

## Now What?

### Insights on Resetting the Relationship

#### Goyce Kakegamic

Renowned artist, scholar and political activist Goyce Kakegamic was sexually and physically abused at residential school. Yet he remained friends with the principal until the day the principal died. "I wouldn't be standing before White Man if I hadn't gone to residential school," he asserted. That candour and grace compelled listeners to lean in to what he had to say about the needs of Indigenous Peoples. According to Kakegamic, Indigenous Peoples need:

- safe, secure future for their children who are able to access education
- healthy communities
- economic self-sufficiency and management of resources in their territories
- the ability to maintain their languages and cultures
- to live in harmony and peace with their neighbours
- to contribute to Canada at large

This list is no different than the list a non-Indigenous Canadian would make, Kakegamic pointed out. "When we work in solitude, we continue to have misconceptions," he said.

Kakegamic was equally pointed in his remarks on accountability. "Funds and programs will not guarantee results," he suggested. "The answers do not come from Ottawa. They must come from the Indigenous Peoples themselves."

Kakegamic summed up his talk with the question Jesus asks the lame man in John 5: *Do you want to be well?* "This question applies to all First Nations fathers, children and communities," says Kakegamic. "The first step in getting healed is to want to get well. Fathers in particular are the key to healing and hope in their Indigenous communities."

*Last October, Highland Baptist Church, Kitchener, hosted over 150 attendees at a conference called Resetting the Relationship. At the conference several Indigenous men and women leaders from a variety of denominations offered insights into how Canadian Baptists may best move forward into a new relationship with Indigenous Peoples. Baptist Women was one of several co-sponsors of this conference.*

*Each presenter was clear: Resetting the relationship between Indigenous Peoples and Canadian Baptists begins with listening.*

*Through 2017, live magazine invites you to listen to the counsel given by Indigenous leaders at the conference.*

*We start with Goyce Kakegamic.*

# AN INDIGENOUS SISTER Prays

*One of my personal highlights for 2016 arrived as I edited and laid out the Baptist Women prayer guide for our Immeasurably More month of prayer in November.*

*Lesley Hobgood from Aylmer Baptist Church, hard at work on her prayer contributions to the guide, e-mailed me. “Jean Maracle, an indigenous mother of eight, wrote these prayers after talking to me.”*

*As I read Jean’s prayers, I realized two things: Nothing’s more powerful than a woman’s prayers for those she loves as her own. And equally powerful is the gift of friendship. Friendship creates the safe space in which we can offer up the things that make us howl and grieve and praise.*

*Lesley and the women at Aylmer Baptist Church created that space for Jean. As a result, Jean has gifted all of us. Her sorrow slides into praise to our God who knows the issues, who knows the name of each missing girl and woman, who welcomes children, who grieves and mourns with Jean and with us, who turns that mourning into dancing.*

*Here are Jean’s prayers.*

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## For the system

O LORD OUR FATHER, You know we have come a long way in our educational system. Now there are schools where children go and come home each day, where they live with their family.

Now we need to help the people in between—parents and grandparents who lived in government

schools, who had no training in how to be part of a family, how to take care of children, how to keep house. It will take a few more generations to accomplish this. Meanwhile we have to learn to love one another and to forgive.

O Lord, please help our teachers on the reserves. Be with them, guard them and fill their hearts full



of love and care. Show them the way to work and love and give our native children hope for the future. For this, we thank You Lord.

### For our children

Lord, help me to be strong to help my children understand why they have been insulted. Help me to have the words. Help me know how to let them feel that You are with them always, that You love them, that they have the ability to love the ones who hurt them and that they can always be proud that You chose them to be "native." Help them forgive, not hate.

### For people lost

Lord, our hearts are broken. We need Your love and healing hand. Help us to accept this fact: Our daughter met her death at the hands of a very cruel man. I offer prayer for all the girls and women who have been picked up on the road and never heard of again. This is still happening on and off reserves. We pray for their families who miss them dearly, who wait in hope that police will successfully hunt and find them. We know so far this has been in vain. O Lord, be merciful.

### For the missing and murdered women

O Lord, we beg of You to build a fire under the police who appear to display very little interest in our

missing girls and women. They all are very precious to us. We are left with memories, dreams and thoughts of their deaths. Help us deal with the reality of our missing dear ones and the finality of their loss. Even so, dear Father, we thank You for Your continuing love and care.

### For women who have been mistreated

Dear Lord, here we stand asking for Your strength to reach for help. We ask for courage to enter the world again. To take our part without fear. To have the strength not to hate those who have done harm to us. Lord You are the way, the truth and the light. We feel Your presence and reach for the love and care we need at this time. Give us the power to forgive the hurtful things that were said and done to us so that we may set a good example for our children.

*RJ, with prayers from Jean Maracle*

## PRAY THESE NUMBERS! EACH FACT TELLS A STORY. EACH NUMBER IS A LIFE.

- Approximately 75 per cent of survivors of sexual assault in Aboriginal communities in Canada are young women under 18 years of age.
- Aboriginal women and girls make up the majority of those being domestically sex trafficked in Canada.
- In Saskatchewan, although Indigenous women make up only six per cent of the province's population, 80 per cent of its missing women are Indigenous.
- Aboriginal women in Canada are five times more likely than women of the same age to die as a result of violence.
- Between 1997 and 2000, the murder rate for Aboriginal women was almost seven times higher than that of non-Aboriginal women.

#### Sources:

- Amnesty International February 2014
- [www.statcan.gc.ca](http://www.statcan.gc.ca)
- Saskatchewan Provincial Partnership Committee on Missing Persons, Final Report October 2007)

*Photo credit: Roshel Kidd*