



Invitation for Proposals

NAIITS: An Indigenous Learning Community

13th Annual Symposium

June 2 - 4, 2016

Co-hosted by

Tyndale Seminary, Toronto, ON

“Education: Looking Behind, Seeing Ahead”

Focus:

For 15 years NAIITS has been exploring topics of interest and concern to a wide variety of people engaged in ministry and mission within the Native North American and wider Indigenous community. At each symposium there have been clear articulations of the landscape in which we found ourselves, as well as some very cutting edge insights about how we might more effectively understand indigenous reality, past and present.

For this, our 15th year of offering insights, relationships, and opportunities at each symposium, we have decided to revisit a topic that has been one of the driving forces of the NAIITS community – education.

Whereas the buffalo, salmon, or caribou might have been the means by which our ancestral kin were sustained, education is increasingly serving a similar purpose for us in the present. It is one of the means by which are becoming and will continue to be sustained in the days that lie ahead. Blair Stonechild observes that, for Indigenous peoples in North America, “Education is the New Buffalo.”

Our task in this symposium is to inquire into how theologically framed education, delivered in an Indigenous way, focused through Indigenous lenses, addressing Indigenous issues, aids us in our efforts toward health, well being, and sustainability. Our focus will be in the following areas:

- Education that connects Christian faith and Indigenous understandings of the spiritual
- Restoring human relationship through teaching and learning together
- Education that renews our relationship and relatedness to the land

Scope of Topics:

NAIITS invites proposals from scholars, practitioners, and other interested peoples for papers on Indigenous education within a theological framework that addresses itself to contemporary issues in the context of these three areas that describe a holistic approach to health and well-being.

Particular attention should be paid to changes in the interplay of theology and practice with respect to the educational environment, the practical issues of content and context, and the need for flexibility in delivery methodologies. Our interest is in a practical application of what ever is brought forward.



Papers that utilize any of a broad range of research and presentation methodologies will be considered. Submissions should address one or more of the following topic areas as noted above:

- Education that connects Christian faith and Indigenous understandings of the spiritual
- Restoring human relationship through teaching and learning together
- Education that renews our relationship and relatedness to the land

Papers should strive to demonstrate how traditional understandings within Indigenous contexts and cultural perspectives might be strengthened, or how new ideas and practices of contextualization might be implemented to further the goals of Native ministry and the advance of Native people in life, service, and the spiritual journey with Jesus. Papers could address themselves to both traditional and more contemporary ideas of Native Christian faith, as well as contemporary Native Christian thought related to cultural and religious contextualization.

NAIITS (see www.naiits.com)

- Is one of three divisions of Indigenous Pathways (IP), a non-sectarian, non-profit charity devoted to ministry with and within the Indigenous context;
- Is the educational division of the IP family dedicated to encouraging the Indigenous community to develop and articulate Indigenous perspectives on Christian theology and mission practice;
- Seeks to facilitate the creation of a written theological foundation for a) the visioning of new mission paradigms to reach Indigenous peoples with the Gospel; and, b) the contextualization of the Gospel in Indigenous communities;
- Encourages the development and implementation of Indigenous learning styles and “world views” as we encourage the development of a body of written work;
- Seeks to develop theological partnerships with other cultural communities of Christian faith which will ensure the voice of Christ is heard in all ways, seeking biblical faithfulness in all things;
- Addresses scriptural, theological, ethical and missiological issues from Indigenous perspectives in concert with those of other ethnicities who would speak into this context;
- Is committed to genuine dialogue with the historical traditions of Christianity and values the written and living resources encompassed in these traditions.

The Symposium

The purpose of the symposium is to facilitate open dialogue about various aspects of biblical and theological contextualization in Indigenous thought, history, and experience. Symposium planners hope that participants will bring together academic and practical approaches to the issues being addressed in the symposium.

Submission Guidelines

Submissions must include a brief personal bio and both an abstract of not more than 150 words and a proposal for the type of presentation intended of not more than 1000 words. The proposal must include a clear statement of your ideas and, if a scholarly presentation, enough of a context to show that you are aware of the basic issues and literature of the field. The proposal is the document on which submissions will be evaluated and selected. Abstracts and bios provided for selected submissions will be used in advertisements and symposium materials. Selected papers will be allotted 40 minutes for presentation. NAIITS may, at its sole discretion, invite or offer respondents for the papers.



Submission of Papers

Papers should be both theoretically solid and simultaneously practical. Submissions will be evaluated in light of their potential to contribute to the Symposium. To encourage dialogue we welcome submissions from various perspectives, from Indigenous presenters as well as those from supportive non-Indigenous presenters. *Scholarly papers must adhere to Turabian Seventh Edition; in Times Roman 12 font; have complete footnotes and Works Cited. Papers may be distributed to selected respondents and will be published in the NAIITS Journal. Finished papers must be submitted by April 15, 2016.*

The deadline for submissions of proposals for papers is midnight February 15, 2016. Please submit electronically to: **NAIITS Symposium Coordinator at symposium@naiits.com**

Previous symposiums/themes/topics

2001- Culture, Christian Faith and Error: Understanding how culture impacts faith and its formation

2003 – “Community: Native and Christian Values, Realities and Solutions.”

What are Indigenous and scriptural perspectives? How are these translated into traditions and values? How do discipleship, youth outreach and community development take place? How do Indigenous and Christian values intersect in the shaping of these practical tasks? What place does the family have in the Indigenous church? How is it possible to integrate strong traditional Indigenous values and practices from a Christian perspective so they produce a better result in the community? How is it possible to integrate value and practice? Papers should strive to show how traditional community notions might be strengthened and implemented.

2004 - “Education: Credentials, Competence, Learning for Understanding.”

Papers should strive to show how traditional notions of education might be strengthened and implemented, or how new ideas and patterns of learning might further the goals of Indigenous mission and the enhancement of Indigenous people’s Christian life, service, and ministry. Papers should draw on both - traditional Indigenous, and Christian thought.

2006 - “Historical Efforts to Contextualize the Gospel: Perspectives and Practices.”

Papers should strive to show how traditional practices and cultural perspectives might be strengthened and implemented, or how new ideas and practices of contextualization might further the goals of Native mission and the advance of Native people in Christian life, service, and ministry. Papers should address themselves to traditional missional ideas of Native Christian faith, as well as contemporary Native Christian thought related to contextualization.

2007 - Redemption, Reconciliation, and Restoration: Journeys Toward Wholeness.

Papers and panels should address themselves to one or more of the following issues:

- Traditional Native North American definitions and perceptions of justice
- Restorative Justice: movements toward intimacy
- Communal healing from historical trauma
- Corrections, penal systems and community involvement
- Spiritual and Theological roots of justice and oppression
- Decolonizing justice and the theologies of redemption and their practices; Theologies of suffering; Promises



of Prosperity and Suicide; Selling Indulgences in the Bush; Sanctification, histories of exploitation and oppression

- Truth-telling and other steps toward wholeness; Sanctified Community; Facing Racism; Beyond Solitudes; Embracing Others
- Theological roots of injustice and oppression; Definitions and perceptions of justice; Restorative justice: a move toward intimacy;

2009 – “*Indigenous Church: Expressions of Community.*”

Traditional Native North American ideas and practices of community, and their relationship to the Church, impact in both positive and negative ways. Papers should address themselves to one or more of the following:

- Indigenous Leadership: movements toward autonomy
- Communal healing from historical trauma interjected by the church
- Examples of positive wider community involvement in contemporary contexts
- Spiritual and Theological understandings of the church and its roles in Native life
- Decolonizing ecclesiology – making the church truly indigenous

2010 - “*In the Beginning: First Nation Narratives of Ontology and Mutuality*”

- Traditional Native North American Creation Narratives and Theologies
- Spiritual and Theological implications of multiple narratives of creation
- Indigenous readings of the creation through traditional cultural lenses
- Indigenous readings of the Genesis narrative in light of Evangelical eschatology(ies): engaging the idea of the destruction and replacement of creation
- Indigenous and cultural perspectives on creation, nature, and the sciences
- The meaning and implications of Indigenous creation narratives on the Christian doctrine(s) of creation;
- Theological and relational perspectives on the nature of time and of the future

2011 - “*Ways We Know Things: Exploring Indigenous Ways of Understanding*”

- Contrasting traditional Native North American ways of understanding, of knowing “truth” with those most often associated with Western thought
- Spiritual and theological implications of Indigenous foundations of knowledge. As one example, how would a different foundation on which knowledge is built, modify our understanding of the Creator and the creation?
- The meaning and implications of Indigenous understandings of truth on major Christian doctrine(s) ie eschatology, the Trinity, redemption, sanctification etc;
- Implications of indigenous knowledge on our understanding of Mission, in particular, the Missio Dei

2012 – “*Giants in the Land: Metaphors for Native Evangelicalism*”

- Contrasting the varieties of Native North American Evangelicalism that present themselves in the present North American Native context. What differentiates them and, why? Is there a literal embrace of the notion that Native North Americans are a powerful force in the evangelical world?
- Examining the Spiritual and theological implications of an Indigenous embrace of the notion that they are “Sleeping Giants.” As one example, how would an embrace of this statement of Dr’ Graham’s modify Native evangelical understandings of themselves?
- Exploring Indigenous understandings of who they are in the broader Evangelical context with respect to the prophetic – either traditional prophecies or, those rooted in the contemporary evangelical context.



- Implications of Indigenous metaphors of church and missional ecclesiology on our understanding of Mission, in particular, the *Missio Dei*

2013 - *"Shaping Faith: How Language Informs the Journey"*

- Examining the implications of verb-based over against noun-based languages on the perceptions of the relationship of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. How, if at all, does the nature and focus of the relationship change between the three persons of the Trinity when expressed in verb-based thought? What, if any, are the ways in which faith is framed differently as a result?
- Unpacking the gendered language of faith. How does a gendered language describe the nature of the Creator, of faith and of faith's journey differently, if at all, from languages which are non-gendered? What do we need to learn about faith's journey from the clearly different linguistic and therefore social realities described in Indigenous non-gendered languages of thought?
- Contrasting Native North American Evangelicalism and expressions of faith as framed by majority language usage where Indigenous language usage predominates. What social and/or structural differences are present? How do these differences influence relationships: between people and their Creator, with other people and with the rest of creation?
- Exploration of Indigenous understandings of the teachings embedded in the First and Second Testaments of the Scriptures as experienced through the listening ear of the mother-tongue speaker. How do non-European languages affect doctrine – its perception and impact? What are the implications for the life of the one who seeks to follow the Jesus Way?
- Identification of potential implications from encouraging Indigenous language use through and within missional ecclesiology. How would this/does this impact understanding the nature of the biblically framed Great Commission?

2014 - *"Indigenous Reality: Moving Beyond Colonial and Post-colonial Conversations"*

Reaction to colonization has produced varied responses to the Christian faith in contemporary Native North America, as it has in other parts of the Indigenous world. Yet most of these reactions continue to be framed largely by colonial language and thought – either in reaction to or borrowing from the language of colonial Christian faith. Post-colonial language and thought, some would argue, continues the same process.

- Contrasting Native North American conversations and writings, regarding Christian faith, with those from other colonized peoples so as to determine whether a common language is emerging that moves beyond colonial and postcolonial constructs into establishing a Christian identity not in contrast to the "other," but rather as a Christian identity in its own right;
- The role of re-traditionalization/reclamation on the formation of Christian identity as distinct from that of the colonial and postcolonial church;
- Potential implications of encouraging Indigenous expressions of Christian faith and life that are not rooted in the trajectories created by Indigenous colonial experiences of Christian faith and the church traditions with which these have been associated, on the one hand, or influenced by the often negative criticism of Christianity in the postcolonial conversation on the other;

2015 - *"Theologies of Reconciliation: les sauvages et le sophistiqué"*

Examining the differentiated responses of Indigenous and colonial peoples in the experience of reconciliation and relational restoration. Particular attention should be paid to the interplay of articulated theology and praxis. Papers that utilize any of a broad range of research methodologies will be considered. Submissions should address one or more of the following topic areas:

- Examining Native North American or other Indigenous peoples perspectives of the nature of reconciliation between people (individual and/or group) in the aftermath of conflict – whether violent or



passive-resistant;

- The role of Indigenous or Indigenous Christian tradition in the formation of restorative experiences;
- Potential implications of an inadequate response to the circumstance of relational breach in terms of ongoing conflict and/or suspicion by Indigenous and non-Indigenous people of one another;
- Implications for Indigenous peoples who are, or for those who may yet choose to become, followers of the Jesus Way
- Submissions on topics that relate clearly to the overall theme will also be considered.