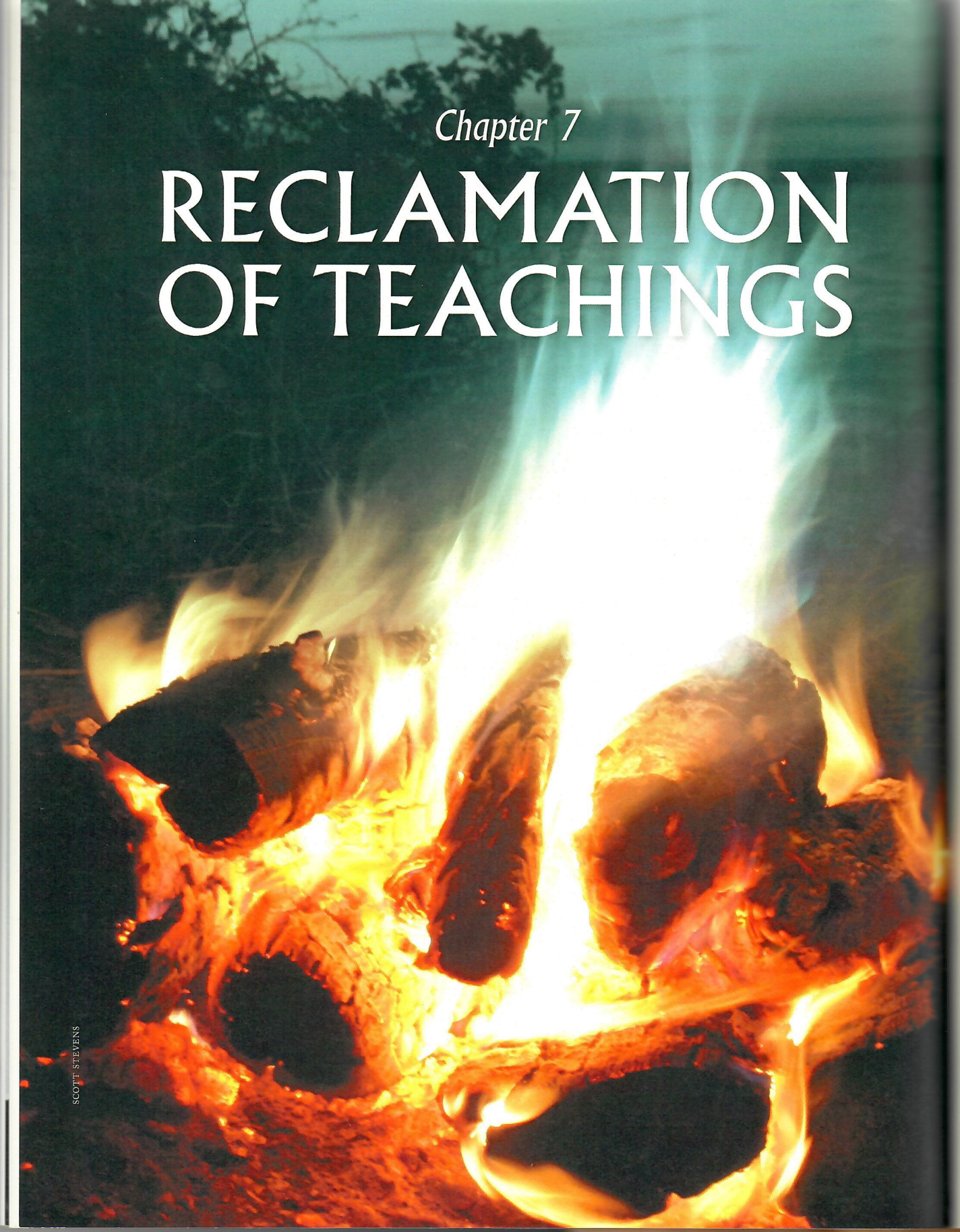


Chapter 7

RECLAMATION OF TEACHINGS

SCOTT STEVENS



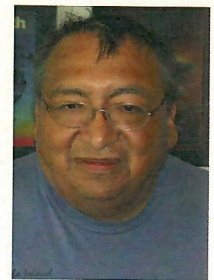
I wanted to share my name with you because names are important to me. My original name is *Châchâsis*, Little Bow, my Great Grandfather came from Pukatawagan. The Missionaries called him George Caribou but there was a misunderstanding, the Missionaries didn't understand our naming system. My children have been asking me to change back to our original name. I have a little girl she said 'if we really want to talk self-determination, why do you carry an Irish name with you? Take back your original name, let's take back our original name.'

—NEHETHO ELDER D'ARCY LINKLATER



That's how you assert your sovereignty. You take back what was taken from you. Not just pieces and bits. You take back everything: your pride, your strength, your land. Whatever it was that was taken from you. You find a way to take all of that back. Nobody's going to do it for you, you have to do it; we have to do it ourselves. Or are we going to wait and wait until there's nothing left, and nothing left for us to do? I say not. We have a chance, and if we have to do, use natural law, use ceremony, and use spirituality to reverse all this corruption, then we do it.

—THE LATE ANISHINAABE ELDER MARK THOMPSON



THE TREATY AND DAKOTA ELDERS IN MANITOBA HAVE DIRECTED US TO RETURN to our ancestral teachings as a method to decolonize ourselves and assert our identity, sovereignty, and nationhood. Although some teachings may have been lost, there are still many that are alive and that are waiting to be shared with the younger generations. Elders Linklater and Thompson in their quotes above tell us how to start.

Rebuilding & Reclaiming

It's amazing how the people had the strength to physically leave Churchill and then to rebuild a community, to try to rebuild our lives, a community, from nothing, there was nothing but bush there. You didn't see people coming in like bringing in equipment to clear or whatever, they did it on their own.

So within the first ten years or so of rebuilding their lives, their community, it was probably the most happiest time of my life, like seeing this development take place, it was different. It was different from living in a prefab house in Dene Village to a log cabin with a woodstove and people were sober, there was no alcohol allowed into the community of Tadoule Lake.

—DENESULINE ELDER ILA BUSSIDOR

So this must mean that my name is a spiritual experience that an Elder had is not the reason why I should respect my name and not change it to Peter Kelly because if I change my name to Peter Kelly that means I have relinquished my father's spiritual experience and I can never do that and I will not do it. So this is the responsibility that we have to our spirituality and this is the responsibility that we have to ancient Elders, their experiences, that's what we have. And my grandfather, Lynx Golden Eagle was his name. That is why I hold on the name, Golden Eagle (Ginew). I am called *Dabasaanakwad Ginew*.

—THE LATE ANISHINAABE ELDER TOBASONAKWUT KINew

Moving Forward

That is the hardest part, the mentality of the people to change that around. They are too used to walking around with head down like a zombie, being a second and third class citizen in your own country. That is not the way it is supposed to be.

—THE LATE ANISHINAABE ELDER MARK THOMPSON

Kwani ayabiiw ekosi kiyspano anohc iina ekwo ekwa ayabiiw, ekwa niitnan piyak-wan kiytatwaskiiniya ekii tatwoskiiya kakiinaw isah kiikwi.

Ekii wiicihitwocihk anebihk iskewniitwak yekwota kakii kaskiitaacihk mistah-ki kekwano kanookwotaacihk moola iina tabaats sooniyawa kiiwoscih toowenime-wak kiiyaam ekaa ekii osciitaniht. Kakaas-kiitaw kiicih anasihno pencila orange... kapeh miinit pihko. (In audible).

—ININIW ELDER ANGUS LINKLATER

This is how it is for them today and as for us, the people in my age group we all knew how to work; at anything we were given.

The women would always work together and that's why they managed to accomplish a lot and it was not for money that they did their work even though back then there was no money to be paid. Today even your own people will even have a hard time giving you one of those orange pencils.

Weweni osha eta ji-ayaagwaamiziyang giishin gi-wii-gashkitoomin gegoon, gi-wii-niibawiikaadizomin. Ji-wiindanoki-indiyang that is the only way it will work. Amii eta ge-izbi wiiji'idiyang, and get an education.

—ANISHINAABE ELDER ENIL KEEPER

That's what I believe today and we have to carry those for our future generations to come and I am honoured that I sit here with my Elders here today and that I got a glimpse of their wisdom and their knowledge. And I want to share that with my children for I, I call myself an Elder because I am going to become one soon and I want to teach them the teachings that we share that we got from our Elders. These are what we learn every day, from the day we were born till the day we die, we never stop learning from each other and that's what the Creator wants is to work together instead of arguing. We have to make peace, we cannot... we have to reconcile, we cannot keep disputing, blaming. We have to forgive and go ahead into the future for the sake of our children.

—ININIW ELDER CLARENCE BIGHETTY

Traditional ways of my people, the skills that were revived within the last 35 years, 30 years maybe is the drum songs, traditional drum songs, traditional hand games and that's it. Maybe some of the hunting skills were passed on to the younger people but other than that in terms of making a hand drum or making things that our grandparents and parents used for their daily lives is something, it seems like it's gone forever although its not. We don't use it today. So, I was asked a really interesting question by my 18 year old, "when kids say I am proud to be Sayisi Dene. I can't say that." I said "why?" He said, "I don't know what I'm proud of because I don't know how to speak the language for one thing." So the young people of that age group I guess, they are aware they are Dene and yet what do they know about the skills, the language. You can read about it maybe, but that's about it.

—DENESULINE ELDER ILA BUSSIDOR

We need to be very careful if we want to be able to do something and be able to stand on our own. We have to work together, that is the only way it will work. That is the only way we can help each other and get an education.



SCOTT STEVENS



SCOTT STEVENS

Akwa nista residential school niki-iskóliwin, mistayi nista niki-tótákawin. Kiwanápitikawinánaw, our spirituality, kákinaw kékwán, ká-isi-pimátsiyák, kitayamiyáwinaw, akwáni piyakwan kiwanápitikawinánaw kékwán, kiyapic máka kikákiskisinánaw, kítwám ta-káwé nántamák anima ká-itwéyak. Mítóni nitakakénítén ká-isi-ayamiyék, ká-isi-pétátakok. Éwakwanik máka anikik kitóskátisiminawak poko ta-pétákik wístawáw. Éwako óma ká-atóskátamák óma, ká-tótamák.

I also went to residential school and I suffered a lot of abuse. We were disrupted in our cultural development, our spirituality, everything, our way of life, our prayers. We have been torn from our cultural ways but we still remember them. We will embrace them again, this is what we are saying. I am very excited about what I hear you saying! Our young people have to hear this too. This is what we are working on this exact kind of work.

I am excited about what we are presenting here, what we are speaking of that will help our children, our great grandchildren. They will use this cultural knowledge that we knew and grew up in; that our Creator gave to us to use.

—ININIW ELDER NATHAN MCGILLIVARY

Giyaabi andone'igerwag daashkoo e wanishinowaad. Daabishkoo debigo zagwaakaan e bimi ayaawaad. Amii dash iwe anamiyaayang ji gagedeyang maano ji mikamowaad eweni Anishinaabe. Ogenen gewiin awaa gaa izhi miinigoowizirwaad. Amii ge izhi wiijiyangidwaa abinoojiyag.

The fear that was instilled in *Anishinaabe* people by the dominant society is still very strong in today's generation, especially in the religious sense. The work to bring back balance in *Anishinaabe* identity crises and social problems that plague our people and communities will take many years to restore. The younger generations need to learn about their own history, so they too, can come up with solutions for themselves and their own future generations.

—ANISHINAABE ELDER MARTINA FISHER

Amii dash iwe ji-wiijiingidwaa amii ingiwe, gaa-gidimaagizirwaad abinoonjiyag. Aabiji goda gidimaagizirwag; that alcohol and drugs are swallowing our young people. Miinge ji-gakinaa'omowangidwa. Ogenen gegendamang ji-ga-ginaamowangidwa ingi abinoojiyag; oshkibimaadiziiug. Gaawin iwe ji-gaganawendaman iwe wegonen gaa-gikendaman.

Ngoding maajaayan gaawiin wedi, they don't need it up there, they need it down here; right here omaa akiing. Amii imaa they need it there amii imaa abinoojiyag onadawendaanawa iwe. Ogoowe abinoonjiyag gaa-nishanaatagamigizirwad, they're crying for help; bizaanigo mawirwag jibazagwiiyang da-gakinaa'omowangidwaa. Daa-noondamoog gosha.

—ANISHINAABE ELDER ESTHER CAMERON, WAAWIYEKAMIGOOG

They [young people] are still searching like they are lost. Just like they are in the dense bush. That is what we need to ask for when we pray that they (*Anishinaabe*) find the way they were given. What was given to them. That is how we can help the children.

These are the unfortunate children we must help. They are indeed pitiful, that the drugs and alcohol are swallowing our young people. Those are the ones we have to teach. What is it that we know that we can teach these children; the youth. You are not to keep that knowledge that you have acquired to yourself.

When you leave here, they don't need it up there; they need it down here, right here on this Earth. This is where the children need it. These children that have destructive behaviours, they're crying for help; they are crying and we need to get up and help them. They will listen, this I know.

Ékwánima nína ká mositayan. Mitoni ni mositán oma anoc ká isi ayamiyán. Oskátisak tápé énákasininik opimotéwiniwáw, kapé taki kiskinarwamacik, takí kosikwénitakik animéniw wapmáwasowin. Tápwé nínánán ékota takí wítamarwáyákok ka kayitáyátsiyák kákípé isi kiskinarwámákawiyák.

Ékosi mína Nókom kí isi wítamák mána. Ékwáni, ékosi mína kí isi wítamákawin. Éko máka anoc, ékosi isa takí isi wítarwámáyákok ókok oski iskwéwak. Oma ká ati isi ániképanik, wínarwáw káwí ati isi anisképanicik. Éka isa ta wanitámak anima. Ká kítwám isa papéyako piko arwiyak ká wítamát. Mona kí nisitotam. Máka ká kítwám ká pétak. Ékota animéniw ká ati océpikiwaninik opimátisiwinik.

Cikéma anima tótósapoy nínánán ota ni niwénáninák tá ocípanik. Cikéma ékota ékí ocípanit awa arwásis, eh, niwáninák. Éko mína kakinaw kékwán ota ta apacitáyák niwáninák. Nicarwásimisinánik. Ékosi anima ká isi, nístanán kiskinarwámákawiyák. We were taught, nístanán máka tati pakitinamák anima.

Éko mína ta awayáyákok kiskinarwámáyákok oméniw. Oméniw isa ininíwin éká ta wanitácik. Ta yáycikápa-wicik isa ita wístarwáw, eh. Ta asarwápat-akik nété níkánik. Éká é wápatamák tánisi tati isinákosicik aniki nicarwás nosisim-inánik ka itwán. Éko mína anikik ayáwak tanisko cápáninánik.

That is what hurts me today. Today I speak of that great pain that I feel. The youth have so little knowledge of their lives. They should be taught and to have great respect for this gift of childbearing. I realize that it is our responsibility as grandmothers to teach our young women about this thing.

That is what my grandmother used to tell me. That was what I was told. And today it is our turn to tell these to our young women. So that they can carry on these skills to the next generation. So that the skills are not lost. To be told repeatedly not just once. They might not understand it then. But if you repeat it all the time. That is where you understand the ways of life from.

The milk they should be given has to come from our breasts. That was where the child came from, your own body, eh, our bodies. And we have to use all of our bodies to raise our children. That was what we were taught by our Elders in the past. We were taught, so we can teach our children.

To give birth to a child. We have to teach this to the young women so that we do not lose that gift. To use that for their own strength. To think about their future struggles. We do not know what is to become of our children and grandchildren in the future on this land. What about those yet to be born?

Ékwáni étoké, wésa mistahi asa tayamin. Ékwáni, ékwánima péyak kékwán nís-ta. Céskwa apók étoké apísti ota mína. Ékoma nístá nitakáwátén ta kiskinarwámát, you know, the young people, the young women. Ta kiskinarwámáyákok kínánaŵ, eh. Takí mámaŵapiyák kínaŵáŵ é kayité iskwéwiyák.

—ININIW ELDER SARAH GARRIOCH

Nístá níki-pétaráŵ é-itwét kítwám itoték óma ká-kí-isi-mínikaŵiyék ininíwí-ístíkéwín, mistayi sókan ayamiyáwín. Kitayamiwinaŵ, ásay mwác óta ayáŵ kétéyáŵ, kíwétotamok óma ininíwí-ístíkéwín, pamiyisowín kí-itwéŵ. Mistayi wí-ati-itakamíkan misiwé anisiníwak é-wí-kíwétotakik aníma isi-ayáwín, traditional ká-kí-totakik kimosóminíwak, kókominaŵak, kakináŵ kékwán é-kisténihtahkík é-kí-ayáçik.

—THE LATE ININIW ELDER HAGAR HEAD

E-minwéntamán ká-isi-pískiskwéyék kákináŵ kékwán ninísítotén ká-ánimótamék. Máwac é-minwéntamán é-miskómáyék ospwákan. E-kístápatísít, ékosi é-kí-isi-ápaciyáçik kimosóminaŵak é-kí-wanítáyák éwako aníma. Máka ásay mitóni kípénátíkonáŵ kítwám óma kiskéntamáwín ká-kí-waníyoyáçk. Emístokósiw é-kí-pétakosík é-kí-niswanáçítát ékwéníŵ.

—ININIW ELDER RAY CATT

Ayaasago it's getting a little bit stronger; mashkawiziiimagan awegonen owe Anishinaabe gaa miinigoowizid gewiin omaa. Amii iwe inda wiinjindaamin, nga gage gakináa'omawanaanig ozhki'ayaasag. Ayaamagan niibiwa omaa ayii gaa zagas-waawad iwe, dago minikwewin gegoo.

That's it for now. I talk too much. That was what I wanted to say today. I hope what little I had to share was good. I would like to see these gifts and skills taught, you know, the young people, the young women. To teach them ourselves, to sit together as a circle of Elderly women.

I also heard him say that we should return to our traditional ways. Prayer is powerful. Your language, we don't have the elderly with us anymore—we don't have our tradition in the North anymore nor our way of livelihood, he said. There's going to be a massive movement in the future, Aboriginal people are going to take back their traditional ways, the way our grandfathers lived, our grandmothers. They had everything, they had respect.

I am happy to hear the way you are speaking. I understand everything that you are talking about. I am especially happy to hear you mention the pipe. It is so important, that is how our grandfathers used it but we had lost that way. Our traditional ceremonies, that we had lost, are now coming back to us.

Yes. It's getting a little bit stronger; its gaining strength as time goes on with our way that the Anishinaabe was given as well. This is what we follow now and we are teaching the young people this way. There is plenty of what they smoke and drink as well.

Ngii izbichigemin irwe, aanind Mooniyaa ininiwag ngiji ganawaabamigonaan-iig wegonen e izhichiged Anishinaabe. Gii minose gakina gegoo, aaniin ezhi maajidooyang gakina gegoo. Amii bezbigwan owe ishkoniganes aani ezhi maajidooyan, aazha ndani waabandaan aanii minoseg. Gakina gegoo aaniin ezhi debwedaagozid Anishinaabe omaa noongom ishkoniganing. Aazha ndani mashkawigaabawimin, ni waabandaan eni mashkawigaabarwiyaang. Aabiji jügendaaagon.

Eya, gakina gegoon aazha ani gegise, bangii gaarwin wiin niibowa. Bangii igo geget bi azhegiwemagan, aabiji wedi agaawaa gii niibawamin ishkwe'ayii gegaa ogii agonaanawaa Wemitigooshi. Aazha dash bi azhegiwemagan, giyaabi niibowa ji azhegiweyang; waasa giyaabi ji azhegiweyang jibwaa oditamang anii mewinzha gaazhi miinigowizid mewinzha Anishinaabe. Amii ezhi naanagadawendamaan, boy niibowa dasing bezbig aanish omaa, bezbigoo ayaa aanish omaa; niibowa dasing dibwaa nibaayaan, ni mamikaaw aaniin gezhi wiijiyag niiji Anishinaabe.

Nashke ni mindimooyem gaa izbid, nasine churching ngii izhaamin, bigo imaa church, we go to church; we go to church every Sunday. Well during the week, aazha miinawaa same thing happened to us, amii gaarwin gegoo. Ngoding amii gaazhi ganoozbid, nawach andonerwag Manidoo ndig. Haaw aandi gezhi mikawang, amii imaa gaazhi gibijiyang, aa geget, Anishinaabe izhichigerwin amii imaa ezhi izhaayang, ezhi ganoozbid, na ndik, gi mikawaanaan. Boy geget na amii imaa onji, gaa ondinamang imaa onji ayii, neyaab eya.

We did the pipe ceremony there and some of the White people were watching us wondering what the Anishinaabe was doing. Everything went good in how we would prepare everything. It's the same thing with our community here; I already see that everything is starting off in a good place. There is a good feeling in how the people will be heard in a good way today. We are beginning to be stronger; I see the results of our strength already. It's a real good feeling.

Yes, everything is coming to a change a little at a time but not significantly. It's coming back a little at a time for sure; our way of life was almost erased forgotten because the Whiteman almost buried our traditional way. However it's coming back and there's still a long ways to go; we have to travel in this way for some time to get back to get to the teachings that were first given to the people. I often think of ways, many times before I go to sleep; ways to help my people when I'm here by myself, as I live alone here.

My wife told me, we always used to attend church, any church, we would go to church; we went to church every Sunday. Well during the week, the same thing happened to us, there was nothing there spiritually. Sometime later she spoke to me and said we should go and seek the Creator out. "Okay where are we going to find the Creator" and this is where we stopped at the ceremony and she said "look we have found the Creator." Boy, for sure this is where we found this way of life again.

Amii imaa geniinarwind gaa ondinamang, gi daadiziiminaaniiig anii gaa zhi ga giigimigidwaa. Amii imaa be onji bi anigewidooyang geniinarwind. Biinish noon-gom, bi azhegiwenyan, nga nagadaan omaa ndigidowin gewiinarwaa oshki ayaag ji ani aabajidoorwaa anii gaa zhi miinigoorwizid Anishinaabe.

Aazha gakina gegoon njaaginaan, amiisa eta ezhi bagosenimoyan, maano gewiinarwaa ongo gichi Anishinaabeg bakaan ishkoniganing gaa ayaarwaa egaa ji bagijisigwaa, daashkoo miinarwind gaa izhichigeyang omaa. Gaawin niwii bagijisiiimin, niwii gagwe mashkarwisidoomin, niwii jiiwananag oshkaayaasag; aazha niwii jiiwigonaanag. Amii iwe geniin ezhi bagwasenimawaa ongo bagan oshkoniganing gaa onjiirwaa gete Anishinaabeg.

—THE LATE ANISHINAABE ELDER DONALD BIRD, NAANAWIGIIZHIG ININI

And there's some people who are going back, and there's some people beginning to revive traditional beliefs. But it was assured for many years that you could almost set up any religion in any community as long as it was Christian it was okay. But you're singled out if you want to go back to traditional beliefs cause there's a deep seeded dislike for traditional beliefs, and yet that's how our people lived. Are we ashamed to be who we are? Is that the kind of conditioning that we have been lead to believe?

—ANISHINAABE ELDER KEN COURCHENE

Móna poko kínánaw anima ká-isi-ininíwi-wépinikéyák máka wistawáw aniki Christians mína aniki, natománának mína aniki ta-pé-wítapimikowákók, mitoni kákinaw isa poko, mitoni ta-isi-mino-kanawá-patamáak anima ká-isi-minikawiyák éká awiyak ta-ati-wanitótásowák éká tanótintówák éwako anima óci.

—ININIW ELDER NATHAN MCGILLIVARY

That's where we received these teachings from the Elders that taught them to us. This is where we carried them from. And when it's my turn to return to the place I came from, I will leave these teachings of our people too, to the young ones so that they will make use of them and learn the ways of our people that were given to them.

I have exhausted my words and my wish is to encourage the people from the other communities not to give up in doing what we do here with the teachings. We are not giving up; we are going to make it so that it will be strong again we are with the young people; and in return they have come to support us. This is what I wish upon the Elders in the other communities.

We're not the only ones who are going back to reclaim our tradition, those who are Christians are doing that as well. We invite them to come and join us. In fact, everybody is asked to come. We want to work on these things that we were given in a good way, so that no harm comes to anyone nor should anyone have any conflict with one another because of that.

Amii ayii ngoding igo gaagii bagijiimagag; gaagii bagidinamowaad mano dagadaga. Noogom Makade'okanayewiijiwe zbhigo gaye Anishinaabe izhichigewin. Amii aazha mina bangii they're coming back; bi azhegiwamagan Anishinaabe izhichigewin omaa goda niinawind ndishkonikaninaan. Wiinge igo niwijiigomin. Anishinaabe izhichigewag neyaab, gaawin aabinji awiya church izhaasii, apane igo narwach izbaa ayiing ceremonies, pipe ceremonies, circle ceremonies, and the shake tent.

What was not practiced, the ones [Priests] allowed. And all of a sudden they [Priests] started to allow us to have our way of worship once again. And today, the Black Robe has joined us in our ceremonies. And some of the ceremonies are coming back; our way of life is coming back to us here in our Reserve. It is really helping. We are being helped by the Creator. Not much people go to church and our ceremonies are alive once again; they prefer to attend the ceremonies such as pipe ceremonies, circle ceremonies and the shake tent.

—THE LATE ANISHINAABE ELDER DONALD BIRD, NAANAWIGIIZHIG ININI

Yekwo, yekwo niista ninaskwomon nitehi oscih eka isa mitwoni ekii wanitahikwiya maaka kikii pekikiskinahakwanawak isi tiysi, isi tiysi kekwano isa wiistawaw ekii kiskeniitakwa kikiskeniitenanaw. Ekwa ayabiiw kitwo kitwocwasimisinanaw ekweno anohc kapiikiskecibk, otayamiiniwaw wiistawaw ekanasiimocibk.

This is what I am thankful for, I am thankful from my heart that I was not entirely misled as we did learn something and they did know other things that we now know of today. This is now the language that our children speak today and their language of today is the English language.

The future of our children is English maybe, maybe it was part of our Elders' wisdom for them to understand their language, for them to survive into the future as part of a learning experience, maybe they saw that? To my belief as a Native or First Nations person, I understand a lot you know, through the Whiteman's language.

You know, growing up in school I learned and listened it wasn't again, a total loss. I used that tool today! If it wasn't for that tool, if I didn't know how to read or write I still would be sitting blank with the white piece of paper in front of me that I wouldn't understand. But I do understand fully and we have to look forward and we have to not forget but forgive by whatever means that is a way for the betterment of our Elders for healing. Because we have to live together in this country as a whole.

No matter which race you come from, which background you're from, which country; the world is changing today and we have to make a betterment of our nation with other nations to work together for the future of our children. They have to survive while we pass on. They are the one's that have to understand all this, what we discuss here, and they have to sit with us and we have to make them understand where we're heading, where we were.

And I'm honoured and I respect that very much that we're writing the history of our people, our First Nations people of this country. And I am also thankful that, that you

know, they shared their knowledge, you know the White race, the *amistihkwoso*. *Yekwo omah*, whatever, whatever name they have, we First Nations people have given, we shared our knowledge and wisdom with them and also they shared their wisdom and knowledge with us.

See we changed, we traded, we exchanged our gifts, our knowledge, our wisdom and we shared as a whole. By working together we can achieve our goals and our destinies and our dreams. And all the things that we lost we can bring back to life! Our future generation can secure their futures by working with them and they have to know these, these things. It's very important to know both ways.

—ININIW ELDER CLARENCE BIGHETTY

Mewizha ingo ndooji nisitawinaan o'o, that is education, amii ozha owe ganabaj debwe that is the most powerful tool there is we got that is, we got is education. Giishin iko education iwewaad Anishinaabeg and learn how to work together. Amii osha eta ge izhi miinosek gegoon amii bizhishik ekidoyaan at home. Amii bizhishik ekidoyaan, bigo osha eta ji wiidanokiindich awiya, amii eta ge izhi minosek gegoon.

—ANISHINAABE ELDER ENIL KEEPER

I will always remember the day my mother got her status card because she was still living and I was visiting her and she got it in the mail from Nelson House and she was so happy. She said, "*Nitánis, mina é Indian iwiyán* [My daughter, I am an Indian again]. Oh my God, my daughter, once more I am Indian." I thought: "who did you think you were?" How could government or whomever, say to my mother for 70 plus years, "you're not an Indian anymore." Then all of sudden decide, okay, you can be an Indian again. It made her so happy. The white outside world as we used to call it, saw us as Native people and yet our own people, saw us as half-breeds and sometimes I wonder what gives them the right to tell us who we are. Like how can they say, okay now your Indian, now your not and now you can be again.

—NEHETHO/ININIW ELDER CHRISTINA BAKER, *NÍPISÍS CÍKIPÍK*



SCOTT STEVENS

I have recognized this for a long time, that is education that is I believe that is the most powerful tool that we have is education. If the Aboriginal people were educated and learn how to work together. That is the only way things will work that is what I always say at home. That is what I always say, people have to work together that is the only way things will work out.

1985, the first person in Ebb and Flow that got their Treaty rights [was] my wife. Amii awe, amii awe niigaan gaa-ango'ind 1985.

Booshke giyaabi gii-ikidowag gaa-gii-wiidanokiimaad aanish niishigo neyaab Anishinaabewiyan amii gaa-inaarwaad. Three years back pay giimiinaa Income Tax. Miigwech gaye ogii-inaa'. Miigwech ogii-inaa ikwewag gaa-gii-maawandoonidi-waad gaa-gii-izhaarwaad Ottawa. Neyaab ji-ago'idirwaa, gaa-gii-gashkidoorwaad neyaab ji-ago'idirwaad.

Aanish inaa nimoonyaa angizomin ngii-inendaamin gete ingo geniinarwind Metisag. Amii ozha ono nimaamaa ogozisa' Metisa'. Baadaniinong amii e-inaajimoyaan.

Aandi bakaan gegii-onji-Metis. Geget aanish mooniyaa obaabaarwan niibowa awiyya. Nashke gaa-gii-izhisek. Nimishoomis awe gaa-gii-izhichiged. Neyaab dash biindigemin zbigoo, neyaab ngii-biindigemin.

Amii onji ingi ikweg aabiji gii-mashkawigaabaawiwag ingiwe ikwewag gaa-gii-amii iwe ago'idirwin gaa-gii-manowe'amowaad. Gii-bakweyaapindwaa gewiinawaa. Gakina aanish awiyya gii-bakweyaapinaa, ikwe e-wiidigemaad. Mooniyaa angizonid awiyan amii sa e-gii-wanitood aanish godak gaa-gii-ango'ind amii e-gii-wanitood aanish awe ikwe.

Nashke ingiwe ikwewag gaa-gii-maamookamigiziwaad, miigwech geniin neyaab e-gii-biindigeyaan ishkoniiganing. Metis geniin ngii-izhinikaanigoo sixty years, I was a Métis.

1985, the first person to get their Treaty rights in Ebb and Flow [was] my wife. That was the first one to get their Treaty rights. That was the one. It was 1985.

Her co-workers even said, are you going to be an Ojibwe again. That's what they said to her. She was given three years back pay in income tax. Three years back pay. She said thank you. She said thank you to the women who got together and went to Ottawa to get Treaties reinstated. Get Treaties reinstated.

Well, we had the same status as the Whiteman. Suddenly we were Métis. It is my mother's sons who are Métis. This is what I've said many times. I'm saying. It was her sons.

Where else would a Métis come from? Well, many have Whitemen as their fathers. Look what happened. What my grandfather did. However, we were reinstated to the Reserve.

It was those women. Those women were strong. They stood steadfast seeking reinstatement because they were disenfranchised. When a woman married someone non-Treaty, she lost her Treaty status. The woman lost her Treaty rights. That's what happened.

Now, for those women who got together, I too, say thank you to them. For getting me reinstated. I was called a Métis for over sixty years. I was a Métis. That's what I was called.

Gaarwiin gegoon ngii-ayaasiin number. Apii e-miinigooyaan number, number gaa-miinigooyaan amii gaarwian gegoon bakaan ngii-anamajiwosii. Amii zbigoo card Métis, ayii zbigoo ndayaan Treaty card. So I throw away my Métis card. Nawach niminendaan noongom Anishinaabeg, e-Anishinaabe winagizoyaan geniin.

—ANISHINAABE ELDER PERCY HOULE, OZHAAWASHKO-BINESI

Ngoding Anishinaabe neyaab oga-mikaan ogikina'amaagewin gaa-gii-miinind. Manidoo gaa-gii-miinaad. Ono gegoogaa-wanitoowaad, mii ini gaye maamaa aki eni-wanitood. Mii ini ge-ani-dazhindaming. Owe gaa-wiikonaamoying. Owe dago miinawaa awesiiyag. Dago miinawaa gitigaan.

Gaarwiin, you can't cut a spirit. Owe gaye mitig wenizhisbid, aapiji awe onizhisbi, the good spirit that tree. Ambe awe maazbigid, hey, maji-mitig. Gaarwiin, gii-aakozi awe mitig. Mii bezhigon Anishinaabe gaa-gii-bi-izhi-aakozid. Awesiiyag, gii-maazbigiwag. Mii awe dash Manidoo, mitig, gwayak oganawenimaan ini gaa-aakozinid. Baan-imaapii booni-bimaadizid, ozaam aakozid, mii zbigoo akiing da-izhi-azhegiirwe.

—ANISHINAABE ELDER FRANCIS NEPINAK, GIIWEDINANANG

I didn't even have a number. When I was issued a number, I didn't feel any different. I now have a Treaty card and I threw away my Métis card. Today I'm proud of being recognized as an Ojibwe. I am no different. I'm not different and I'm proud to be called an Anishinaabe part of this here.

One day, the Anishinaabe will rediscover his teaching. What was given to him. What the Creator had given him. These things they're losing, those are the things our mother the Earth is losing. These are the things we will be discussing in the future. Our air as well as the animals, and the plants.

No, you can't cut a spirit. When a tree is healthy, it's got a good spirit. The tree has a good spirit. However, if it's sick, it's no good. No, the tree was sick just like the way the Anishinaabe was sick. They were in a bad way. However, the Creator looks after that tree properly when it's sick. Later, when it gets well or it dies it returns to the Earth.

Amii imaa ge-izhi-mikamang. Amii iwe endone'amang. Daabishkoo awensii gaa-mikang aaniindi ge-izhi-zhaaboshkaad. Gii-mikang awensii aaniindi ge-izhi-zhaaboshkaad, amii sa iwe. Gaarwiin miinawaa gegoo o-gotanziin. Gaarwiin miinawaa gegoo o-gibishkaagosiin. Amii owe gaa-dazhindamo'ogwaa giniijaanisi-naanig goozhisinaanig. Ji-dibendamowaad aki, ji-dibenindizowaad obimaadiziwin-iwaa, owiiyawiwaa'. Ji-gotaajisigwaa. Ji-bimosewaaad. Ji-jiikendamowaad. Ji-baapiwaaad. Ji-moojigitoowaad. Ji-minwendamowaad ebimaadiziwaaad. Amii iwe mayaa. Amii gosha iwe ji-gii-bimaadiziy-ing, ji-gii-jiikendamang. Gaarwiin wiin ji-gagiinwaabiigisagiingwebiy-ing, gaye ji-ajidawikwebiy-ing. Gaarwiin iwe gi-gii-izhi'igosiinaan Manidoo.

—THE LATE ANISHINAABE ELDER MARK THOMPSON

To me, we were given a lot of tools to help ourselves. We have ceremonies, we have all these different kinds of ceremonies, we still have that power. The government assimilated us, put us in Residential School, they broke up that family system, they took away our ceremonies, banned them because they knew that was where our strength was; it was in our ceremonies.

But now, we're reviving our ceremonies and we're coming back to that way of life. We can bring it back. We will become powerful people again. And women have to start speaking up. As Clan Mothers, we've got to bring that Clan System back. The men have to listen to what women say. We have rights. The Creator gave us ability to bring forth life, with a partner. So we have to work together in order to do that.

—NEHETHO ELDER D'ARCY LINKLATER

That's where we will find it. Just like an animal that finds the route that will take him through. When he finds that opening, that's it. He never fears anything again. Nothing gets in his way again. This is what I talk about for our children and grandchildren. So that they will own the land, so that they will own their lives, their bodies. So they will not fear. So they will be happy. So they can laugh. So they can have fun. So they will be glad to live. That is it exactly. That's how we should be living, so that we can be happy. Not so that we have long sad faces, or sit with our heads down. The Creator did not make us like that.