survivor testimony indicates that teachers, priests and workers consistently direct symbols of evil and divine condemnation toward the residential school children.[313] In the testimony that I heard at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission national events, all but one former student was the recipient of existential cultural-based shaming or pronouncements of damnation. Threats of eternal suffering caused such trauma that a former student and Anglican priest Andrew Wesley described how he was called into a hospice care facility because two men, both successful and respected elders in their respective first nations, were terrified of going to hell as they lay dying. The story of these elders illustrates that demonically structured theology itself, even without other abuses, causes suffering and therefore merits a careful renunciation. As I argued using the testimony of Mark DeWolf, one does not have to commit personal acts of abuse in order to participate in the degradation and condemnation of others.[314] I will argue in the pages ahead that even beyond the already deplorable contribution to psychic suffering, the idea that another person essentially deserves infinite damnation creates the conditions necessary for radical horrors. How then do we reconcile this with the prevalent images of hell and torment in biblical tradition? I turn first to

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which he detailed graphically in front of everyone." The supervisors then proceeded to mock him. Richard Behn, Commissioners Sharing Panel, TRC Vancouver National Event, September 21, 2013.

[313] Former residential school students who agree to offer public testimony also agree to limit their story to highlights that will fit into a twenty-minute time slot. Those of us bearing witness to survivor testimony understand that what we hear in those twenty minutes has risen to the top of several years of memory, and remains significant to the life of the survivor.

[314] This echoes the point I made earlier based on Mark DeWolf's testimony about the dedication and kindness of his father, Reverend Ted DeWolf. He may be innocent of personal acts of abuse, while still contributing to what Casey Eagle Speaker described as a "traumatic cycle." This removal of oneself from the participation in communities of meaning is something I will address in my conclusion. The phrase "traumatic cycle" was cited previously in this dissertation as quoted in Trevor Solway, "Telly James."

four thinkers, Elaine Pagels, Megan Henning, Augustine of Hippo and Paul Ricoeur, who provide insight into the ways the idea of hell and punishment evolve historically.

Elaine Pagels, in her work *The Origin of Satan,* describes the role of the symbol of demons in the formation of Christian identity and influence.[315] The idea of the demonic evolved from its roots as an entity constructed as a way to acknowledge the mysterious workings of the natural world and into a symbol wielded for the purposes of institutional power. Pagels follows the trail of this evolution, and maps the habit of mind that forges a pattern of demonizing others. Early Christians sought to differentiate their identity in a pluralistic world, and an articulation of uniqueness and difference was essential to this process. However, what overtakes differentiation is a "practice of opposition," and Christians begin to habituate the idea of others as threat. Who counts as a threat shifts with time ("first other Jews, then pagans, and later dissident Christians called heretics") but the demonization of an opponent becomes the initial tactic of power.[316] Eventually, the idea of others as threat dominates the Christian imagination, and conflict and challenge are interpreted as moral affronts. In other words, groups of people are not just our enemies, but "God's enemies."[317] Jews, pagans and bold women are not just a challenge but are forces of evil — and as such, identified with Satan.[318] When enemies are identified with evil, Christians are able to distort practices of discipline and violence as practices of justice. Pagels observes this and notes that the tactic of moral demonizing "has proven extraordinarily effective throughout Western history in consolidating the identity of Christian

[315] Elaine Pagels, *The Origins of Satan* (NY: Vintage Books, 1995).
[316] *Ibid,* xvii.
[317] *Ibid,* xix.
[318] *Ibid,* xxiii.

groups; the same history also shows that it can justify hatred, even mass slaughter."[319] Pagels tracks the evolution of the way in which symbols of evil fortify efforts to make our own constructions of power and identity infinite. She asks her readers to "consider Satan as a reflection of how we perceive ourselves and those we call 'others.' Satan has, after all, made a kind of profession of being the 'other;' as so Satan defines negatively what we think of as human."[320] Pagels' analysis suggests that the residential school practice of dehumanizing the 'other' group is a common Christian practice. This is an ancient habit of Christianity that we have honed to an art through sharpening our understanding of Satan and demons to tools of destruction that are masqueraded as holy.

While Elaine Pagels contributes to my understanding of how the symbol of Emmanuel, God-with-us gets co-opted as an absolutized form of separation, Meghan Henning illuminates the problem of divine condemnation. In her work "Educating Early Christians through the Rhetoric of Hell," Henning charts how Jews (Hebrew Bible), Greeks and Romans all used the afterlife as a rhetorical tool to call forth a particular ethical response from their followers.[321] Building on this, early Christians used the notion of an afterlife as way to "establish, fortify, and expand their fledgling communities."[322] With an analysis of the needs of forming communities that compliments Pagels' observations, Henning describes how 'threat' was used to discipline believers. As the rhetoric of a torturous afterlife shapes the imagination of early Christian communities, theologians begin to shape biblical texts on divine condemnation into an idea of

[319] *Ibid,* xxiii.
[320] *Ibid,* xix.
[321] Meghan Henning, *Educating Early Christians through the Rhetoric of Hell* (Tubigen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014).
[322] *Ibid,* 3.

“hell.” Henning pays particular attention to the apocalyptic writers and early church fathers who drew on Matthew’s imagery of "the outer darkness where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth" to develop the idea of hell.[323] Of particular import to my interest in the absolutization of condemnation, Henning observes that the rhetoric of ‘hell,’ with all its threatening and gory imagery, did not serve the purposed of rejecting or punishing people eternally. Henning describes the function of the rhetoric of eschatological punishment as detailing "ethical and cultural boundaries" for early Christians.[324] In other words, hell was didactic; the goal was ethical, not moral. Writings on the Christian apocalypses proved remarkably effective, and were embraced with indiscriminate enthusiasm. John Chrysostom effuses about the pedagogical effectiveness of the idea hell, which "frightens usefully.”[325] Readers were taken on tours of the horrors of hell which Henning describes as the curriculum for “the consequences of disbelief and the ethical and cultural requirements of early Christian *paideia.”* Hell produced an inward gaze that motivated the Christian to relinquish vice and purify their focus and commitment.

A notable shift comes with Augustine of Hippo who turns the gaze of hell outwards in judgment toward others. Henning suggests that Augustine bears down on the images from Matthew for their punitive usefulness. What Henning describes as Augustine's obsession for intensifying the New Testament images of hell and absolutizing the consequences of bad behavior parts ways with the pedagogical intent of even fervent hell-users such as Chrysostom. Augustine expands the idea of hell to suggest that "people must be punished for all eternity

[323] *Ibid,* 173.
[324] *Ibid,* 173.
[325] *Ibid,* 218.

because the concept of *lex talionis* is not severe enough."[326] With Augustine, the purifying power of hell is traded for the punishment of hell. This marks a difference of kind, not degree. Augustine theologizes the idea of absolute hate, insisting that people who refuse God are pre-destined for hell, and that nothing, "not even prayer," will be able to save them. "But if the church were certified who those are, who, though they are still abiding in this life, are yet predestined to go with the devil into eternal fire, then for them she could no more pray than for him."[327]

Interestingly, Augustine's vision for annihilation had little appeal to his peers. Gregory the Great aligns himself with Augustine's effort to perpetually condemn Origen (who refuses the idea of hell entirely), but apart from that, Augustine's outsized version of eternal damnation gained little traction for several hundred years. With the establishment and necessary fortification of the institutional church, the punitive logic of hell is picked up again in the middle ages and employed with renewed vigor from everyone from John Calvin to Jonathan Edwards. Calvin resuscitated Augustine's theology of double predestination — some humans are pre-destined to hell — which extends the evolution of judicial punishment into eternal punishment.[328] This gained long-lasting traction in the West. Given my earlier overview of Tillich's use of the demonic, it is worth noting that the logic of this legacy of annihilation in theologians like Augustine and Calvin characterizes evil as having an independent existence,

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[326] *Ibid,* 220.

[327] This is an odd, but accurately cited, translation of Augustine into English. Augustine, *City of God*, trans. William M.Green, William Chase Greene, Philip Levine, George Englert McCracken, Eva Matthews Sanford, David S. Wiesen (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1957), 21:24.

[328] See Calvin's Institutes of the Christian Faith, particularly Book 3, Chapter 21, *Of eternal election, by which God has predestined some to salvation, and other to destruction.* John Calvin. Institutes of the Christian Religion, trans. Mortimer J. Adler (Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1990), book 3, chapter 21.

and capable of overwriting the divine image. There is a separation of evil from existence (whose features are all finite) and evil gets relegated to the realm of the essential. In this sense, evil is not woven into the ambiguity of existence and therefore finite; it is symbolically essentialized — willed eternally and enacted as unending separation from God. A theologian like Tillich rejects this as a demonic distortion of justice. But for Calvin and other Protestant and Catholic Christians, it provides the theological backdrop for the identification of others as essentially evil, and the reconfiguration of 'justice' as condemning an infinite flaw to an unending punishment. As I will argue in the pages ahead, this 'flaw' that God condemns is not moral or ontological. As with expressions of racism in residential schools, where the 'crime' is not being a white Christian, predestination removes moral calculus from condemnation. One is simply predetermined to be worthy of eternal condemnation before one was born by the mysterious fiat of God.[329] This innate unworthiness makes condemnation 'just.'

The symbolism of justice as punishment is taken up by Paul Ricoeur. When Ricoeur tracks the idea of punishment as the correct response to wrongdoing, he tracks the distortion of the same idea (and practices) of purification that we understand as the goal of the early Christian 'tours of hell.' Ricoeur suggests that the ambiguity of purity plays into questions of how a physical evil might "equal, compensate for, and cancel out a moral evil."[330] Ricoeur suggests that we as moral beings struggle with how to balance the split that occurs in our own selves when our wills are asked to be judge and culprit at the same time. We overcome this split by

[329] "…no one is free from sin in your sight, not even an infant whose span of earthly life is but a single day." Augustine, *Confessions,* book 1.
[330] Paul Ricoeur, "Interpretation of the Myth of Punishment," in *The Conflict of Interpretations: Essays in Hermeneutics* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1974), 355.

equating crime and punishment. Ricoeur likens correlation to the split between "pollution and purification."[331] If a stain is something that is perceived as a kind of attack on order — an order that has been constructed by prohibitions — then removal involves the reestablishment of order. Purity can be restored by ritual acts, such a goat into the wilderness, sacrificing a lamb, reparations to a victim of loss, fasting. However, when rectification gets translated into punishment (and thus the *myth* of punishment), physical pain (or perhaps mental pain) somehow serves to restore purity or cancel wrongdoing. What had been once accomplished ritually now requires the application of physical pain. As punishment gets theologized — woven into the relation of eternal deity — it becomes transformed into eternal or unending suffering. Thus the excruciating passages in Augustine explaining how something finite (the human body) can receive infinite pain.

Though Ricoeur does not name the consolidation of power by the institutional church nor the punitive imagination of John Calvin, both of these justified tactics that ensured that religious purity was established and maintained.[332] Tillich observes that Calvin is so obsessed with the idea of purification that Calvin equates cleanliness with holiness.[333] Anything that is rendered "unclean," then, is seen as a violation of holiness. The holy and the unclean must be in separate realms. For Calvin, whose doctrine of predestination functions as an assertion of essential uncleanness, it makes sense that a cancellation of impurity must be an absolute cancellation.[334] Ricoeur calls this the "myth of punishment" — the evolution of the idea justice

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[331] *Ibid,* 356.
[332] Tillich writes this leads to an ambiguous "contrast between the Holy and the unclean." Tillich, *Systematic Theology I*, 216.
[333] *Ibid*.
[334] This is a reference to his double predestination mentioned previously. Tillich, *Systematic Theology I*, 216. Calvin, *Institutes,* book 3, chapter 21.

as restorative to the ideal of justice as punitive.[335] Much of Ricoeur's analysis draws on the Apostle Paul's radical alternative to the mythological power of punishment by the logic and efficacy of grace. As I shift towards articulating how the symbol of divine condemnation works in the testimony of residential school survivors, I first point out how the non-static life of the Christian symbols of sin, hell and justice inevitably inform practice in particular ways. Ricoeur's analysis, notwithstanding this biblical dismantling of the myth of punishment, illuminates how the idea of humans as deserving of punishment becomes codified in judicial and theological language. We as Christians inherit this codification. I will argue that as we assimilate the principle of 'deserving of punishment,' our Christian practice degrades into outsized abuse.

Divine condemnation and the relationship to justice

I have indicated that symbols related to divine condemnation, such as hell, sin, and punishment, have populated Christian thought and practice variously. It is inaccurate to assume that the idea of humanity as 'deserving punishment' represents the whole of Christian theology. Drawing on Tillich's insight that finite symbols are part of the ambiguity of life and can be used to create or destroy, I turn now to the ways in which the symbol of divine condemnation has been used in relationship to the symbol of justice. This does not mean that I propose that we reclaim the use of 'divine condemnation.' Tillich argues that "a religious symbol is true if it adequately expresses the correlation of revelation in which some person stands."[336] The

[335] Justice as restoration is known as the Platonic ideal of justice. However, much biblical thinking about justice is fundamentally restorative as well. Even when punishment is present, its function is restorative. The Hebrew bible in particular seems to combine ritual and punishment as ways to restore harmony. Part of the gospel is an attack on the very idea of punishment as a method of restoration.
[336] Tillich, *Systematic Theology I*, 240.

language of condemnation has been wielded for harm for so long that it no longer adequately reflects that to which it points. It points, when it is not demonically structured, to the rejection of anything that stands in the way of loving, consensual connections. Rejecting harm and restoring the means necessary for flourishing is what we call justice — as Tillich says, justice is the structural form of love.[337] The principle of divine condemnation points to the ontological understanding that anything that rejects the divine image in another human being, by the principle of participation, rejects the divine.[338] Goodness is utterly incompatible with injustice. If we must use the language of condemnation, may we garner the sense of urgency that comes with it in order to awaken from indifference and act to level the ground on which we all stand. The kind of dim-sighted, sluggish response to the degradation of children at residential school witnesses to the loss of the fire and fury of justice. Tillich insists that the just aim of history includes the divine banishment of the demonic and therefore the divine banishment of destruction.[339] In light of this, I will speak first to the ways in which symbols associated with divine condemnation can be used for justice. Then I will speak to what happens when the loving work of justice is perverted by a demonic structure that exacerbates harm.

I am proposing that we do, even today, recognize a certain form of divine condemnation as an appropriate response to injustice. God's participation in creation as the ground of life means that we intuitively claim that every person has individual integrity, value and agency —

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[337] Tillich, *Systematic Theology II*, 174.
[338] Anything that shares the divine image, really.
[339] Tillich speaks of how the demonic will be rendered impotent, unable to prevent the "aim of history". This connects curiously with Tillich's section on the atonement that I referenced earlier where he describes the metaphorical starvation of the demonic when it cuts off its life source (the good, in Jesus as the Christ). Whether the demonic destroys itself or is banished, it does not have the capacity to impede the narrative arc of salvation ultimately. Tillich, *Systematic Theology III*, 373.

or in the language of Tillich, the "power of being."[340] It is this dynamic power of being that Tillich identifies as humanity's intrinsic claim for justice. "Divine love includes the justice which acknowledges and preserves the freedom and the unique character of the beloved."[341] Differences in power of any kind can produce struggles that can be generative.[342] But used to diminish, differences in power can also be destructive. We, as Canadian white Christians, had the power of western education to use and to give. When any person or community uses their particular surplus of resources for the reduction or destruction of another, this is injustice.[343] Whether through literature, film or lived experience, all of us have witnessed how the forced reduction of power wounds people, and in so doing harms their created wholeness.[344]

Radical harm, such as the horrors of child abuse or death camps, degrades human beings to such a degree that both the wounds and the wounding surpass comprehension. Claude Lanzmann gives an account of this in his eight and a half hour film *Shoah* by saying that that there is an obscenity in the project of understanding *why* the Jews were killed because such a question implies that there is a rational explanation.[345] Lanzmann understands that radical harm voids logic. Analytic philosopher Susan Brison describes radical harm's cognitive rupture with the mathematical metaphor of a surd, a "non-sensical entry — into the series of events in one's life, making it impossible to carry on with the series."[346] Witnesses to such degradation such as

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[340] Tillich, *Love, Power and Justice,* 67.
[341] Tillich*, Systematic Theology I*, 283.
[342] Tillich would say 'creative.' See *Ibid,* 253.
[343] Tillich, *Love, Power and Justice,* 88.
[344] This is not wholeness as constituted by societal norms, but rather wholeness in the sense of unity of the seemingly disparate parts of the self and society. This is why Tillich, along with the world's wisdom traditions, see healing as overcoming separation.
[345] Lanzmann, "The Obscenity of Understanding: An Evening with Claude Lanzmann," *American Imago* 48 (Winter 1991), 473-95. In the United States, *Shoah* runs for 503 minutes.
[346] Susan Brison, *Aftermath: Violence and the Remaking of a Self* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2002), 103.

Lanzmann and Brison observe what Tillich observed: that the consequences of evil become not only incomprehensible but also self-destructive — the degradation turns inwards, severing the subject from her own self and from the world around her.[347] Gabriel Marcel describes how harm not only denies its subject self-sovereignty, but as Simone Weil puts it, "imprints on the soul" the feeling of culpability.[348] If life survives the isolation and indifference of suffering, degradation orchestrates its cruelty by forcing people to despair of themselves, accepting the untruth that wounds demonstrate worthlessness. All the hatred to which they were subjected turns inward, and their own soul continues the work of decimation that was started by the power-full. We recall this kind of deep degradation in the testimony of Shirley Waskewitch who spoke of how her ongoing self-destructive acts participate in the shame and violence imposed on her by Sister Ludevick at St. Anthony's residential school in Onion Lake.[349] Waskewitch witnesses to the way suffering transforms her own self into an accomplice of pain and a parody

[347] Lanzmann and a host of post-Holocaust writers including Levinas, Marcel, Weil, Elie Wiesel, Ruth Kluger, and Art Spiegelman). Primo Levi (Survival in Auschwitz) is particularly adept at describing the disintegration of life under degradation. Paul Tillich writes of the self-destructiveness of evil. "As structures of evil they are structures of self-destruction." *Systematic Theology II*, 69. See also *Systematic Theology II,* 108. Simone Weil in *Waiting for God* speaks about the difference between suffering and affliction. The latter involves not only what I describe as severing from oneself and the world around her, but also as the experience of the absence of God, and the agony of the soul's participation in that absence. Lanzmann, "The Obscenity of Understanding: An Evening with Claude Lanzmann." Emmanuel Levinas, *Collected Philosophical Papers,* trans. A. Lingis (Dordrecht: Martinus Nijhoff, 1987). Gabriel Marcel, *Man Against Mass Society*. Simone Weil, "The Love of God and Affliction," *Waiting for God*, trans. Emma Craufurd (New York: HarperCollins, 1951). Elie Wiesel, *Night, trans. Marion Wiesel* (New York, NY: Hill and Wang, a Division of Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2006). Ruth Kluger, *Still Alive: A Holocaust Girlhood Remembered* (New York: Feminist Press at the City University of New York, 2001). Art Spiegelman, *Maus: A Survivor's Tale* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1997). Primo Levi, *Survival in Auschwitz:* the Nazi assault on humanity, trans. S. J. Woolf (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996).

[348] Gabriel Marcel describes this in his writing on techniques of degradation. For a further description of his exquisitely perceptive work on suffering, see Gabriel Marcel, *Man Against Mass Society*. Germaine to the witness of survivor testimony, Marcel makes the observation that any distinction between the intent to humiliate and the intent to degrade quickly vanishes (page 33). See also Simone Weil, "The Love of God and Affliction," *Waiting for God* (New York: HarperCollins, 1951), 69.

[349] I cited Shirley Waskewitch in chapter 1. Shirley Waskewitch, Commissioners Sharing Panel, TRC Saskatchewan National Event, June 23, 2012.

of the hopes she has for herself. Emmanuel Levinas calls this phenomenon "the servile soul," and describes how this ultimate desecration of autonomy sends the victim into the arms of that which degrades her.[350] From there, the violence moves outward, and victims perpetuate their harms on others. I heard many survivors of residential school talk about degradation's turns in terms of 'lateral violence.' Our participation in our own oppression extends to those within reach, even those we love, and communities begin to carry out the harm on each other that we first imposed on them.

Divine condemnation, in its healthy meaning, is a rejection of these kinds of obscene contortions of freedom — from the experience of the self as disparate parts (child, victim, survivor) to the full annihilation of the free subject.[351] The symbols we associate with divine condemnation (such as judgment and wrath) harness the urgency of divine justice. Those of us who find ourselves in locations of privilege can miss this point, setting what Martin Luther King Jr. called "a timetable for another man's freedom."[352] Radical harm demands a *swift* intervention on our part. Both King and Tillich understand that the reduction of another person's power of being as injustice. Justice is the structural form of the good news of Emmanuel. As Tillich's structural form of love, justice looses bonds and sets captives free. Justice restores to creatures their capacity to recognize God's participation in them.[353] Love as justice channels wrath and judgment in the direction of wholeness. Justice is action. More specifically, it is participating in the power of God to re-unify all, within or without, that has

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[350] Levinas, *Collected Philosophical Papers,* 16.
[351] Or in the case of the experience of survivors who internalized radical harm: mother, thief, whore, dirty indian, city girl.
[352] Dr. King contrasts a negative peace, which is the absence of tension, with a positive peace, which is the presence of justice. Martin Luther King, Jr., *Letter from the Birmingham Jail* (New York: HarperCollins, 1994).
[353] For Tillich, "justice not only affirms and lures; it also resists and condemns." Tillich, *Systematic Theology I*, 283.

been taken apart. For Womanist theologian Delores Williams, justice is the good news of Christ, the work of salvation. Williams describes salvation as "active opposition to all forms of violence against humans (male and female), against nature (including non-human animals), against the environment and the land."[354] Indifference to the degradation of creation in any form undermines Love, and in so doing, enacts a kind of radical atheism.[355] Without participation in the divine condemnation of injustice, we deny the ground of life, the Good beyond Being.

Divine condemnation without end

If we use Tillich's understanding of the absolutizing structure of the demonic, we see the transition from a finite condemnation of a finite injustice into condemnation with no end. The alienation of divine condemnation involves steps that trigger the insightful interrogation of residential school survivor Doris Young whose question I raise again: "How do we hear their stories so we understand how they did what they did?"[356] When Doris Young implores the audience at the TRC National Research Centre Forum before much of the testimony was gathered, she is asking, in part, how it is that Christianity becomes involved in what Gabriel Marcel termed in a different context "techniques of degradation."[357] Doris Young asks us how we as Christian teachers and religious workers "know to treat them as less than animals?" The distorted application of the symbol of divine condemnation proved a powerful inspiration and technique for the degradation of school children. The demonically structured symbol of divine

[354] Delores Williams, "Straight Talk, Plain Talk" in *Embracing the Spirit: Womanist Perspectives on Hope, Salvation, and Transformation,* ed. Emilie Townes (New York: Orbis Books, 1997), 118, 119.
[355] Thus the 'demonic' misappropriation of religious symbols is a kind of atheism in action, if not belief.
[356] I have used Doris Young's questions throughout, and as the epitaph for chapter 2.
[357] Gabriel Marcel, *Man Against Mass Society,* 30.

condemnation has collaborators. We think that Emmanuel is God-for-*us.* We misread divine power as might. We remove urgency from justice. We replace appreciation of difference with seething hostility. We separate You from I. From this interplay of theological mistakes an attitude toward residential school children emerges. Students are told their language and practices are evil and thus condemned by God. They are told they are going to hell. The very existence of non-European heritage and non-Christian culture becomes an outrage against God. For someone like Tillich, God's power is erotic — drawing us, wooing us, enabling us to flourish — it is the ground that gives life. "This love awakens in man the answering love which is certain that love not wrath, is the last word."[358] Yet in the mouths and hands of residential school workers, symbols of divine condemnation become alienated from the commitments of love and subsequent promises of justice, and employed as a means of despair. Our theology became a destroyer of life. Tillich's and Marcel's insights into life under such demonically structured communities of meaning suggest that in the history of residential schools, theology itself initiates the techniques of degradation. Symbols of divine condemnation become a house of mirrors for the demonic, warping judgment into punishment -- a punishment without limit and without end. We imagine others as deserving retribution both on earth and eternally. We imagine others are not included in the grace and goodness of creation, or of God's will. We harbor the idea of absolute hate. It is no wonder that an atmosphere of divine condemnation accelerates the self-destructive nature of evil.

[358] This is a repeated refrain in this dissertation. Tillich, *Systematic Theology II,* 172. Perhaps even more germane to this discussion is Tillich's description of *agape* under the topic of The Reality of God. There is says that "the *agape* type of love…seeks the other because of the ultimate unity of being with being within the divine ground." Tillich, *Systematic Theology I,* 281.

I am suggesting that the theological meaning of condemnation distorts and jumps tracks when it shifts from "salvation" — that is, what Tillich thinks of as loving into healing and wholeness — to absolute rejection. Healthy condemnation is divine justice calling out injustice. We see this in the prophets, in civil rights, in Tillich's writing against nazism.[359] Such condemnation is characterological. In residential schools, we see absolute condemnation of a person as such. That is, as the world saw in the extermination of Jews, the evil to be condemned was not an act or disposition. It was not a crime or even a sin. It was the very existence of this non-Caucasian culture. The 'sin' does not call out for justice, but for a destruction and exclusion. We see condemnation in the service of racism and colonialism. We see condemnation that requires not only a cutting off, but also punishment.[360] In other words, the blasphemy that has occurred in the existence of Indigenous peoples can only be made right by punishment. Since children are the seeds of this existence, it is against them that the worst horrors of punishment were measured out. The 'crime' of the children was not essentially that they spoke Indigenous languages or wore their hair long. It was that language, clothing, life itself represented the existence of non-Christian culture. To extend Tillich's argument, it was a blasphemy that challenged the universality of the divine providence. Since it was against infinite reality, God, it must be carried out to an infinite degree. Absolute condemnation requires absolute punishment — a punishment that Gabriel Marcel describes as intending a kind of excruciating inner disintegration.[361] The techniques so successfully deployed by Nazis lived in spirit in the

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[359] See Paul Tillich, *Against the Third Reich: Paul Tillich's Wartime Addresses to Nazi Germany*, eds. Ronald H. Stone and Matthew Lon Weaver (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998).
[360] This is the insight of Paul Ricoeur in his interpretation of the myth of punishment. Paul Ricoeur, "Interpretation of the Myth of Punishment," in *The Conflict of Interpretations: Essays in Hermeneutics* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1974).
[361] Gabriel Marcel, *Man Against Mass Society*, 61.

residential schools. We see this similarity in Marcel's citation of Madame Lewinsky of Auschwitz who articulates the strategy of condemnation by saying, "There is no need to kill a prisoner in this camp in order to make him suffer; it is enough to give him a kick so that he falls in the mud. What rises up is not a human being, it is an absurd monster, plastered with filth."[362] This kind of humiliation and debasement floods the testimony of residential schools survivors. Casey Eagle Speaker describes, "I was taught everything about being an Indian was wrong. It did not create a civilized Christian human being. It created an angry, raging animal. Full of hate. Dead of feelings."[363] Children were not only told they were going to hell, but displayed naked after wetting the bed, forced to eat their vomit, electrocuted for the entertainment their flailing limbs provided, cattle-prodded in the genitals.[364] Christian workers tortured them until they accepted their own debasement just as Gabriel Marcel describes. They were condemned and punished not because of guilty acts (they were children!), but as representatives of vile and rejected people. That a five year-old such as Casey Eagle Speaker can call forth such horrific violence indicates the demonic theological tactics at play. Children are innocents. They are free of any crime or wrongdoing. As such, they are more perfect exemplars of *ontological guilt*. Absolute condemnation is ingeniously applied to the Indigenous children of Canada, and it is done in the name of God.

I have argued that in residential schools, a demonically distorted theology of God-for-*us* and divine condemnation was used to inflict devastating physical and psychological damage. We

[362] Gabriel Marcel quoting Madame Lewinsky's "Vigny Mois a Auschwitz," in *Man Against Mass Society*, 61, 62.
[363] This is an uncanny replication of Madame Lewinsky's language. Casey Eagle Speaker, Commissioners Sharing Panel, TRC Calgary Regional Event, November 11, 2013.
[364] These are all examples cited from the testimony in chapter 1.

can hear survivors tell how, because of this initial perversion of truth, children carried untruths about their being and worth into their adult lives. So, in addition to the distorted theology that justified the liberal dispensing of horrors and punishments, their lived response to this punishment (alcoholism, family dysfunction, unemployment, and later, the recipients of monetary reparations) became folded into their personal narratives. In the eyes of a racist, punishing church, the effects of poverty and abuse become the markers of the ontological character of the crime or sin — proof that the ideology is correct. Therefore, they are savages, uncivilized, violent to one another, takers — not a part of God's picture for 'saved' humanity.[365] When Ronald Niezen cites Oblate priests speaking of how "greedy" formers students are, this indicates a pattern: we harm, then we demonize the victim.[366] As Gabriel Marcel and Tillich predict, having internalized our messages of worthlessness, students go on to fulfill the stereotypes imposed on them, and even became abusers themselves. Casey Eagle Speaker and Shirley Waskewitch and Reverend Andrew Wesley all testify to the lasting consequences of distorted theology. Residential schools, under Christian tutelage, created the conditions under which aboriginal children cannot flourish. The schools removed children from their families, language and traditions and then subjected them to every horror. Then, regular citizens, from the comfort of their judicial bench or doctor's examining table or clergy press conference, say, "Look, they are what we said about them all along."[367] Former National Chief of the Assembly

[365] Again, the parallel here with the techniques of degradation of the death camps is strong. We debase human beings to such a degree that they live in the stereotypes that justified our disdain in the first place.

[366] I reference Niezen's interviews earlier. The Oblates interviewed accused former residential school students of making up stories of abuse so that they could receive more settlement money through the Independent Assessement Process (IAP). Niezen, *Truth and Indignation*, 51.

[367] This also recalls Mark DeWolf's argument that he submitted to the National Post saying that the deaths of Aboriginal children were being sensationalized by the media, because the condition on the reserves for disease

of First Nations Shawn Atleo says it this way: "It's like they break your leg and blame you tomorrow for limping."[368]

Residential schools and the internal source of harm: summary of the demonic structure of Christian symbols

In this last section, I will summarize the insights I am drawing from Tillich's understanding of the structure of the demonic in relationship to the symbols of Emmanuel and divine condemnation. Following this, Tillich's argument against the absolutized version of divine condemnation anticipates my next chapter where I elevate voices of the Christian tradition who likewise reject the myth of punishment and the absolutization of hatred. I offer this alternative lineage as a protest for the way a theology of divine condemnation has colonized the historical memory of the Christian church. This is not our only theological legacy. Despite the ubiquity of the idea of eternal damnation, there is a stream of theologians from the beginning of Christianity who declare with Tillich that "the wrath of God is neither a divine affect alongside his love nor a motive for action alongside providence; it is the emotional symbol for the work of love which rejects and leaves to self-destruction what resists it."[369] Tillich, in his rejection of eternal damnation, is joined by Origen, Irenaeus, Gregory of Nyssa, several medieval contemplatives, William Blake, Schleiermacher, feminist theologians and a number of other contemporary thinkers. Theologians such as these receive a theology that imagines a

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were even worse. The report issued by the Canadian Public health department, cited in chapter 2, makes a note that these diseases were brought by settlers, and the reserve system created the conditions for poverty.

[368] Chief Shawn Atleo, Call to Gather, TRC Vancouver National Event, September 19, 2013.

[369] Tillich, *Systematic Theology I*, 284.

permanent duality between an inherently stained segment of humanity punished by God and an elect, pre-ordained, predestined segment that is saved by divine grace as an imposter.

I have argued over the course of this chapter that Tillich enables us to recognize that when the good news of Emmanuel is bent into meaning good news for one group and bad news for another, the symbol of divine condemnation takes on a demonic distortion. I have argued that this distortion, left unchecked, forms us in habits of separation, which are the essence of radical harm. The demonic follows this fault line of separation. Divisive habits of mind and exclusionary practices allow us imagine a human other as unequal and undeserving. When the other violates one of our constructed prohibitions or conventions, anything we need to do to cancel that violation is justified. Tillich's demonic lens interprets that in a totalizing theological system, wrongs against us are perceived as wrongs against God. Though we may not enact punishment ourselves, when we mistake what Tillich calls "our limited goodness for absolute goodness," and mistake temporary stains for eternal stains, we entertain the imaginative space where we not only calculate the suffering of another living thing, but also imagine a fellow human being as deserving of endless punishment.[370] We imagine separation and anger as eternally upheld. We imagine lives are valued differently.

For Tillich, the nature of participation means this absolutized separation is idolatrous, and drives to the core of the demonic. That "a small number of beings reach salvation" is "an absurd and demonic idea."[371] Tillich describes salvation as "derived from *salvus,* "healthy" or "whole," and it can be applied to every act of healing; the Christian message points to an ultimate

[370] Tillich, *Systematic Theology II,* 51.
[371] *Ibid*, 167.

salvation which cannot be lost because it is reunion with the ground of being."[372] The logical implication of this summary of Tillich's rejection of the demonic is that the only true healing, therefore, is a healing for all.[373] I have argued that this is the salvation that was understood by Delores Williams — not a division of saved and damned that perpetuates violence but an active end to violence.[374] For Tillich and others in this stream of non-violent theology, divine love is not an attribute in the way humans have attributes, divine power is not mechanism external to being-itself. "Divine power is the power of being-itself, and being-itself is actual in the divine life whose nature is love."[375] There is an ontological nature to justice and love. Tillich suggests that imagining condemnation that is infinite in nature, *eternal* condemnation, inserts non-being into the very heart of love, establishing an eternal split within Being itself. "The demonic, whose characteristic is exactly this split, has then reached co-eternity with God."[376]

I have argued using Tillich's understanding that "structures of evil…are structures of self-destruction."[377] Using the insights of thinkers such as Marcel, Levinas and Brison, I illustrated the ways in which the damage inflicted by the demonic appropriation of Christian symbols turns its violence inwards. Residential school survivors testified the insidious tortures of shame and hatred that we imposed on them in the name of God. In light of this, I want to acknowledge that the demonic power of destruction continues to devour our Aboriginal communities — I have cited statistics that indicate that our Indigenous sisters and brothers continue to fight poverty, disease, water quality, inadequate housing and employment at rates that far surpass that of the

[372] Tillich, *Systematic Theology I*, 147.
[373] Tillich, *Systematic Theology III*, 282.
[374] Delores Williams, "Straight Talk, Plain Talk," 118, 119.
[375] Tillich, *Systematic Theology III*, 283.
[376] *Ibid*, 283.
[377] Tillich, *Systematic Theology II*, 69.

non-Indigenous public. I want to acknowledge the children who did not survive residential schools, whose voices and stories are lost to us altogether.[378] And, I want to acknowledge those who resisted the demonic. Despite the prolific ways we Christians used demonically appropriated Christian symbols to harm, there are stories upon stories of children then, and survivors now, who resisted our domination. Survivors testify that our hatred and arrogance did not destroy their spirit as we intended. They are the ones who chose to tell their truth, and chose to establish a Truth and Reconciliation Commission in order to prevent this from happening again, in order to make a more loving and just world for all of our grandchildren. The modern day challenge to our religious paternalism comes by way of Commissioner Murray Sinclair's question to the churches seeking reconciliation with Aboriginal people: "What kind of relationship do churches want to have with this new found, prideful group of people?"[379] Our theology, our understanding of the ground of life, is tested by this question. To renounce the demonic is one thing. To honor the power and difference of others is another. What does it mean to love our strong neighbor? How do we affirm the participation of God in God's creation universally? How does Canadian Christianity join in the 'mission' of creating a society where have the resources to care of themselves, and share out of a sense of community?

[378] This is a reference to the final paragraphs of chapter 1 where I acknowledge that the testimony from which we draw comes from the most 'successful' of former students. These are the lawyers, the scholars, the grandmothers. The stories of those who are not well enough to speak or who did not survive are lost to us.

[379] Steve Heinrichs and Murray Sinclair, "Does the Church Have Hope for Relationship? An Interview with Justice Murray Sinclair on the Declaration," *Intotemak*: Wrongs to Rights, no.2 (May 2016), 25.

Chapter 4 - Alternatives

> Besides, it is written that the tree shall be known by its fruits. The Church has borne too many evil fruits for there not to have been some mistake at the beginning. Europe has been spiritually uprooted, cut off from that antiquity in which all the elements of our civilization have their origin; and she has gone about uprooting the other continents from the sixteenth century onwards. Missionary zeal has not Christianized Africa, Asia and Oceania, but has brought these territories under the cold, cruel and destructive domination of the white race, which has trodden down everything. It would be strange, indeed, that the word of Christ should have produced such results if it had been properly understood.
>
> -Simone Weil, Letter to a Priest, 1951

> Is this not the fast that I chose? To loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the straps of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke?
>
> -Isaiah 58:6

In the early pages of this study, I cited Reverend James Scott in his official capacity as a church representative as apologizing for the degradations of residential schools by explaining that "we were a product of our times."[380] I have argued in the preceding chapters that this account of ourselves, that our wrongs find their root in something external to Christianity, does not represent the whole truth. Religious 'before and after' images of children and paternalistic habits of care certainly do reflect the colonizing principles of entitlement, superiority and consumerism, but, I have argued, these emerge as a symptom of an internal cause. My analysis of the principle of the demonic has attempted to articulate why cultural mimesis does not account for the proliferation of horrors reflected in the voices, bodies and communities of former residential school students. Instead, I have offered an evaluation of absolutized versions

[380] Reverend James Scott (UCC), *Observations and Reflections from the Parties to the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement*, National Research Centre Forum in Vancouver, March 3, 2011.

of the theological symbols of Emmanuel (God-with-us) and divine condemnation, and suggest that such distortions of our understanding of the divine underwrote and exacerbated cruelties of residential schools. In other words, I have sought an explanation for the degradations of residential school internal to Christianity itself.[381]

The acknowledgement of an internal explanation for evil demands something of Christians. It demands the courage to acknowledge the capacity within faith and virtue to distort, and the courage to trust that faith can withstand protest. To accept the ambiguous presence of the holy to human beings means we live in a dynamic, critical relationship to the language, images and tasks we use to reflect the beauty of divine love. The work of this chapter is to offer good news to those who feel trapped in the cycles of condemnation that characterize the living church. There is one stream of theology that describes a God whose expression of love includes anger satiated by violence; but there is another stream of theology, longer and just as deep, that describes a God to whom anger does not apply. The good news I offer here is that Christianity is home to a tradition of courage and criticism manifest in practices of spiritual discernment that enable seekers to inhabit the strong *counter-cultural* call in the Gospel. We are called *not* to be a product of our times. If Divine condemnation is a dominant motif in Christianity today, and in some circles it is, we have the precedent to resist.

This chapter provides an overview of figures in Christian history that embody the courage to acknowledge the inherent ambiguity in religion, and reject an absolutized version of divine condemnation. I have separated these figures into two categories. The first figures are those

[381] The other side of this coin is refusing to externalize our complicity in abuse with evaluations of colonial assimilation.

who have intentionally practiced an awareness of ambiguity so that they might be alert to the dangers of the demonic. Jack Forstman's work on the Christian theological debates prior to and during the rise of German National Socialism offers a model of what it looks like for theology to discern the traces of the demonic. His study illuminates how the symbols of the church can be used to either reinforce or condemn oppression. Alongside Forstman, I mention several medieval mystics for whom attentiveness to deception becomes a guiding spiritual practice. The second figures are those who construct theology without divine condemnation. In my own post-residential school world where some Christians have turned from church in disgust, I wish to end this study with the voices of the faithful who offer a different option than the mimetic and condemning theology overrepresented in Christianity today.

Part 1: Awareness of Ambiguity

Forstman and the presence of the demonic

One of the overarching mysteries of my study of the demonic is the transition from absolutizing into sadism and violence. I have argued that this transition is neither rational nor inevitable. I have suggested that one technique that traverses this logical chasm in the history of residential schools is the particular way the symbols of Emmanuel (God-with-us) and divine condemnation function. By bringing the perversion of these symbols into the light, I align myself with a legacy of Christian practice that addresses how susceptible we are as humans to vile and costly distortions. One such practice is modeled by Jack Forstman, in his book *Christian Faith in Dark Times: Theological Conflicts in the Shadow of Hitler.*

Forstman asks whether or not we can recognize the rumbling of the demonic before it emerges on the horizon at full speed. He investigates this query from the side of pre-Holocaust Germany, and interrogates the way six of the leading Christian theologians interpreted and theologically responded to the impending tyranny of Nazi rule.[382] Forstman believes the snapshot of how different Christian thinkers approached the advent of the Third Reich reveals something of the substance of Christian faith as it informs daily life, church practice and social structure. In other words, the distortions of the demonic matter — they are recognizable — and our commitment to serve others with an impulse of love that is not self-serving depends on our rejection of the demonic as it appears before us.[383]

There is a chilling quality to Forstman's work because we know that half of the equally brilliant German Protestant theologians placed their stakes on the wrong side of history. Despite their virtues and brilliance and resources and commitment to the common good, only three of the Christian theologians (Barth, Tillich, and Bultmann) rejected the totalitarian and antisemitic rhetoric and policies of Hitler. Forstman charts the often public theological debates, and carefully maps the ways each thinker interpreted the trajectory of events unfolding before him. A sample of the core issues for Gogarten, Barth and Tillich illustrates how theology relates to our ability to recognize absolutizing structures within Christian thought and practice.

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[382] Forstman follows the dialogues of protestant theologians Karl Barth, Paul Tillich, Rudolf Bultmann, Friedrich Gogarten, Paul Althaus, and Emmanuel Hirsch. They were close in age and all accomplished in their fields. Forstman, *Christian Faith in Dark Times: Theological Conflicts in the Shadow of Hitler*. (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1992).

[383] Forstman speaks of this when he is describing Barth's exhortations to the Christian community. He not only describes *agape* as unsentimental service, but also identifies where the demonic hides within this impulse when he includes in his remarks on love, "…and the recognition that whatever one does is not and cannot be equal to God's realm (thus the constancy of self-criticism that goes with the criticism of all human acts and institutions.)" *Ibid*, 44.

Karl Barth and Friedrich Gogarten were scholars and friends in the conceptual world of dialectical theology.[384] Part of the energy of dialectical theology lies in its insistence on God's ultimate freedom (sovereignty) wherein "God creates God's own access to human beings."[385] Barth's guiding text was the First Commandment.[386] For Barth, 'You shall have no other gods before me' established the absolute transcendence of God over human beings, and thus God's judgment over all human activity. Forstman explains that Barth and Gogarten understood this to mean God as Wholly Other (revealed in Jesus Christ and proclaimed in the Church) has a claim on all human life. Forstman notes that Gogarten, understood God's transcendence in terms of 'Lordship' of both God and Christ, and that this Lordship was necessarily analogous to the claims of Lordship in society. This is because "To acknowledge the Lordship of God is to acknowledge that all human beings are at root evil and prone to self-interest."[387] The symbols of Lordship and human sinfulness became the kind of truths for Gogarten from which we can draw ethical principles. This opened the door for Gogarten to infer that people need an earthly model of Lordship that will provide direction and order strong enough to keep an otherwise inevitable descent into chaos in check. With this theological conviction in tow, Gogarten aligned himself with both the German Christians (though he eventually distanced himself from them due to their antisemitism) and National Socialism (which he never renounced.)

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[384] Dialectical theology is sometimes referred to as neo-orthodoxy. Barth's famous phrase of God as "Wholly Other" serves as a background for the seeming paradox that there are limits to what the rational mind can know about God, and one eventually has to give way to a faith that is shaped by God's sovereign act of love in Jesus as the Christ as revealed in scripture.
[385] *Ibid,* 115.
[386] "You shall have no other gods before me." Exodus 20:3.
[387] Forstman, *Christian Faith in Dark Times*, 252.

This correlation of the Lordship of God and the Lordship of politics was unthinkable to Barth. For Barth, God's ultimate sovereignty implied that all things were equally separate from God, human power included. Barth had already been vocally opposed to the reasoning of the public theologians who embraced Hitler (Hirsch, Althaus), and became so adamantly opposed to this turn in Gogarten's dialectical theology that he severed their collegial alliance. Barth and Gogarten parted ways in the realm of theology and friendship.

Although Tillich and Barth publicly denounced the Christian support of the rise of National Socialism (and were eventually exiled), Tillich's analysis of the theological climate of the day afforded a more radical critique of theological authority than Barth. Forstman describes how Tillich cautioned Barth about the portions of dialectical theology that fostered an uncritical 'No' to all things created. Tillich saw this habit of absolute certainty as dangerous — a kind of rote principle that can be flipped into an equally uncritical 'Yes'.[388] Forstman argues that Tillich's participation in these theological debates honed his understanding of the structure of ambiguity. Tillich, like Barth, would grant the sacramental and revelatory aspects of religion, however, he would go on to insist that because these aspects of revelation still have to be received by *us*, they are vulnerable to distortion. In other words, there can be no unambiguous presence of the holy to human beings. He noted that in Barth's commitment to radical transcendence, Batth excluded scripture as an element that participates in the human sphere. In so doing, Forstman notes that Barth, like many Protestant theologians today, grants ultimacy to the word of God and sequesters it from an uncritical relationship to its use. For Tillich,

[388] This is the idea of "God creates God's own access to human beings" that Forstman notes was troubling for Tillich. *Ibid*, 115.

criticism is an expression of a living faith; it prevents us from accepting a tenant that does not align itself with the goodness of God, and it opens us the diverse expressions of Spirit.[389] Tillich's principle of ambiguity prescribes a posture of humility toward the interpretation of Word and world. "Faith is never a possession that one holds with unwavering confidence. On the contrary, it must always be received anew."

When Forstman asks whether the "Christian faith provide(s) the courage to publicly name the demonic and to say "No," he can look to the ways that Tillich and Barth (and Bultmann) employed theology as both lens and resistance. [390] I regret that my own condemnation of the demonic of residential schools comes by way of hindsight. In the history of residential schools, the voices that articulated warnings in advance of further harm came from outside the church. I have indicated in previous chapters that the administration of the schools was confronted about excessive punishment, poor sanitation and inadequate living conditions. As I have written, despite reports by Indian agents and medical examiners, the church not only silenced the warnings but rallied to keep the schools open when the government attempted to shut down the residential school project in the 1960's. Christian voices were overridden by the interests of mission and nation-building. We identify by way of backwards glance how a sense of spiritual mandate induced such a passion that people were willing to "overlook or excuse the system's excesses," as Forstman argues when describing Christian allegiance to National Socialism.[391]

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[389] Tillich called this the prophetic element of the Christian faith, or "the Protestant Principle." cf. Forstman, *Christian Faith in Dark Times*, 253.
[390] *Ibid*, 20.
[391] *Ibid*, 17.

The clarity of hindsight is troubling for Forstman because he hopes that we can foster a sense of theological sight that is able to recognize the signs of the demonic in advance. Forstman observes, "Looking back back on the Third Reich, we have no problem with clarity. We see the lies, the perversion of the language, the oppression, the tyranny, the inhumanity, and above all, the Holocaust." [392] This is because we look back as historians, says Forstman, not as prophets. The prophetic impulse served Tillich well. Not only did he offer theological resistance to National Socialism while in Germany, but he continued to hone his theological insights while in exile. It was while Tillich was in America that he developed the understanding of the structure of ambiguity and the capacity of the demonic to distort the holy that I use in this dissertation. Both his reflection on the demonic and his understanding of a faithfulness that includes criticism of oneself and one's certainties have informed my understanding of residential schools.

With a watchful eye for the presence of the demonic from within the ranks of Christianity, Forstman and Tillich find themselves in good company. Many medieval contemplatives were especially sensitive to ways religion could be exploited by destructive impulses. Mechthild of Magdeburg instructs her religious followers that holy works performed without council can be destructive.[393] Catherine of Siena writes to clergy and exhorts them to watch for the devil under the "guise of light."[394] Catherine cautions that the things that make us feel reassured spiritually (in her day this was visions and ecstasy, in our day this may be personal piety and mission) are

[392] *Ibid*, 15.
[393] Mechthild of Magdeburg, *The Flowing Light of the Godhead*. Classics of Western Spirituality #92, trans. Frank J. Tobin (New York: Paulist Press, 1998), 184.
[394] Catherine of Sienna, *The Dialogue*, trans. Suzanne Noffke (New York: Paulist Press, 1980), 199.

the most likely to cloud our vision. From within the practice of devotion, we can be "deluded by gladness."[395] St. Ignatius of Loyola sought to reform the church from within, focusing on practices of discernment that would enable the faithful to recognize what he referred to as "the tail of the snake." By this he means that though the demons mimic the consolations of God, their consolations are fleeting. What is more, with spiritual practice, we can learn to recognize the trace of the demonic (desolation) as it slithers by.[396] Both Catherine and Ignatius taught the discernment of evil as the way to reform the structures of the church. Teresa of Avila and John of the Cross, on the other hand, emphasize that true religious signs and wonders manifest as a participation in God's love for humanity. In Teresa of Avila's sixth mansion, she warns that "the devil is a skillful planter" and proceeds to chart the ways we think we know God (through visions, spiritual experiences, consolations).[397] She is interested in evil not so much as a kind of active corruption, but as that which keeps us from love. Left unchecked, we begin to mistake the dramatic 'signs' of prayerful experience as the indication of union with Christ, and when those signs fade, we seek them again. Teresa understands that these mystical experiences are a lie if the participation of Christ in us does not lead us to the participation of Christ in all of creation. This fall into egocentrism provides the beginning point for the symbol of Emmanuel demonically structured as "God-for-*me"* instead of Tillich's 'God-for-everything God has created.' John of the Cross makes a similar point by clarifying that God's aim is not to chastise "but to grant favors."[398] These favors are not meretricious experiences but a love like God's love

[395] Catherine of Sienna, *The Dialogue*, 199.
[396] Gordon Smith describes this aspect of St. Ignatius of Loyola's work. Gordon Smith, *Listening to God in Times of Choice* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1997), 60.
[397] Teresa of Avila, *The Interior Castle*, trans. Mirabai Star (New York: Riverhead Books, 2003), 189.
[398] John of the Cross and Kieran Kavanaugh. *John of the Cross: Selected Writings* (New York: Paulist Press, 1987), 203.

for all of humanity. John of the Cross writes in his *Spiritual Canticle* that the soul's aim is to "love equal to God's."[399]

I rally these early Christian thinkers as a way to emphasize that there is a legacy in Christianity of watching for the demonic. This is a skill that takes practice, whether it be to read the signs of impending active corruption, to intervene in the corruptions of the clergy, or to reorient us to the good fruit of spiritual devotion: a heart like God's, open to all humanity.

Part 2: Rejection of Divine Condemnation

Gregory of Nyssa and the absence of punishment

In the previous chapter, I turned to Augustine and Ricoeur to track the evolution of the idea of hell and condemnation as it relates to the myth of punishment. In the story of creation, Augustine constructs a theology that insists that the only cure for the Fall is punishment. In his theological opus, the components of a traditional theology remain — creation, fall, salvation — but with the overlying idea that only punishment heals.

Gregory of Nyssa explores the ransom theory of salvation to recall the story of salvation without the myth of punishment.[400] This theory, which was dominant during the time of Augustine and which Augustine himself explains beautifully in *On the Trinity* (De Trinitate), describes the Fall as the trickery of the devil. The devil deceives us into freely pursuing beauty apart from God.[401] Gregory argues that God "cannot use violent means" to secure his ends and

[399] See particularly his Spiritual Canticle. John of the Cross, *Selected Writings*, 278.
[400] Gregory of Nyssa is not the first to explore the ransom theory. It was there in Origen, Irenaeus and others before him.
[401] Augustine's other letters, particularly the Pelagian letters and City of God, develop his understanding of the fall and offer a much angrier God. Augustine, *The City of God*, trans. Marcus Dods (New York: Hafner Pub. Co, 1948).

so cannot simply quash Satan with might. Because humanity accepted the offer, neither can God override the 'rights' of the devil. Instead, God tricks the devil with the ploy of seeming to offer him something higher and better.

> Now that we had voluntarily bartered away our freedom, it was requisite that no arbitrary method of recovery, but the one consonant with justice should be devised by Him Who in His goodness had undertaken our rescue.[402]

The narrative tension unfolds solely between the Godhead and the devil — this atonement arises out of love and longing for a stolen creation. God reciprocates the mechanism of Satan's barter with humanity, and hides his son in human flesh. The wondrous deeds of Jesus ignites desire in the devil, and the master of lies gladly trades humanity for Jesus.[403]

> Therefore it was that the Deity was invested with the flesh, in order, that is, to secure that he, by looking upon something congenial and kindred to himself, might have no fears in approaching that supereminent power; and might yet by perceiving that power, showing as it did, yet only gradually, more and more splendour in the miracles, deem what was seen an object of desire rather than of fear.[404]

Jesus is killed. But it is not the nature of light to be contained by darkness. Jesus' goodness becomes a kind of antidote to evil, and the principle of participation unites humanity with Christ's defeat of the devil.

Gregory, one of the defenders of orthodoxy, exemplifies the early church's focus on a non-violent God who redeems all of humanity. The ransom theory provides theological insight into

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Augustine, *Answer to the Pelagians, I,* trans. Edmund Hill and John E. Rotelle (Hyde Park, N.Y.: New City Press, 1997).

[402] Gregory of Nyssa, *The Great Catechism*. (Wikisource: Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, accessed July 7, 2016), Ch.22. Further text can be found here: https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Nicene_and_Post-Nicene_Fathers:_Series_II/Volume_V/Apologetic_Works/The_Great_Catechism/Chapter_XXIII.

[403] *Ibid*, ch.23.

[404] *Ibid*.

how the early church understood the 'problem' that the atonement sought to fix, and how God was constrained to fix it.[405] The problem to be solved in the 'Fall' is *not* revealing divine justice by punishing humanity, but ransoming humanity from their slavery to the devil. For Gregory, the narrative of salvation is not a transaction between Father and Son wherein the Son becomes a receptacle of violence as a substitution. Rather, it is a transaction between the Trinity and the devil. There is no logic of violence found in the strategies of the Trinity. God cannot use violent means to solve the problem. It is alien to God's nature. Jesus tricks the devil, and by the power of the resurrection emancipates *all* humanity. There is no anger, no punishment, and no partial emancipation. Not until the middle ages do we see a shift in narrative as Augustine's later theology takes hold.

Julian of Norwich and the rejection of shame

By the middle ages — a time of great violence, illness and death — the idea of humanity as deserving punishment and Jesus as substitute for an angered God was ubiquitous. The fragility of living in the midst of such cruelties and the massive predations of the Black Death lent itself to theologies of anxiety and guilt. We humans entertain the idea that we may be at fault somehow when suffering comes our way. This tendency to self-blame, coupled with the church's apotheosis of 'might' results in Christian culture of penitential theology and practice. Right in the midst of the church's toxic theological alchemy of blame and power, Julian, as well as other medieval women contemplatives, resist the dominant theology of an angry God.

[405] I use the language of constraint to echo the discussion of constraint in chapter 2.

Wendy Farley, in her book *The Thirst of God: Contemplating God's Love with Three Women Mystics*, reads Julian's visions as culminating in a full blown rejection of the doctrine of atonement and the image of God as an angry plaintiff, judge, and executioner.[406] Not everyone agrees. Episcopalian priest and monk Father John Julian, founder of the contemplative monastic Order of Julian of Norwich, reads the text that proceeds Julian's famous "all will be well" as an acceptance of the doctrine of hell that aligns her with medieval tradition.[407] Farley, however, reads Julian's visions as part of an evolving theological arc — one that acknowledges the threats of hell, and renounces the church's use of an angry God. Julian has several visions from the Lord, all of which are deeply troubling to her because they challenge her theological upbringing. For my argument here, I will draw on Farley's insights into Julian's vision of the lord and servant — a vision that Jesus grants as an illustration of how she is to understand evil and suffering.

Julian's vision of the lord and the servant is an allegory of the fall and redemption. It is given to her as a way to reconcile the previous visions she has received from Jesus on the nature of sin and suffering: "our lord was never angry nor never shall be. For he is God, he is good, he is truth, he is love, he is peace. And his might his wisdom, his charity, and his unity suffer him not to be angry."[408] Farley argues that Julian struggles to reconcile this vision of a God who sees our wounds, not our sin with the teaching of the church (the abhorrence of sin and the justice of blame) and her experience of daily life (suffering debilitates people and evil appears to

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[406] I will be drawing on Wendy Farley's interpretation of Julian throughout this section. Wendy Farley, *The Thirst of God: Contemplating God's Love with Three Women Mystics* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2015).
[407] Wendy Farley references this in her notes to chapter 14, citing Father John Julian's appendix to *The Complete Julian* that cites her acceptance of hell in Chapters 32 and 33 of the revelations of divine love. Wendy Farley, *The Thirst of God,* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2015), ch 14 n 22.
[408] Julian of Norwich, *Showings (Long Text),* trans. Edmund Colledge and James Walsh (New York: Palest Press, 1978), ch. 46.

triumph.)[409] In her vision of the lord and the servant, Julian is visited again, years later, with an elaboration of the allegory that helps to ease the trouble she had comprehending God's message of mercy. In this vision, a loving servant seeks to do his lord's will. The lord, who loves the servant, sends him on a task. Eager and willing, the servant dashes off to do the lord's bidding, and immediately falls into a ditch. Badly hurt, he struggles in pain but cannot free himself. His wounds and his failure compounds his suffering. Farley describes the scene and the emotion: "The servant is so consumed with his pain that he forgets his beloved lord and cannot see that he is right there with him, full of love. His inability to see or remember this love is his worst suffering."[410]

Farley follows the way Julian argues that the fall of the servant is met by no disappointment by the master, only compassion for what the servant suffers.[411] The lord knows the servant will heal, but wishes to turn the servant's hard work and suffering into even greater joy, and rewards him even more than if he had never fallen. Farley interprets that as the vision closes, Julian understands this to be Jesus' explanation for evil, which only disconcerts her more. Despite what she has been taught, Jesus reveals to her that the servant represents both Adam and Christ. Adam and Christ both stay united with God at their fall, and both 'fall' into the ditch of embodiment and history (finitude).[412] For Adam, notes Farley, the pain of finite, embodied experience is completely absorbing, and causes humanity to "forget the love that binds it to God."[413] The insight Farley access is that Christ as God incarnate, both human nature

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[409] I will be drawing on Wendy Farley's analysis of Julian's visions throughout this entire sections. See Wendy Farley, *The Thirst of God*, 120.
[410] *Ibid*.
[411] *Ibid*.
[412] For an extended description of this allegory, see Farley, *The Thirst of God*, 121.
[413] *Ibid* 120.

and human suffering are knit to the Trinity so that humanity is never separated from the Power of Being that formed them. Julian understands that this unity makes it impossible to read culpability and offense into humanity:

> All suffering and sin, all of the anguish of human history, is contained in this unity by which the divine nature is so united with human nature that nothing can happen to humanity that does not also happen to Christ. Humanity is loved by the Trinity just as Christ is loved by the Father.[414]

Julian is still troubled by the symbolism of suffering and continues to question Jesus. Farley describes Julian's angst, and argues that Julian wants to know how suffering, with its wounds and contortions of beauty, fits into redemption if redemption is an expression of God's love.[415] Julian comes to understand that Jesus is showing her how suffering forms a person into the "depths of love," which is a treasure of ultimate worth.[416] Our time in the ditch is not wasted, our soul not lost, we are not hidden from God's love. Farley argues that Julian's insight is that the servant must retrieve the treasure of mature and expansive love herself.[417] Love cannot be forced, and it matures over time. She can have the courage to hope if she is taught that God plans for transformation; and the Trinity ensures our success. The ditches and disappointments will wound and impede, but they should not cause us shame. For they cannot prevent the aim of history — this fall into 'sin' is headed toward a single end. "Because sin has been built into creation as the occasion of our soul-making, there is no shame or blame in it."[418] Julian comes

[414] *Ibid*, 121.
[415] *Ibid*.
[416] "Depths of love" is a beautiful refrain that Wendy Farley repeats throughout her text. *Ibid,* 123.
[417] *Ibid*.
[418] *Ibid*.

to understand that though suffering is not deserved, it serve to unite us with Christ (and all who bear Christ's image).

I highlight Farley's interpretation of Julian's vision because of the way Julian comes to understand how it unravels the church's functioning theology. By the Middle Ages, sin had come to represent not only bondage, but guilt. Not only earned guilt – the result of ditches and wrongdoings -- but existential guilt. The operating theology of the day formed Christians to believe that from the very moment of conception humans *deserved* the endless torment of hell. God's wrath against us was the appropriate response to our 'condition.' Justice, then, was not the structural form of love, but the economy of appeasement and satisfaction. Julian, enmeshed not only in this myth of punishment but also in the horribly debilitating realities of suffering, completely overturns the understanding of the place of evil and suffering in relation to divine love. In the visions Julian receives, the overturning comes with the revelation that "there is no wrath, and there is no shame."[419]

> Jesus tells her over and over and over that God is love, that God loves all of humanity, that the desire and wisdom of God are eternal and never change in their purpose She is shown the meaning of the incarnation and passion. It is not a blood atonement. It does not turn aside God's anger. There is no such thing. Christ becomes incarnate in order to knit human nature to the divine nature. He suffered on the cross to overcome the "fiend" whose lies and violence block our knowledge of God's love. There is no wrath and there is no shame.[420]

Without wrath and shame, there is no conflict for the atonement to solve; there is no narrative of violence or bloodletting that could ever make sense to Love. Farley describes the

[419] *Ibid*, 141
[420] *Ibid*.

passion of Christ as the work of the Trinity to reunite humanity with their Ground of Life.[421] The church is meant to bear witness to the exuberance of this reunion, to the cleverness of the trick that gathers humanity into the bosom of love where they belong. Julian grieves when she realizes that the church's witness has been inferior to the witness of divine love. The church has structured its witness according to wrath, and has divided humanity, deciding some are worth saving, and some are not. The church has enshrined the image of God as a Father who will only accept blood as an appeasement for his rage — a Father who allows the death of his son to satisfy his honor. Julian recognizes that the uncontested myth of punishment clouds not only our vision of others but also the collateral damage it incurs. As I have written, Augustine's view of hell was not particularly powerful in its day, and did not gain much traction until the middle ages. Reading Julian *after* reading Gregory of Nyssa, we realize just how dominating the church had become if they could employ violence and ideology to turn religious symbols into tools that reinforce their authority. In a mad twist of the ransom theory, we find that we, like Eve and Gregory of Nyssa's first humans, have been told a half-truth that keeps us from both God and one another. Only *we* are the ones who are tricked. Farley argues that threats of the devil have lured us into attributing "to the Father the wrath and violence once attributed to Satan."[422] In a horrible reversal of goodness, Farley notes, God becomes the one from whom we need saving.

Julian understands that the devil will try to stop her from sharing her visions. She is not the only woman mystic who recognized the danger of exercising her own theological voice.[423] Yet she continues to write because the wounds of Christ that remain so gory and vivid to her are

[421] *Ibid*.
[422] *Ibid*, 138.
[423] Marguerite Porete was not only silenced but killed by the church for her renunciation of anger.

not the marks of God's rage, but, as Farley describes, the "doorway to the unending gentleness of God's embrace."[424] For a theologian like Julian, divine compassion, then, becomes the doorway to understanding God.

Schleiermacher and the absence of anger

Like the women mystics who came before him, Schleiermacher understands that though we cannot make claims about God's own being, we can witness God's *effects*…the most obvious of which is love.[425] Murray Rae, in his essay "Salvation in Community: The Tentative Universalism of Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768-1864)," discusses markers throughout *The Christian Faith* that indicate Schleiermacher "favored" a universalist view of salvation.[426] He tracks Schleiermacher's philosophical orientation toward theology in order to provide an account for Schleiermacher's "tentative universalism" (the idea that salvation applies to all) however he fails to account for Schleiermacher's understanding of the divine . It is precisely his understanding of the divine that, I will suggest, grounds Schleiermacher's orientation toward universalism.

Rae is right to locate Schleiermacher's systematic theology by his understanding that humans have an awareness that they do not exist independently. That we are somehow sustained by something greater than our own selves is part of what Schleiermacher calls a 'feeling of absolute dependence.' Though this feeling of absolute dependence manifests in

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[424] *Ibid*, 138.
[425] Friedrich Schleiermacher, *The Christian Faith*, trans. James S. Stewart, and H. R. Mackintosh (Edinburgh: T & T Clark International, 1999), 498, accessed July 7, 2016, EBSCOhost.
[426] Murray Rae, "Salvation in Community: The Tentative Universalism of Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768-1864)" in *"All Shall Be Well": Explorations in Universal Salvation and Christian Theology from Origen to Moltmann*, ed. Gregory MacDonald (Eugene: Cascade Books, 2011), 195.

different ways, it is an essential human experience, and one that unites us to each other. Schleiermacher understands this feeling of dependence to be a fundamentally religious experience, which is why he calls it "God-consciousness."

Rae goes on to relate universal God-consciousness to Schleiermacher's understanding of redemption. Redemption, of course, is related to the question of evil for Schleiermacher, but in the notable sense that evil "can only consist in an obstruction or arrest of the vitality of the higher self-consciousness."[427] Like Teresa of Avila, John of the Cross and Julian of Norwich before him, Schleiermacher does not read evil as external corruption so much as something that impairs our fundamental awareness of God-with-us. Schleiermacher suggests thinking of this kind of evil and sin from which we need redemption not as godlessness, but as God-forgetfulness.[428] Evil damages our ability to recognize our interdependence, and our connection with both divine life and the life of others is obscured. This experience of separation is a great wound to a human, but never beyond God's capacity to heal. Just as God-consciousness is universal, redemption is universal. It is not that sin and evil are not real.[429] Schleiermacher argues that both humans and institutions bear the marks of sin and evil, and that some people display marks of sanctification while others seem to be excluded from the 'effects' of the gospel. However, Schleiermacher rejects making ultimate any visible distinctions of "inner and outer fellowships" we see as it relates to Christianity and church.[430] This is because "the incarnation of

[427] Schleiermacher, *The Christian Faith*, §11.
[428] *Ibid*.
[429] Shortly I will remind readers that though sin and evil are real, they have no lasting content.
[430] Schleiermacher uses the terms inner and outer fellowship, and even references the biblical term 'elect.' See particularly his section on election, §116. He will observe that some people seem to be excluded from election, but only "provisionally." Schleiermacher, *The Christian Faith*, §16.

Christ is the beginning of the regeneration of the *whole* human race."[431] Rae points out that Schleiermacher argues that if we assert a theology whereby we are saved by grace (the basic Protestant stance), then it seems "discordant" that God would save some and not others.[432] What is more, the eternal arc of God's banishment of sin and evil toward a full restoration of our "God-consciousness" leads to his eschatology of "eternal blessedness." Blessedness, however, could not exist if a restoration of our awareness of interconnectivity also meant an awareness that some were suffering in eternal torment while others were not.[433]

Rae indicates Schleiermacher's universalism as "tentative" by arguing that Schleiermacher presents his beliefs as a kind of personal inclination but resists including them as points of formal doctrine.[434] While Rae analyzes how Schleiermacher applies a universalist ethic to the basic Reformation doctrines of predestination, the efficacy of Christ, "the last judgment," he keeps his analysis on the level of logic. For example, Rae explains that the traditional view of the last judgment where humanity is separated into two groups, one destined for blessedness and one for "perdition" involves "conceptual problems" for Schleiermacher.[435] Yes, Schleiermacher argues that "Christ did not learn obedience and was not himself perfected through separation from sinful company," and that the separation of sinful people serves no benefit; yes, Schleiermacher argues that if our own gain comes at the cost of someone else's loss, there is no "bliss." But the core of Schleiermacher's so-called universalist ethic is rooted not only in logic

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[431] *Ibid*, §11.
[432] Rae, "Salvation in Community", 180.
[433] Schleiermacher, *The Christian Faith*, §163.
[434] Rae says, "Like Barth…Schleiermacher refused to give doctrinal status to his universalist claims. Schleiermacher's refusal was based on the insufficiency of the evidence either in Scripture, or in the contents of consciousness. It is clear, however, that Schleiermacher favored a universalist view." Rae, "Salvation in Community," 195.
[435] *Ibid,* 191.

but also in ontology. The fundamental meaning of Christianity is shaped by questions of who we worship, how power is conceived and who gets to wield it. What sin accomplishes in the soul and how sin reconciled to divine love does not express logic for its own sake, but expresses something essential to Christian practice. If love is the effect of God, and if love is the name adequate to God, then any theology that comes out of an adjudication of division, separation and anger is not a theology of the same God.

A key to understanding Schleiermacher's understanding of divine condemnation, and the subsequent population of dogmatic topics, is found in Schleiermacher's teaching on justification, which Murray Rae does not mention. Schleiermacher writes about the topic of justification with an attentiveness to the anxieties roused by the culture of justice as punishment, one that Rae invokes when he assumes the extension of Schleiermacher's thoughts on grace as, "There is no one who is blameless, nor anyone who deserves redemption."[436] This is not what Schleiermacher means. Schleiermacher acknowledges how sinners *feel* "guilty before (God)" and deserving of punishment — but he empties these concerns of any real content. Sin, forgiveness, and adoption are topics appropriate to systematic theology, but humanity is always "the object of divine favor and love."[437] To assert that no one deserves redemption is to assert that they deserve the suffering that is caused by the alienation of sin. Schleiermacher rejects this by aligning redemption with freedom — God's saving act removes the obstructions that keeps us from remembering our awareness of God as love, with us and for all of us. The key to Schleiermacher's ontological understanding it this: "This does not

[436] Rae assumes this is an extension of what Schleiermacher means when Schleiermacher agrees that sin extends to the whole human race. *Ibid,* 181.
[437] Schleiermacher, *The Christian Faith*, §109.3.

in the least mean that previously he was the object of divine displeasure and wrath*, for there is no such object.*"[438] In Schleiermacher's understanding of the divine being, anger does not exist. Therefore, evidence of resistance to the soul's recognition of God-consciousness, even if that resistance is destructive, is not met with anger. There is no doctrine that expresses this primordial divine love based on an idea of divine anger. Any imagined object of divine condemnation does not exist.

The reason why eternal damnation does not make into Schleiermacher's dogmatics is not because he is 'tentative.' The subject of eternal damnation is relegated to an appendix because, for Schleiermacher, there is no natural or logical place in dogmatic theology to speak of eternal wrath. The flow of Christ-in-us (sanctification) is in a current headed toward a reunion of freedom and love.[439] Since divine condemnation is a topic relevant to sanctification and the discussion of eternal blessedness, it is addressed, but not as something organic to Christian thought. The idea of divine condemnation goes against the long game of divine love. "If the perfecting of our nature is not to move backwards, sympathy must be such as to embrace the whole human race…"[440] Neither punishment nor damnation reflects the ultimate purpose of God — though scripture uses images of damnation, there is nothing scripture to suggest that Jesus looked toward such an end: "…such testimony is wholly lacking."[441] For Schleiermacher, the full display of the power of redemption lies not in retributive force or divisions, but in a reunion with God certainly, not tentatively, "through the power of redemption there will one

[438] *Ibid,* §109.4. Emphasis mine.
[439] Schleiermacher argues that the idea of deserving punishment leads to fear, and fear to slavery. He refers to salvation as "eternal bliss". *Ibid*, §109.3.
[440] *Ibid*, §163.
[441] *Ibid*.

day be a universal restoration of all souls."[442] I will take up the questions of who we worship, how power is conceived and who gets to wield it in the conclusion.

Conclusion: Theology after residential schools

It is the hope of this chapter to find good seeds of Christianity for a theology after residential schools. In the first three chapters of this dissertation, I have attempted to expose the kind of fruit that grows when the church uses shame and violence to reinforce the religious symbols that fortify its privilege. This fruit is destructive, and exposes the way suffering conceals from a residential school child the loving face of Christ that remains so very near to them.[443] We do not have an uncontested legacy of eternal damnation in Christian theology. If we relinquish practices of colonial domination, as many Canadian churches are doing, we can also relinquish practices of theological domination.

I draw my cue from the survivors of residential schools. It was the survivors who broke the stronghold of silence imposed by dominating practices. In a culture where sexual abuse is protected by whispers and secrets, former students spoke out, defying convention and rejecting the force of shame even when shame was thrust on them anew by Christians rejecting their claims. We call the survivors warriors because storming the blockades of coercion takes immense cooperation and courage. Because the survivors spoke their stories of sexual abuse, over and over, for everyone to hear, the rules have now changed. The future of domination will be different for it no longer has its bodyguards. I am arguing in this dissertation that there is a

[442] *Ibid*.
[443] Likewise, the effects of fragility and suffering conceal from us the loving face of Christ in every other face, each a varied and extravagant reflection of the divine image.

pattern of domination within Christianity itself. God-for-*us*-and-not-for-you and divine condemnation are dominating theologies protected by cultures of silence. I have come to reject the theology of eternal damnation, but have been scared to say this out loud. I am not alone. I have spoken with women in both the church and academy who have leaned over and in hushed tones disclosed that they, too, do not believe in divine condemnation. We all have a hunch that there may be abuses happening in the name of God. There are whispers and raised eye brows, but we just talk amongst ourselves. The survivors, however, have set a new precedent. They have showed us that practices of domination must be brought into the light if the cycle of harm is to be stopped. If we remain silent, we protect the habit of imagining others as deserving punishment. If we remain silent, we nurture the worship of a different God, one who expresses both satisfaction and love through the torture of his child, one who measures 'guilt' in terms of existence rather than actual wrongs.[444] As with the Nazis for whom the mere fact that Jews existed justified their torture and murder, this God measures guilt as arising from the mere fact that human beings exist. In humans, we recognize this behavior as criminal. Moses smashed his tablets over lesser idols. Why do we allow this to hide? Martin Luther King Jr. condemned such practices of silence in a sermon he delivered as the eulogy for Jimmie Lee Jackson, a black man shot at the hands of a racist justice system propped up by uncontested distortions of theology in the U.S. "He was murdered by the indifference of every white minister of the gospel who has remained silent behind the safe security of his stained-glass windows."[445]

[444] This reflects my analysis of divine condemnation, and the gathering force of Augustine's assessment that we are born guilty and undeserving.

[445] Martin Luther King Jr., "A Tribute to Jimmy Lee Jackson," The King Center digital archive, accessed July 31, 2016, http://www.thekingcenter.org/archive/document/tribute-jimmy-lee-jackson.

The work of this chapter, through broad strokes, is to make sure that the secrets of the demonic are exposed and another way revealed. By presenting these alternatives, I argue that the theological possibility of recognizing the demonic and rejecting divine condemnation is as old as Christianity itself, and manifest in in every period. Gregory, one of the defenders of orthodoxy, exemplifies the early church's focus on a non-violent God who redeems all of humanity. The 'mystics' criticize the religious demonic and focus on love all through the middle ages, even as divine wrath became more prominent. Schleiermacher, with the rise of modern Protestant orthodoxy, excludes divine punishment from the topic of systematic theology because the anger of God is not organic to theology. In a post-Holocaust world, Tillich identifies the dangers of making our finite religious symbols, words and images, infinite. Like Schleiermacher, Tillich rejects eternal condemnation on the basis of ontology. He insists that a condemnation that is eternal creates a split within Being itself: "The demonic, which is exactly this split, has then reached co-eternity with God," and "non-being enters the very heart of being and love."[446] Along with those I have exposed, many contemporary feminist and liberation theologians reject the image of the wrath of God, as do some Evangelicals.[447]

A repudiation of divine condemnation does not imply a rejection of sin. Many of the finest theological thinkers who reject eternal damnation have lived within range of the upper registers of suffering.[448] Tillich reminds his readers that "no future justice and happiness can

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[446] Tillich, *Systematic Theology I*, 285.

[447] Delores Williams is a classic example of a Womanist theologian who rejects notions of suffering as salvific in any way. See *Sisters in the Wilderness*: *The Challenge of Womanist God-Talk* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1993). Gregory MacDonald chronicles Evangelical universalism. He has edited a volume of essays called *"All Shall Be Well": Explorations in Universal Salvation and Christian Theology from Origen to Moltmann* (Eugene: Cascade Books, 2011) and is the author of *The Evangelical Universalist* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2006).

[448] I am thinking specifically of the medieval mystics (Porete was killed because of her theology), Simone Weil, Paul Tillich.

annihilate the injustice and suffering of the past."[449] These theologians do, however, attend to the relationship of sin to divine love with precision and care. The history of residential schools as told by former students overwhelmingly illustrates that our default approach to making "all things well" is by crushing the designated seeds of evil as they form. We damn small children, we burn their belongings, then we belittle their protests when they rise up as adults. Wendy Farley, the clearest theologian on the heresies of eternal damnation, writes, "If we train ourselves to stomach the eternal torment of our fellow human beings, then we are also training ourselves to worship hatred, violence, cruelty, domination, and torture. Who, then, is the real object of our worship?"[450] Not God. A demonically distorted shadow of God whom we have forged with our melted down adornments of anger, racism, and division.

So what does it mean to worship God? For the survivors it means that we tell the truth. It means we must learn to access on another if we are to access God. It means we celebrate and acknowledge the wild and varied plurality of God's image in the world around us. It means that we embrace both the beauty and the struggle of naming difference. It means that we resist the devil in all his forms. A theology after residential schools speaks God to the world as Emmanuel, God-for-all-of-us, gathering the whole of God's creation into spaces of flourishing and light.

[449] Tillich, *Systematic Theology II*, 373.
[450] Farley, *The Thirst of God*, 119.

Conclusion

> We don't want someone to say 'that was not in our thinking' because the documents will say otherwise….intent to take our language, our culture, our people…such a magnitude of loss…it is important to acknowledge that this could happen again.
>
> — Commissioner Justice Murray Sinclair

To conclude this dissertation, I will summarize the arc of my argument and then address two points of reflection that did not make it into the main body of my work: the way suffering affects academic work, and how we might move forward from here.

Summary

I have argued that the history of residential schools indicates that Christianity authored abuses and degradations that exceed the colonial vision of cultural genocide. I have also argued that the Christian participation in processes of decolonization is necessary, but if we identify the source of documented harms as colonialism or some other location external to Christianity itself, we continue to evade responsibility and continue to evade the truth. I have proposed that with Jack Forstman and Paul Tillich, we acknowledge the source of demonic distortion internal to Christianity itself. This dissertation proposes that the absolutized versions of the theological symbols of Emmanuel (God-with-us) and divine condemnation underwrote and exacerbated the cruelties of residential schools. It has been my intent to model the understanding we have received from survivors that transformation begins with telling the truth. For Christians, telling the truth about the history of residential schools includes telling the truth about theology itself -- that divine condemnation perverts the beauty of divine love and denies the principle of the participation of God in God's creation. Anger is not infinite.

Punishment is not healing. These distortions not only harm, but construct a false image of God -- a God who renders divisions absolute and condemnation eternal. I have invoked the traces of a theological lineage that understands the only principle and ground of life, the only absolute as love. I have invoked this lineage so that we might dismantle the false construction that a God of infinite anger is a faithful way to understand orthodoxy and scripture.

I have not intended to say anything new about God, about the demonic, or about the temptations of idolatry and horrors of suffering. Instead, I have intended to relay insights that are very old. By drawing on these streams of well-honed wisdom, I loosen the grip of destructive streams of theology that mask themselves as the only avenue of belief, practice and tradition. I give credit to Paul Tillich for my understanding of existential fragility and demonic distortion just as he draws on Origen, Francis of Assisi, the early contemplatives, Thomas, Duns Scotus (to name a few). I give credit to Wendy Farley for my interpretation of non-coercive love in the theology of Julian of Norwich. Farley, in turn, relies on a lineage of thinkers from Plato to Schleiermacher to contemporary liberation thought. My work is placing the insights of others in conversation with the insights of residential school survivors, and then attending to the alchemy of thought in the way a baker attends to the alchemy of butter and baking soda. As the heat of my study melded these pieces together, a few reactions occurred. I turn first to my experience of writing about suffering as an unexpected source of information.

Suffering in the academic process

I elaborate on my research process itself as a way to flag the need to think more intentionally about what it means to engage in projects of grave human import. I am interested

in the continuing effects of real life events on the writer, and how we might learn to *include* suffering into the academic process instead of sweeping it into a corner and waiting for it to subside.

As I have indicated in my introduction, when I began to garner information on the history of residential schools, the work was both cumbersome and shocking. I was at Emory University in Atlanta when the Canadian courts facilitated an agreement between all parties involved in the Residential School Class Action Litigation, and the government of Canada issued a public national apology. I stumbled upon a notice for the forum on building a National Research Centre for Truth and Reconciliation to house the impending documents and testimony, and so made my way to Vancouver in 2011 to learn more. It was there that I first heard survivors tell their stories and the church issue apologies. When I returned to Atlanta and explained the impending Truth and Reconciliation process to Deborah Lipstadt, she immediately urged me to attend. More than anyone I have worked alongside, Dr. Lipstadt understood the value of first person testimony witness, and understood that the TRC provided a rare historical opportunity that would change the direction of history in my country. My research, at that moment, moved from the theoretical to the practical. I went on to participate in all but one of the remaining TRC national events.

Through my work with Holocaust testimony, I knew reading or watching personal accounts of harm to be extremely difficult. Even so, I was unprepared for how deeply affected I would be by sharing a physical space with such a visceral amount of human suffering. Had I been listening to speakers without my translation headphones on, I would still have received their communication of pain by way of their posture and breathing and silences and weeping. I

knew through the energy of their bodies that what they had experienced was a violent and grim undoing. I was able to register the low, deep wail of a grown man whose letters from home had been withheld for his entire tenure at school, who grew up thinking his parents had forgotten him, and understand that this was a cruelty and degradation as unjust as the most obvious description of horrors.

Bearing sacred witness to this suffering rendered me silent. I attended the TRC events with the right measures of composure and empathy. I took notes furiously to give my hands and heart an occupation. I made an effort to reflect in my notes not only words that were being spoken, but also the character of what was unfolding before me. I can look to my notebooks and find extraneous descriptions that flash like blazes on a trail -- descriptions like “weeping loudly” and “stopped speaking, looking down for 15 seconds” and “family gathers around and puts hands on shoulders" and “trouble breathing.” The weight of this history, of which I was a part in both old and new ways, and the pain of these strangers with whom I share land and home, was something that I could witness, but not process in any way. I would arrive back in Atlanta with anger and pent up tears, and they would all leak out, no longer bound by the need for propriety. The task of organizing pain and writing it seemed impossible. I never wavered on the importance of this work and its value to theology. But the pain affected my health. It affected my plans to have children. It affected my relationship with friends and neighbors. I withdrew from the world of human interaction and into the world of the animals in my life who seemed to know that I was suspended in narratives of the ways humans destroy each other. I was nurtured by rocks and stones that I held, and then began to shape into necklaces. I could

not write, but I could string beads. It renewed occupation for my hands and my mind after my note-taking was over.

I did not understand or even adequately register any of this until I was sitting beside the adult daughter of a residential school survivor at the Vancouver national event in 2013. We began talking, and she said to me, “How do you do it? I have sat here for one afternoon and I am deeply affected by what I am hearing.” I blurted out for the first time, “I can’t write. Even though I have to write. I can only string beads. I make necklaces.” “I get that,” she replied. And there my healing began.

My experience in Vancouver was followed by the observant compassion of my advisor who said, “Remember that it is over. The abuse is over now.” This opened up a space for me to breathe, and I picked up my pen and slowly began to write. However, I was ashamed of my suffering and silence, for what it might be saying about me as a person and as a scholar. I did not show up to departmental events because I had no way of giving an account of myself. I hoped that if I waited long enough, I would be back to 'normal' and could put the debilitations of pain behind me.

I can now bring myself to acknowledge that the writing I have contributed to this dissertation has been remarkably difficult. My writing no longer flows. I feel limited by language. I labor to smooth out my thoughts and am worn from the effort. I fail more often than I succeed.

I am articulating the specificity of my experience because I have come to realize that we are living in an era where we desperately need people to engage with one another on very difficult topics. On topics that implicate practice and policies and people’s own lives. On topics

that work to prevent horrors from happening again. The academic field has evolved to recognize the value of this kind of work — and the university values it, but without a honed practice of how we support those navigating the process. My project is not unique in its difficulties, and unlike many others, I was one and two steps removed from the proximity to harm. Instead of rendering suffering in the academy invisible, as something to 'get over,' as something we can whisper about and shake our heads over, how might we enfold suffering into the process? Is there a way to recognize that these projects come with a cost, and expect that people might be upset? Is there a way to acknowledge and accept imperfections and wounds as a certain kind of academic education? While my suffering did not make sense to me through the lens of academic progress, it made sense to the woman whose mother attended residential schools. And she saw my experience of pain as an expression of solidarity, that I was, in this way, a part of her world too, and a part knowing how to create a better world for our grandchildren. Pain has instructed me about the destructive practices of theology in a way that I could not access otherwise. And it has allowed me to move forward, slowly, imperfectly, in what my Indigenous sisters and brothers say is ‘a good way.’

Moving forward

I will include a few final observations about what might come of this study, as it is a question I am readily asked. Some of these observations have appeared earlier, but I gather them here as a way of drawing together the kind of thoughts that might lead to a robust discussion.

First, I would like to reiterate an observation I made in my introduction about the problem-solving approach of western logic. My colleague Lori Ransom at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada relayed that Indigenous thinkers caution western thinkers about their goal-oriented approach to problems. A move too quickly into problem solving before we spend adequate time listening can further erase Indigenous voices. It can also be an extension of the paternalism that is symptomatic of a colonial view of mission that seeks to reify hierarchies instead of engaging in genuine egalitarian acts of community. The survivors established the Truth and Reconciliation Commission as an extended practice in listening. If, I am advised, we stop and wait for long enough, goal oriented thinkers will discover that the Aboriginal community has something to say about how the problem needs to be solved. And they are ready to lead us.

Next, I would like to suggest that while my own study (my own presentation of data and theology) can help access the emotional point of connection with the history of residential schools, this is not where the real action of social change takes place. I support and perhaps facilitate the people who march and demonstrate and write policy and revamp statements of faith, and otherwise do what it takes to change the structure of governing institutions. Colonial history represents a structure of society that we still fight to hold in place. We certainly need to relinquish our false gods and idols, but if we do not change the fundamental distribution of opportunity, we hold people within colonial habits of oppression.

Next, I draw attention to the 94 Calls to Action released with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in their Final Report released in 2015. As Canadians, we have a responsibility to demand the cooperation of government, institutions *and* churches to implement the TRC's

recommendations. I draw attention to the Indigenous movements (Idle No More, Native Women's Association of Canada) and Aboriginal public intellectuals (Hayden King, Tanya Kappo, Leah Gazan) who are issuing powerful interventions into Canadian thought and practice. I contribute to a more loving and respectful future in so far as I am in conversation with a larger, culturally representative community of thought.

In light of this, there is value in me speaking the truth as an insider about Christian complicity in the harms of residential schools. Indigenous people should not carry the burden of truth telling. When we ask an Indigenous person to come and to 'tell the truth' to white settler communities, we not only ask them to do a job we could do for ourselves, but also ask them to manage white/settler grief, anger, guilt and resistance. We need to process amongst ourselves so that we can be ready to act as informed, grounded participants in an arena ready for acts of justice. A broader way of saying this is we should not have to rely on the Aboriginal community, the Jewish community, the African American community, the Queer community, to tell us what we have done wrong.

Next, I draw attention the matter of church/religious response to the unfolding history of residential schools. For readers removed from the dialogues happening in Canada right now, there is good work taking place in all the mainline denominations to decolonize their ritual, liturgies and practices of community engagement. Anglican communities are including the smudge and recommissioning plaques to reflect the legacy of residential schools. United Churches are renouncing the Doctrine of Discovery. I have mentioned the exemplary work of Steve Heinrichs of Mennonite Church Canada. Steve has edited two books that put Indigenous leaders in conversation with settler Christian thinkers on issues related to decolonization:

honoring the treaties, attending to TRC Calls to Action, issues of land justice and Indigenous sovereignty. Heinrichs works in community with Indigenous thinkers to imagine a respectful, loving future of relationships for Canadians.

Last, one of the central arguments of my dissertation is that colonization in itself is not responsible for outsized abuses that former students suffered at the hands of the church. It is a fair critique to say that according to my logic, practices of decolonization, therefore, do not address the dangerous and idolatrous constructions of the divine that I describe. What I can offer in response to this is very slim. There are moments when I feel like I have barely survived wading through the vile archives of abuse perpetuated in the name of God. It has taken more strength and courage than I like to exert tell the truth about such things. Any hope I have that practices might access the participation of divine life in finite life, that the varied exuberance of life in all its forms might reflect some quality of the goodness of God, comes by faith not by sight. I am still overwhelmed by the ways that we humans harm one another, and may need my larger theological community to imagine practices of goodness when I cannot. What I can offer is a kind of provisional framework for practices that target the absolutizing impulse of the demonic. I will draw on the contemplative Christian traditions that I reference in chapter 4 because of their sensitivity to our capacity for illusion and a dedication to the way of love. I will name four habits we can cultivate, with the hope that the larger Christian community can spin these threads into a good fabric of inclusiveness and love.

1. A plurality of names for God. When teaching about the apophatic tradition in Christian theology, Wendy Farley argues for practicing a plurality of names for the divine.[451] In Christianity, we have a tradition of naming God. We understand that a name for God affords a particular insight into the nature of divine being. We cannot think beyond-being, and harness the gift of language to translate meaning to our minds that function here, in time and space. When we name God *father* or *lord* or *shepherd*, we are not saying that divine being is one object among other objects to which we can ascribe attributes or characteristics. We are saying that there is something that we have come to know about *father, lord, shepherd* that gives our mind access to an aspect of goodness and quality of love that derives originally from God's own self. This is a reflection of Tillich's principle of participation: that God participates in all of God's creation. We use language to mine that. However, when we become attached to the name instead of the reality it accesses for us, we succumb to the temptation Tillich describes as the demonic impulse of translating our finite symbol into an absolute symbol. Under this structure, *male*, for example, becomes associated with God, instead reading the symbol of fatherhood as an insight on love's unconditional embrace. We can loosen our addiction to images and our tendency to absolutize with a proliferation of names for the divine.

2. Practices of seeing and compassion. These include practices such as compassion meditation, phenomenology exercises, or attentiveness to aspects of the world alien to our natural experience (bird watching, puzzle making, animal rescue or serving the poor or

[451] This call to a plurality of names for God comes from a notes I took of a presentation Wendy Farley made to theology students at Emory University in 2015. For a further account the ontological necessity of a plurality of names for God, see Elizabeth Johnson, *She Who Is: They Mystery of God in Feminist Theological Discourse* (New York: Crossroad, 1998), 105f.

homeless). When Christians are raised to understand that we share the image of God with the world around us, we know intellectually that we are not more important or real than anyone else. However, if we confine ourselves to people who mirror our economic and social status, our awareness of others becomes much less vivid than our awareness of our own selves. This relates to my description of a demonically structured version of Emmanuel where egocentrism minimizes the importance of others and renders the suffering of others less urgent or real. Such rendering is an illusion. As we pay practiced attention to creatures, stories, details, opinions beyond our immediate circle of exposure, we open ourselves to the truth of our intimate connection with all things. We begin to free ourselves from the despotism of the ego over our line of sight, our heart, our mind. This freedom from the demands of the ego works to lessen our consumer addiction as well, as we no longer need our pain and loneliness assuaged by our ability by *things* (whether they are physical items or investments), which we then strive to protect.

3. Sabbath. I think of this as the practice of play and the practice of humor. Laying aside work and cultivating playfulness -- where we delight in seemingly non-productive pleasures -- is a practice that refuses to allow our identity to be defined by what we accomplish. When people are no longer defined by what they accomplish, or what they contribute to a world of capitol, we can begin to see meaning in shared features of humanity. Likewise, with laughter, residential school survivors have taught me that a quick, even raucous sense of humor can be an act of resistance, a refusal to let any one experience consume us entirely.

4. Confession. Our liturgical practice of confession has drifted towards the idea that we confess our sins before God as a kind of symbolic reference to generic harms. This serves the

illusion that we do not have active, unfolding harms to confess. If we understand that we engage in confession as a community of believers, where voices around us join our own, we allow ourselves to share responsibility for harms done in the name of God, and be implicated in the actions of others. Confession has the capacity to remind us that we are one body, connected to the harms committed by those who seem otherwise removed from us. And it allows us to transform. One of the most meaningful moments of the church dialogues that I witnessed during the Truth and Reconciliation process was when a young Christian Reformed pastor stood up after listening, silently, to a full day of survivor testimony and said, "I am so troubled by this. I have never abused a child nor have been horrific. But I am a pastor. And I felt today in a way never have before that I am a part of that fraternity. And that's where I am today."[452] This beautifully exemplifies the pain that we open towards when we see ourselves as part of the 'exclusive' groups that I referenced in my analysis of the symbol of Emmanuel. However, the pain, the confession and contrition, gives way to a condemnation of wrongdoing in the just sense of the word. This pastor allowed us to become a community that acknowledges wrongs and believes in transformation. We understood that we can turn, and become something new and different into the world. Confession and transformation go together, and they are a part of living in respectful relationship to the world of living things. Confession prepares us to assume that we get things wrong and will continue to get things wrong, and that this in itself does not interfere with our ability to live in community. Our shock and denial and resistance of true confession prevents us from living in community.

[452] This quotation is from notes taken at an event at the Reformed Church in Vancouver, unknown pastor, September 21, 2013.

I offer these four practices as a gesture toward habits that can bring flexibility and fluidity to the places where the demonic hides in the history of residential schools. Practices such as these, honed in a community of Indigenous and settler voices, alert us to the difference between the finite and the infinite so that we can identify places of demonic distortion. The alternative lack of clarity is seen in matters of 'condemnation.' Some Christians are willing to imagine eternal condemnation as something faithful, but are unwilling to support the temporal condemnation through prosecution of those who have committed crimes against the children in residential school. Though I acknowledge the oppressive legacy of racism that structures laws and practices of arrest, the functional aim of the legal process is to render *finite* judgment for criminal harms. For this reason, I support the prosecution of clergy who have abused children, and support the expectation that the government will comply with their legal obligations of the Residential School Settlement Agreement and release all residential school related documents to the TRC. I support the honoring of treaty agreements, and compliance with the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. I support land justice, and the sovereignty of first nations to control resources on their own territory. This kind of call to prosecution and the implementation of justice is not the same as imagining God inflicting a condemnation that is without end.

In an early epitaph, I cite Commissioner Marie Wilson as she reminded listeners at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission that our virtues -- good intentions, even love -- are

ambiguous without truth. "Truth is the beginning of reconciliation, and it has to be the truth from those who have suffered."[453] May this be a good beginning. All my relations.

[453] Commissioner Marie Wilson, Commissioners Sharing Panel, TRC Vancouver National Event, September 19, 2013.

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