

Christian Perspectives: A new way of seeing

By Penny Lewis

Christ Church Bolton

I just love Canada.

I am a very patriotic Canadian. I feel blessed to have been born in this country. During Canada's 150th celebration, I have been wondering what I can do to participate in this birthday. But --!

Have you ever had a certain mind-set about something, felt very enthusiastic about it, and then, the wind changed?

Slowly you come to realize how off-base you have been, your eyes are opened to new insight. Well, that is just what happened to me.

I belong to the Dufferin Kairos group. We are a member of a national faith based organization that works for social change in Canada and around the world through advocacy, education, and research programs.

Our Dufferin group is not large and much of our time is spent on educating ourselves on current social issues.

While The Truth and Reconciliation Commission was under way, much of our learning was about Aboriginal Peoples and their issues. We have continued on this theme with a focus on Calls to Action #62 which calls for mandatory age appropriate indigenous history to be in the curriculum of our schools.

To this end we held an adult educational event, "**Whose land is it anyway?**"

Our resource person was Colinda Cline, Curriculum Lead. Equity/First Nations, Metis, Inuit Education, with the Upper Grand School Board.

Are you still with me? Hold on, I am getting there.

So, you can see that through Dufferin Kairos I have had the opportunity, I thought, to learn much about, and from, Aboriginal Peoples.

At our last meeting one of the items on the agenda was, Does Dufferin Kairos wish to celebrate Canada's 150 birthday, and if so how? We are privileged to have in our group a passionate, vocal Aboriginal person.

When I asked this question, the you know what hit the fan.

"Don't you know that 1857 was when reserves where begun, don't you know about the Indian act, don't you know about outstanding treaty negotiations, residential schools?" and on and on he went.

Meanwhile, I am beginning to feel a sense of resentment.

Why do I have to hear all this? I know this, but I love my country, can't we just, for once, celebrate CANADA?

But on this person went.

It was only after the meeting was over and I was driving home that I thought, how would I feel if I had been aboriginal and a settler began speaking about celebrating Canada's history? Then I got it. I began to wonder how could I have been so blind? I was stunned by the attitude I had had and my lack of insight and sensitivity.

Sometimes we lack the insight to see how imbedded racism can be.

Later that week, I was preparing a sermon for Sunday. The gospel reading was the story of Jesus healing the man who had been blind from birth [John 9: 1-38].

As I read it a light went on. It was then that I realized that my Aboriginal friend had been a Christ figure for me. With his words he spat on the ground, made mud with the saliva and spread the mud on my eyes and I was able to see.

I had been blind from birth and now I could see. I now see 150 years as a milestone rather than a celebration.

I see Canada, with all its foibles, both good and bad.

So, what will I do to mark 150 years?

I have given each member of my family, from aged 75 to 2 years, a different book authored by an

Aboriginal person.

I still love Canada, but I do not wish to be blinded by this love.

P.S. I am writing this prior to Easter, but you will be reading this after Easter, so I invite you to experience ?insight? as resurrection experience. May your life be filled with insights. Happy Easter.