



Feast Centre for
Indigenous STBBI Research

**Conversation: Reflecting on the Papal Visit; Sexual Health, Gender Identity and
Reparations**

(00:05 – 07:26) Miranda Black:

Hello, everyone. My name is Miranda Black. Thank you for joining us for our talk today. I'm a research coordinator at the Feast Centre For Indigenous STBBI Research, a project that studies the impact of sexually transmitted blood borne illnesses and their impact in Indigenous communities. I'm a person of Mohawk ancestry and mixed bloodlines. My family is from Tyendinaga territory, which is about 2 and a half hours from Toronto. If you like our talk today, please follow us on Facebook and Instagram at Feast Centre for Indigenous STBBI Research and on Eventbrite as we host monthly conversations. We have also just launched our Feast Centre podcast called Indigenous Sexual Futures, And you can check that out, along with our Facebook and our Insta and the links that are in the chat. So a few housekeeping notes for today. There's 3 rules. Please be respectful to other participants. Please be mindful to have your mic and your video turned off during the conversation, and please be inquisitive and put any questions that you might have into the chat. We'll try to get to all of your questions at the end of the session when we are doing the Q&A portion of the conversation. So I'd like to start with the land acknowledgment. I would like to acknowledge that McMaster University is located on the traditional territories of the Haudenosaunee, the Anishinaabe, the Mississauga of the Credit, and many other nations. What's now known as Paradise Point, located on McMaster campus, was once a place where families would meet to gather wild rice for generations prior to colonialism. We're gathering today virtually from many locations across so called Canada, and all of these locations are Indigenous lands that are shared with settlers and peoples from across the globe. I would like to acknowledge that today we will be speaking about residential schools and other tactics that were put into place by Canada under the advisement of the Catholic church. These things may be quite triggering as the residential school era lasted over a 100 years and only closed the doors to the last residential school in 1996. And to my knowledge, and yet, what were called Indian Day Schools were in existence past this date. I wanna acknowledge my own ancestors and the ancestors, elders, grandparents, parents, the survivors who are in our audience today, our friends and colleagues, and everyone who is on the call who attended these schools. I would also like to acknowledge the many, many children who lost their lives to the system. I would like to acknowledge all of us who live with intergenerational trauma related to the persistent genocide of Indigenous peoples due to the Catholic church. And that being said, many of our community members have been indoctrinated by the church and the language and

relationship of this faith guides their lives and their ethics. For that reason, I would like to ask that this space stay safe for everyone. And that we are respectful to our speakers, our elders, and the rest of the folks in this conversation by keeping the conversation respectful within the chat. If anyone feels the need to reach out for support, we will be putting the phone numbers of our friends at Wa-Say Healing Center and the National Residential School Crisis Line in the chat. So I'd like to introduce our panelists today. We have doctor Albert McLeod who is a long standing activist in the Indigenous response to HIV and AIDS and 2-spirit Indigenous LGBTQ+ education, outreach, and advocacy. He is a First Nations Cree living in Winnipeg Treaty 1 Territory. Albert specializes in education about 2-spirit history and reemergence. Canada's truth and reconciliation process and the outcomes of the national inquiry into missing and murdered Indigenous women. He is also on our Feast Centre Council of Elders. Marjorie Beaucage is also joining us this evening. Marjorie is a 2-spirit Metis auntie, filmmaker and activist and educator, a land and water protector. Her work is focused on giving voice and creating a safe cultural healing spaces that restore wounded spirits. She has recently made story medicine with a series of harm reduction videos and those who are walking through the dark and creating light around drug use and addictions. She is the author of the new book, Leave Some for the Birds, Movements for Justice, and she's also an elder on the Feast Centre Council of Elders. And we also have Kimberly Fairman. Kimberly has joined us from the Institute For Circumpolar Health Research. She is the executive director there. She... after a long career in, federal public service, Kimberly joined ICHR. With continuing support from Canadian funding agencies and university partners, Kimberly is showcasing the valuable contribution of northern communities, practitioners, and Indigenous Knowledge holders to the modern research agenda. She is a member of the board for Canadian Society For Circumpolar Health. For this evening's conversation, our elders and leaders have come up with some learning intentions. And so some of these intentions are to have participants learn how the Canadian state and Euro-Christian values of churches attempted to erase history and lives of 2-spirit and Indigenous peoples. One is to encourage communities, elders, leaders to begin these hard conversations. Tonight, we'll unpack the history of residential schools and the trauma ensued by Indigenous children and the generational trauma and harms that continue to this day. We're gonna reclaim, restore, and repair 2-spirit narratives. And we'd like to imagine what our ancestors would say. If these are things that you're looking for this evening, you've come to the right place. Again, I'm... just a reminder to keep respectful in the chat. And, I feel like from all of the friends who've turned out in this conversation, this is gonna be a really warm hearted space. Where we'll be able to speak about these things in a very truthful manner. So with all of that said, I would like to welcome and pass this over to elder Albert McLeod.

(07:28 – 37:38) Albert McLeod:

Thank you, Miranda. And I'll begin tonight's session with an invocation, which we're advised, by our elders and knowledge keeper, is our protocol when we come together as humans to discuss being human and the challenges that we face. And certainly tonight is a very complicated project... topic, that, deals with a lot of emotions, fears, anxiety, and need for healing. And so, as humans, we don't have all the answers, so we rely on petition in the spiritual realm, and that of our ancestors to join us tonight to guide us in these conversations in exploring the healing, the outcomes of the papal visit. And, we open those doors to the spirit world, the east, the south, the west, and the north and invite those spirits in to join us to see us, to hear us, and guide us, and help us if they can. Look to the earth below that gives us life, the water, the plants, and the animals, and the sky above. The universe, the stars, the planets, the moon, and the sun. That we

inhabit our legends for our children to understand the complexity of life, plus the complexity and challenges of being human on this earth, and we rely on those representations of the star world... the spirit world and helping our children understand their life journey. And finally, we call in the humans, the lost creation, to be a part of this circle and, to help each other navigate these conversations and to come out with good ideas, strong solutions, courage, faith, and strength to move forward, and to understand, with humility that we are not, above any other part of creation or this world. We are only a part of it, a very small part of it. So we have to do this work with respect and humility and understand the power of these spirits that guide us and contribute to our well-being and our knowledge. Thank you. I'll start this session with a brief overview, using slides to contextualize the papal visit. And then I know with Miranda, we'll open up to the panel to have dialogue about the implications of, you know, the negotiations with the former students of Indian Residential Schools with the Vatican and with the pope and the Confederation of Catholic Bishops in, negotiating this, apology and movement forward, of the legacy of colonization and the complicity of the state and the various churches in manipulating the minds of children for the benefit of resource extraction and building wealth for Europeans who settled here. Just wanna go to my slides. Looks great, Albert. I'm still seeing the projection applied forward. Well, these things are always... Elon Musk has to... oh, I'm not controlling the slides, it's our helper there. Okay. 1st slide. Let's go. Sorry about that. Slide 1. So, again, this is a reflection of the papal visit, sexual health, gender identity, and reparations. And, this one is particularly my portion is around the emergence of 2-spirit people or Indigenous LGBTQ people. This is the promotional, banner for the papal visit to Canada in July of 2022. Next slide. So the conversation around 2-spirit or Indigenous LGBTQ is in our period of reconciliation and decolonization about our place in history, that goes back 1000 of years in the Americas, the intersection or interaction with European explorers and colonizers and settlers over 500 years. And certainly, the idea of the humanness of being LGBTQ and the idea of equity in understanding who we are and our place in society, our place in our families, and our place in governance of ourselves, our bodies, and our communities as well. And there's ideas around who we desire, who we're attracted to, that we seek pleasure as with anybody else. We seek intimacy. We have lusts and we lust whether it is for wealth or success or love or sex. And finally, we seek love, you know, in whatever form, parental love, sibling love, social love, the love of our partner, you know, married or single. And Adrian Matthias Stevenson and Sean Snyder from the Nevada area of the US expressed that to us in a physical way, a visible way. There are 2 male powwow dancers who are partners, and they're not shy about expressing their love for each other or their intimacy as in this photograph of a kiss. A sight rarely seen in North America of 2 men kissing in public, certainly in the case of 2 Indigenous men kissing in public to show that they are intimate partners. Moving on. Next slide. So the papal visit after in March, earlier, that, delegations had gone to the Vatican to dialogue with the pope, the First Nations, the Inuit and the Metis, and the Mount Chobert Metis Federation went later. And, you know, as laypeople were not privy to the discussions. But certainly, my concern was about was their dialogue about the oppression and discrimination against Indigenous people over LGBTQ during the over a 100 years of Indian Residential Schools and the imposition of the binary gender identity on Indigenous peoples. And there's no clear answer yet, what was discussed or whether that topic, ever came up in these discussions with the pope in the Vatican. So the visit did happen in Alberta, July 25th, and then Quebec, July 27th, and July 29th in Nunavut, where there was, you know, large meetings of people, the pope spoke, and more or less apologized for that history of, discrimination and oppression, particularly of children who were in these schools, for many generations. Next slide. This is from Northern

Manitoba and it's the Guy Indian Residential School, which opened in 1926. A lot of First Nations people, from Northern, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, were sent there. And here, you actually see the representation of the binary gender that was imposed separate dormitories based on the western perception of gender identity or sex. Oh, there's no sound? Oh, can you hear me?. Someone is having problem hearing. So these are photographs that, were donated, from a man who was actually working at this school. It's a very isolated school. And so the boys were all put in boy dormitories, male dormitories. They were dressed in western style with pants and shirts and ties, and the hair was cut short. And the girls wear uniforms. Their hair was cut shorter, wear tams, And again, we're socialized to, so the colonial idea of this female, and heteronormative female or heterosexual. And for 2-spirit people who are gay or lesbian or transgender or intersex, they had to conform to one or the other. And in the most cases, they had to pretend they were straight or, if they were outed, they were subject to teasing, bullying, shaming, violence, as well as sexual assault, not from just other students, but from the staff working at the school, including the nuns and the priest. So this is a visual representation of the forced segregation based on your Christian binary gender construction. And so this was what was imposed, and it assisted in the erasure of 2-spirit people who had lived in these communities for 1000s of years before contact with Europeans. Next slide. So this is the distribution of Indian residential schools in Canada into the far Arctic, West Coast, East Coast, and you see along the edge of the boreal forest there, Alberta, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, All those schools were brought right to the edge of the boreal forest because below that was farmland, and that is what settlers wanted. Right? And so this was to be as far away from the traditional communities of their children, but not certainly not in the area that settlers wanted to farm. Next slide. So the state sponsored churches that run Indian residential schools and day schools were the Anglican church, the Baptist church, Mennonite Pioneer Mission, Methodist Church, the Presbyterian Church, the Roman Catholic Church, and the United Church of Canada. So the Guy Indian Residential School burnt down accidentally in 1952. And here you see a couple of the staff who were Catholics there. And it was a huge school, and it was a very sort of Victorian style with a large fence around it where the children were kept inside that fence. Next slide. I had an opportunity to visit, Sturgeon Landing where the school was in 2019, and it's in that amount of trees there, clustered there. And, some of the students said that they were never allowed to leave the yard or even go down to see the river. And so there's the ruins there, of the school, and it's mostly concrete from where the furnace was. Next slide. There you see the foundation, the cement foundation of the, building where the furnace was. And, there's a lot of relics there, pipes and bed frames, and this was a student's desk. What was left of a student's desk after the fire. They're kind of there as a monument, but it's really hidden in the forest, in the bush. And again, to emphasize that separation from community and culture, language, elders, grandparents, this is Lebrét School out of Port Coppel. Again, a very, you know, Victorian formal type school large. And again, you see the fence that showed the limits of where the children could go and not go beyond that, or they would be considered runaways. And this was an early attempt to families to continue that connection to their children by camping nearby the school, and there's some red river carts there and some teepees. But it was very difficult to keep up that contact because sometimes it was impossible and expensive to try and reach these schools, and, for people to even leave the reserve to be near their children. Next slide. So the surviving students, beginning, I think around 1986 began the idea of a class action lawsuit, of the harms of their education, through the state and the churches. And, Canada settled out of court. Next slide. The Indian Residential School Settlement. So, again, this is acknowledging the harms. And, so this has been the process, of continuing, you know, to collect

the statements of the students and the payout reparations for harms done. Next slide. So in terms of what happened is really around spirituality belief systems is the colonial imposition that Euro-Christians were superior to Indigenous peoples. And that propaganda, was consistent for, you know, over 200 years. And this is the positioning of God as a white man. And here you have Michelangelo who's painting from the Sistine Chapel, which is a literal representation of a European white man as God and Adam as a European. The concept of sin with Jesus wrestling with the devil, and that concept of babies being born from cardinal sin did not exist here prior to colonization. And so that western way to purify that baby from sin was to wash that baby in holy water and make the sign of the cross on the baby's forehead that was brought by Europeans. So Indigenous people did not see babies as carrying sin with them. And then through mass media and terms of Hollywood in the creation of the movie, the 10 Commandments with Charlton Heston, a very high level production fabulous costumes, scenery, actors. And again, it's a tool for every generation to see what settlers believe in and what really is the focus or the foundation of our belief system is through, you know, your Christianity. And it's, shown every year. Right? To, you know, and so, again, it's a product of Hollywood. Now popes early on, and this was the pope just after Columbus, Western South America. Initially, were not interested in the Indigenous spirituality, but as that wealth, from slavery, and gold and silver and emeralds came from South America, they changed their tune and were very much, invested in resource extraction and the abolishment or the erasure of Indigenous spirituality. And this guy here comes every year in a capitalist society that gives away free presents to everybody which I call him the car... the car salesman of Christianity. And there's something about these images that we take as background noise, normal. We see them every day in our society, but they're intentional to influence us subliminally about the structure of our society. And it's the white beard that is present at each of these images. And it's not accidental or random. It is again, ever present in our institutions, in our systems, in our media, to tell us, you know, where's the center of authority, of knowledge, of power, and privilege, and this is it. Next slide. But there's other voices in the Americas that talk about a different view of creation of the world. And Harmonia Rosales is an artist in the US who painted this restructure that narrative about that white European, understanding, or the replication of God as a European white man, and she's inserted an African American woman, or black woman as the supreme being. And for the first creation Eve, an African or American black American woman to change that narrative. And in truth, the US was built on the backs of black American women who were slaves for over 249 years. They created North America through their toil, their slavery, the wealth that was generated from their slavery. So this is the true narrative of the founders of America democracy. And, Harmonia has said, you know, after this painting was released, she did receive death threats because her vision, her art was changing that narrative that people were so comfortable with next slide. And another, artist, Kent Monkman, who's 2-spirited from Manitoba originally, studied at the Winnipeg Art Gallery has shown us visions or interpretations of that time of the removal of children from their families and communities. Things that Canadians were not allowed to see. Right. The fear, the trauma, the pain, the anger, and the involvement of the Royal Canadian mounted police who ensured that the children were removed and were sent to these schools. There has been an apology from the RCMP for their role in that period. Next slide. And this is Kent Monkman's alter ego, Miss Chief Eagle Testicle, which she transforms into a female deity. Again, representing that resistance to misogyny, to homophobia, to transphobia as an Indigenous 2-spirit person asserts that femininity in a powerful way to rewrite that narrative, to correct that narrative, the lies, the half truths, the myths created through the colonial period. And, her name is a play on words. She is like a spirit, a trickster. So

she creates mischief and she tickles us with her views of history with her work as an artist. Right. And this is her show in Paris. Next slide. So again, in pre contact times, there was a place for 2-spirit people. There were on other side, the ultramale and ultrafemale were were ritual roles. They were, you know, prescribed. They were not general roles, and, they were drawn from the people in the centre. And they were about petitioning the natural world through ceremony for things the humans needed. Next slide. And after 400 years, this is where we've landed. The society that is focused on the binary gender identity and heterosexism upheld by our faith systems. Today we could say we're secular but I don't believe a society can go from being run by politicians who are... have certain, you know, Christian faith beliefs to being secular in 150 years. And I believe a lot of the anti-Indigenous racism is really fueled by these non-secular views within our political systems, where they constantly underfund Indigenous people and create a lot of harm. And so our society has settled on championing the ultra-male toxic masculinity, the ultra-female as a second-class citizen. Right? And this is where the violence comes in when genders are polarized. And it's no surprise that that violence is centered around Indigenous women. Because if you look at the previous slide, the pre... you had a functional cooperative community that was inclusive. Next slide. And you see all that knowledge of above was outlawed and attempted to destroy the languages, the ceremonies, the traditions, the legends, the planted by colonial knowledge. And these two identities that are impossible to achieve, but our society upholds, right, as a form of a colonial tool to maintain privilege and power. Next slide. So in, the national inquiry process and the writing of the national action plan with the federal government, I was part of a subworking group for 2-spirit people to write our national action plan. We did that during COVID, the pandemic, for 40 weeks. We met every week on Zoom, and we wrote our plan forward. In the plan is an ask for an apology from the 7 Canadian churches that ran Indian Residential Schools and Day Schools for the erasure of 2-spirit identity and further racism, homophobia, and transphobia promulgated in these schools and in First Nations, Inuit, and Metis communities. And here you see, Lacombe's Ladder, which was a graphic, a tool that was meant to influence children that Christianity was better than being Indigenous. And it was really a cynical ploy of bureaucrats in Ottawa and churches to manipulate the minds of children so that they would not hold on to their traditional territories the same way if they had not been in those schools. Right? So it was, you know, a crime. And certainly Canada settled out of court because they could not defend what they had done to these children in this ploy to get access to traditional Indigenous land. Next slide. So there's the details of Lacombe's Ladder at the top. On the right, you see the Indigenous pathway, paganism, heathenism, devil worship, serpents, snakes, hedonism will lead to hell and damnation. The bottom there you see the priest taking that Indigenous family away from the traditional life, belief system, to redemption, and eventually to be converted to Christianity. These were equal to a graphic novel or a comic book for a child. They didn't have the ability to determine if this was real or not and it's very colorful, lots of characters, so it was attractive to them. And their parents were not there to help them process what they were being told. And it was to encourage them to abandon your identity and in doing so abandon your territory. Next slide. So in terms of post, TRC process, the National Centre For Truth and Reconciliation has been set up at the University of Manitoba. There's 15 million digital files and 1,000 physical objects in that, archive. Next slide. And Canada now has reconciliation day, September 30th, based... with a T shirt, the orange shirt day, based on Phyllis Webster's experience in residential school where her blouse, which is orange, was taken away, and she never saw it again. Which humiliated her and humiliated her mother because it was supposed to be something joyful to be going to school, and it was not that

experience. Next slide. So in the last, you know, days of reconciliation, I saw that it was a very much an expression that it was, heterosexual, cis male, cis female experience of residential school, and there was no, referencing to the 2-spirit people who were in those schools, some up to the age of 19. So they were not just little children, you know, some were 17, some were 18, some were 19. So I managed to get this t-shirt made, and it says every 2-spirit child matters, and it is in the orange color. And it's to tell people, if we went through the truth and reconciliation, why are we not telling the truth? Why are reverting back to the binary and heteronormativity, which was not the pre-contact reality of Indigenous peoples? Next slide. And so in terms of reemergence, this Saturday is a 12th annual 2-spirit powwow in San Francisco. And then in Manitoba, we're having the first 2-spirit Sundance in North America on the land that 2-spirit people own, 10 acres west of Winnipeg. So in terms of the papal visit, we have a story, we have a relationship, to share with that apology. Right? What the church did in Canada. Yet we have not been at the table. I did a press release on July 22nd saying, you know, the Assembly of First Nations, Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, the Metis National Council, the MMF, why the voice of 2-spirit people is not in those conversations, in those delegations with the pope and the Vatican and saying there are countless ruined lives and suicides because of that experience, that history. And no one is acknowledging that or taking responsibility for that. So that is the future. And, next slide. I think we're almost at the end guys. We're doing good. So we're looking at sexual health, gender identity, reparations, next slide. So in closing, you know, 2-spirit people were here long before colonization, 1000s of years, because it's embedded in the language. The names, the descriptions, the activities, the roles of 2-spirit people. And the late Roger Roulette said, you know, the strength of a culture is not defined by what it can repel, but by what it can absorb. So now in the 21st century, we are absorbing 500 years of colonization, but we are also picking that knowledge and the tools. We're picking that up that the ancestors left us for this time. And one of those knowledges is about being 2-spirit. Next slide. That's all folks. So that's the end of the pre-context and the intro. So thank you. You can close the slides. They'll come back to Miranda. I hope that was helpful.

(37:40 – 38:23) Miranda Black:

Thank you, Albert. That was very helpful, and this gave such an overview of, what, a 150 or 260 or 400 years of the church presence being on Turtle Island. I wanna welcome back Marjorie Beaucage and Kimberly Fairman, and we're gonna open it up for some questions. And my first question for everyone tonight, and I'd like everyone to be able to answer in their own way, of what the Roman Catholic Church and other churches can do to repair the harms and crimes perpetuated against 2-spirit and Indigenous LGBTQ people?

(38:24 – 41:13) Albert McLeod:

Well, for me, there are six funded 2-spirit organizations in Canada, and there are some in the United States. So it's not like we are not available for a conversation or an invitation to dialogue with the Confederation of Catholic Bishops or with the Vatican or with the AFN or Metis National Council or ITK or MMF about this process history, our place in history is... you know, and one has been around for 30 years, 2-Spirit People of the First Nations. So in this process of understanding the apology, we were there. We've been there for over 30 years and we were ignored. Right? Because people don't realize we are part of that experience and we were targeted in these schools for shaming, for bullying because we were LGBT and for sexual assault, sexual exploitation. And that's the conversation that the church and the Confederation of Catholic Bishops has to do is to step up to the plate and talk to us and understand. And, you know, recently, the pope said being gay is not a crime to encourage people to stop the violence and

murder of LGBT people in their nations, but still holds on that if you're gay and you act on your urges, your desires, it's a sin. Not realizing in some of these nations, the sin equates to a crime. And gives people privilege to kill. Right? And if the Catholic church still believes that gay people are supposed to be celibate, it's wrong because we were not celibate before Christianity, before colonization. The world didn't start when Europeans arrived in the Americas, but a lot of people think it did. So I think that's what needs to step forward with these six funded groups, is to begin these conversations about what actually happened in those schools and how that abuse affected everybody, including 2-spirit people and how people walked away with the attitude that we are not supposed to exist. Right? Still today. So that's what I think should happen.

(41:14 – 47:24) Marjorie Beaucage:

Well, I was very conscious of the visible demonstration of patriarchy when the pope came to Canada, and all you saw, even in the media, was the men, you know, doing all their officiating and pontificating and whatnot, except for that one woman that stood up and said, I came here to heal not to kneel. And women have been forced to kneel to those powers of patriarchy forever. And my... James, do you have that slide of this image that I... Yesterday. I wanna read a little reflection for the Metis perspective that, you must break the pattern today or the loop will repeat tomorrow. And that's what we're not doing, in our own communities because the church still has that power. And there is a grief that cannot be resolved by Christian prayer. There's a violation of the sacred that has seared our spirits for generations. And only when ceremonies banned for so long are restored, only when women and 2-spirit are acknowledged in their sacred gifts, Only when elders heal from the abuse of power can true healing and reparation begin. The power to heal ourselves cannot be given away to authority figures. And waiting for apologies from our oppressors will not restore what was taken. The question for me is, what do we need to do to reclaim ourselves and heal the abuse that comes from gender-based violence and homophobia and transphobia that still continues in our communities today. And, you know, at the Feast Center for Research, I would like to see some researchers out there take on this to ask in our communities this question. What is the impact of ceremony on our healing? And what is the impact, the real impact, of public apologies and papal visits on our healing? I mean, it happened, but have we really, talked about it? You know, we postpone difficult conversations, and so we can't wait any longer because the church is still killing us. Our youth are still committing suicide. We have all these addictions. That's all based on that sexual wound. And that forced change of colonization, we have to turn it around and reclaim ourselves. And that's what we're doing as 2-spirit people, but our communities have to no longer avoid this conversation. We have a [...] in the Michif way where we can, come forward and be, like, self-governing in our relation. They say all our relations, but it doesn't include 2-spirit. You know? It it's like the ceremonies don't include us. There's this gender binary everywhere, and, they say, well, we never had the spirit, or they say, well, you know, that's lost or as I say, it's not lost, it's sleeping. And, when you sleep, you dream. And the ancestors sometimes visit you when you dream, and it's in our DNA too. So you can take the slide down now. What Albert was outlining about the vilification of Indigenous practices and killing the Indian in the child and the terror that was imprinted in our souls. I lived that. I lived that. I was part of the church for 30 years of my life, and I lived that, humiliation and embarrassment and the abuse and the secrecy around it and not talking not talking about it and continuing to maintain that silence is really, really deadly. And to me, the excavating, the knowledge and the 2-spirit narratives in our stories, still has to be done. And we need to set that table to have that conversation about sexuality and gender systems in our communities and including the rules and responsibilities of 2-spirit. That knowledge is still there. And so we have

to start imagining what life through our dreams, through our DNA, imagine what our ancestors would say. And that's where a lot of the artists in our communities and a lot of the... are creating new representations of us in our roles and responsibilities. For to me, that's what we have to lift people up, and the leadership and elders really need to be educated to improve the well-being of everyone, especially for the youth and for the future.

(47:34 – 52:06) Kimberly Fairman:

You're on mute, Miranda, but I think you're calling on me to speak next. Yeah. Okay. Well, I think it's been, and I mean, I want to thank, elder Albert for the presentation and for, the reminder of so many things as we talk about history and in this era of, you know, talking about history in a way where somehow it's you know, if we do that, that, we will get justice, right, from all the wrongs that have been done against our communities and our people. The reality is that... and I love all the references to Kent Monkman because when you see those images to me, what he's saying, what I feel when I look at those paintings is that history was really about power. It was about the power that these institutions held and how Indigenous voices were, you know, quashed and really discredited and you know, right from the beginning. And I think those messages are ones that we really need to hold on to. And what I love about this conversation today is this recognition that, we may not get justice from the institutions and from the systems, you know, by simply telling the truth about the history, but that there are multiple discourses and that Indigenous people, through these conversations are, you know, saying we know we were, subject to colonization, and we're still being colonized. This is essentially, you know, what you're saying and that we're still looking for justice and that, you know, through these conversations, there needs to be recognition of that. It like... you know, you're saying like, you were saying, Marjorie, it maybe offers us a different way to think about the questions that we ask in research or, you know, that there are other ways of doing things. We're not gonna... obviously it's so complicated and so complex, and we're not gonna come up with the, you know, magic bullet sort of solution, but that there are other ways to do things, including research. And we should be looking at those and using those tools to address the fear and the judgment and the self-righteousness that the church stood for. And, you know, what they did with even our own, community members felt that power and the self-righteousness and, you know, did things against their own people. You know? They hurt members of their own community, and, you know, that was instigated by the children. I think those are things that, if we don't sort of talk about it... you know, like, we're just sort of by our complacency, giving the church the method the message that it's okay, that they still have that power, and they still have that ability to... essentially, that their actions are well received, like, if we don't say anything. You know? And that, they are... it's okay for them to cause more harm. And so I love this sort of forum where we can acknowledge that we're flagging the issue, that we're reaching out to the people, who have been impacted or have been hurt or, in a people in our communities, that we see it and that it's not okay, and that we support the discourse and that we support them in their healing. Like I've... that's where I feel it's so important to...

(52:07 – 53:59) Marjorie Beaucage:

Well, you know, the the whole thing around judgment and fear and shame, that doesn't come from our teachings. Right? And it's like, how can, like, the whole terra nullius, like, making our land nobody's land. Like, it's nobody's land, so it's open for conquest, and that included women's bodies too. And we're still doing that. Like, the land and the body is still being violated every day. So I'm thinking, like, to decolonize that violence, is also part of that healing, And to... you know, we've done memorials, we're witnessing with our stories. That's what the TRC was all

about... the witnessing is important. And the tributes that the public monuments and the public mourning and when the women go... still go missing, and all of that. But it's like at the community level on a day to day, how can... that's where I think we need to have well-being for everybody and that sexual health and sexual healing needs to occur because that's where our wound is. Like and the thing is, 2-spirit people have the medicine to balance that. That is our gift. And our gift is not being allowed. That's why they have to restore our place in the centre of community where we were before to heal that wound.

(54:02 – 57:05) Albert McLeod:

You know, recently, I had an opportunity in Manitoba with the election of the new Grand Chief for the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs. You know, the former chief had been fired for sexual harassment, and I intervened, and I wrote a press release that said, you know, in this process, we need to include 2-spirit people because we are First Nation citizens who vote. We have rights, treaty rights. And, you know, media picks it up or doesn't, but I had someone who was there and I said, you know, photocopy this in yellow and hand it out to all the chiefs and the policy analysts and advisers and bring up a resolution, and they did. And that resolution passed. So they are going to create a 2-spirit council. The Assembly of First Nations also created a 2-spirit council after I don't know how many years, 6 years of advocacy to be representative of their First Nation citizens who are 2-spirit people. And so slowly the wheel is turning, but again, it is against, a background of the privilege of the binary male and female. And I think people who've been oppressed once they attain that power and privilege, the tendency is not to share it because the future is unknown. So along come the 2-spirit people, well, we want that access now. And so there's a pushback. Right? And I really see it happening now. There's more of these women's conferences that do not include gender diverse or 2-spirit people or the pushing of matriarchy. Right? So the siloing of the female biological identity as heteronormative and cisgender and no one else fits into that. Right? So it's in some ways it's a pushback even though there has been some progress. Mhmm. And in terms of practical things too, like an MP came to Manitoba in 2021 to give, 4 communities \$15,000,000 for housing. And I wondered how many 2-spirit people in those communities will get housing. Likely none. Mhmm. Right? Because we're not a priority for housing. Even though we live in the community, we have treaty rights, but we're gonna be couch surfing. We're moving to the city, moving to the town. Mhmm. And people are okay with that, that we're not there to use resources that we should have because of our rights. And that is discrimination. There's... they're not even talking about that right - 2-spirit housing in the community in which you live.

(57:05 -) Marjorie Beaucauge:

Our youth are on the street in the city because they're not accepted at home, and then they end up in jail and back into using and back into jail because nobody cares about them or... there's no services for them. You know? It's just really sad. That's what I see every day. And they're the... also, the young 2-spirit youth are demanding their place. They're standing up and they're not taking no for an answer, but they have to put up with a lot of, bad things before they can find a safe place to have ceremony or to be included in the community things, you know, if they don't wear the ribbon skirt or if they don't, you know, go to sit on that side of the room or that side of the room, like, we had a place in the lodge before. Like, why don't they remember that? Why don't why don't we dig through that colonial trash and find our true place? Because it's there. And and it's on the diagonal. Now the circle is not cut in half just one way. We're... it, you know, so let's say the women are on one side and the men on the other. I said what's what's the place of 2-spirit in the circle? It's on the diagonal. We cross right across the whole thing, and we move

back and forth on that line, whatever is needed because we're *oskapewis*. We're helpers, and we do what needs to be done to help the people.

(58:31 – 58:56) Albert McLeod:

And I think as well, you know, we do have Knowledge Keepers and Elders who are very set in their ways. Yeah. That, you know, creation or creator made men and women. You know? And my approach is that they should not be hired and they should not be paid with federal dollars or provincial dollars for healing. Right?

(58:56 – 59:00) Marjorie Beaucage:

Yeah, in public places like universities and health centres.

(59:00 – 59:37) Albert McLeod:

Well, really, it's against the law. It's against legislation to discriminate based on sex, gender identity, or sexual orientation. And I think we put up with that for so long in the programs and institutions that we enable people to discriminate illegally against 2-spirit people and we pay them. That's the other thing. Right? They're paid. There is no vetting of Knowledge Keepers and Elders about their position around LGBT or 2-spirit people. Right?

(59:37) Kimberly Fairman:

Yeah.

(59:37) Albert McLeod:

Go ahead Kimberly.

(59:38 – 1:00:37) Kimberly Fairman:

Well, I just I think that's such an important point, Albert, and that sometimes I wonder if also it's not so much, sort of an overt movement, but that the people in the system are kind of in that place of, you know, like 'mind your own business' and avoid being targeted yourself and then also avoid being embarrassed yourself. Like, we get very caught up in that, and that gets very complicated to me. Like, it's one thing when you have an overt attack on a component of an individual's identity that's, you know, so key to all the things you talked about, like relationship and intimacy and love. It's one thing when it's very overt, but there's all this subversive stuff too that happens with individuals, and it's very complicated and makes it very hard for us to address in systems.

(1:00:38 – 1:01:28) Marjorie Beaucage:

So, like, why does it... why don't our laws about respect and reciprocity and collective responsibility apply to 2-spirit? Why do they exclude us from those laws? We're self governing people. We have the right to determine ourselves. Nobody should be judging us and shaming us and displacing us. Like, that's not our way. And it's like, it doesn't seem to register that it doesn't apply to us, like or they don't know how to apply it to us, or they just rather, like, I was said, you know, have us go away and be invisible and... rather than embracing the gifts that we bring.

(1:01:28 – 1:02:52) Albert McLeod:

Well, I think it's context in terms of the pope, and the pope went back to the Vatican. And he did affirm what the Roman Catholic church did in Canada was genocide. And it's not the first time we heard that about Canadian colonialism of Indigenous people. And people are on the fence about that, whether it's valid or not or it's actual genocide. But for me, it's a machine with no brain, no eyes. And it's the people in the cog that are just... they just keep the machine going regardless. And they don't notice the carnage because it's not happening to them. And so I think it is, you know, when people are under that stress of making decisions about who has privilege, who has power, who has access, when there is internal genocide and violence and external genocide, that it's the one who gets to the top that survives. And some of it involves

discrimination, pushing others down so you can stay on the top of the heap so you don't get pulled under. And those are not the conversations we're having, and I think that happened at the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs because there were chiefs who actually voted to keep that former chief in despite the findings.

(1:02:52 – 1:03:24) Marjorie Beaucage:

Well, look what they did to Rosemary, the first woman Chief at the National Assembly when she spoke her truth as a woman and challenged. Like they really did everything they could to protect that patriarchy in there, that colonial way of doing things and not welcoming what she had to bring as a woman. And they elected her, but as soon as she stepped up and did her job, as she saw it, she was under attack right away.

(1:03:24 – 1:06:58) Albert McLeod:

And one of, RoseAnne Archibald, the National Chief of AFN, her platforms for her election was to create a 2-spirit council, and she did, you know. And in December 1991, the AFN amended their charter to include a 2-spirit council because they have a a women's council, a youth council, and a veteran's council. And I guess the men's council is the chiefs, but they did. She did. And maybe that's one of the reasons why she was attacked. Right? Because she did make that motion to create, a 2-spirit council, and it is in process. But, again, people have to shift their worldviews to understand the implications of that, that we will be advising on the rollout of funding and programs for First Nations in Canada. And I guess that takes time. But... and certainly in Manitoba, we have 2, locals that are 2-spirit through the Manitoba Metis Federation. And so in some ways, there has been some shifting of inclusion, but I think it really goes back to, you know, how the papal visit to the Vatican, the role of the Canadian government in that, and Canada paid \$35,000,000 for that visit. That money did not come out of the Catholic church. It came out of our tax money for that to happen. And, again, were we invited? No. No one wanted to hear our position, our opinion, our experience. We do have, you know, in the TRC, 6 volume report, there was one paragraph about 2-spirit people in residential school, and it was from, one of the former students who talked about being targeted for sexual assault by other students. And that was it. Right? So, you know, when you think about truth, that's where we have to be: is what is the truth? And are we comfortable with that truth? And how do we do reparations? Right? And I think that is the conversation with... it's just not about an apology. It is about that conversation and what is the investment of these churches. There were 7 of them in contributing reparations, right, to get people educated, to get people houses, to get people employed, to have a career. And so far, it's been silent ever since... the papal visit has been very quiet despite the pope saying what they did was genocide. And so I think we have to understand... and we've seen it before, right, that a privileged western thinking democratic society with theorists and scientists and artists can engage in genocide. We saw it. You know, 70, 80 years ago, it was Germany, the center of culture of Europe. So Canadians step back and say, oh, it can't be. It's impossible. They said it was impossible 80 years ago. And in Canada and North America to say, oh, that's impossible, we can't be, participating in genocide. Yes we can.

(1:06:59 – 1:07:50) Marjorie Beaucage:

Well, that's why there are so many holocaust deniers today because they don't wanna deal with that word at all. Regardless, like, they just have this vision of the world that doesn't... that with those blinders on, that won't allow any other way of seeing or being in. It's just really the the larger society still doesn't quite... even when there's more babies being uncovered, like they say, well, it can't be, you know, they're still saying that it can't be here in Saskatchewan. They're still saying that. And there's scientific evidence.

(1:07:53 – 1:08:13) Miranda Black:

Speaking of that, I'd like to ask all of you another question, and... there's been so much harm. And from each one of your perspectives, how are we gonna move forward from that? Marjorie brought in this beautiful idea of what would our ancestors say, and how are we gonna move through all of this?

(1:08:13 – 1:11:20) Albert McLeod:

Well, fortunately for me, I worked with an Ojibwe language specialist here, Roger Roulette, who sadly died in November. And he was my mentor because we set out to authenticate Ojibwe values and beliefs and philosophy through the language. And he would deconstruct words and terminology and find the root word and explain how that word came about and what it was meant to be about communications, survival, you know, science, technology, wisdom. And one word he shared in his model was [...] which means given or received from the divine. And that tells us Indigenous people before contact had a connection to the spiritual world. The divine undefined what divine means. It is a power, a spiritual power that is not a replication of the human experience or the human condition as we saw in those paintings from the Sistine Chapel. He said the spiritual realm are amorphous. They don't have shapes like humans, and they could be the thunders, lightning, rain, wind. They change our lives, the seasons, and we adapt. So this term means we could call into that world. We could do an offering. We could petition that world for what we need to survive. And everybody had that as young children to know, make your offering, and ask that spiritual world for help. And that's what the church destroyed. Because when the early settlers arrived here, they called the medicine people conjurers, magicians, because they could do things that these settlers could not explain. They couldn't understand that power. So even though they validated it early on, they decided to destroy it instead because they were bringing their god, the monotheistic god of Europe. And anything here had to be sublimated, oppressed, destroyed even though it had power. And that was what was taken from the children in those schools. The understanding that they had that connection was innate, inherent, and inalienable to them. And they were never given that knowledge, so they struggled without it. In my life, I'm 67 now. I've seen it in real-time. This power, this ability to petition spirits and to receive from them. You know, this weekend, just the 2 Spirit Pow Wow in San Francisco.

(1:11:21 – 1:12:31) Marjorie Beaucage:

Well, we owe it to the... we owe it to the future generations. It's their inheritance that needs to be reclaimed and restored. And so that means we all have to roll up our sleeves as well and dig through the colonial trash to find those truths that are ours. Because when we do that together, like have these hard conversations with Elders and leaders in the communities and the schools and everywhere, where we talk about our sexuality and gender systems before colonization. Let's go find those. And let's restore those places in our communities, you know. That knowledge is still there and people are excavating it in different places, but there are many that still haven't begun that. And I think we need to really put... there's a lot of dollars out there for research, for programs, healing, mental health, and all that. So I think that we should dedicate a big chunk to that sexual health.

(1:12:31 – 1:13:24) Albert McLeod:

Well, I think the Roman Catholic church should dedicate a big chunk of funding. That is reparation. If, you know, if in the holocaust, it was confirmed genocide and, Germany has been making reparations for decades. Now in Canada, why can't the Catholic church be doing reparations paying for this healing instead of it coming out of our taxes here, I don't know. And

to me, that is true, true reconciliation. Right? Pay till you're poor and your job is done. So you have no more gold, no more silver, no more emeralds that were taken from these... from the north from the Americas. Right? Wealth to restore what was taken away was destroyed. Right?

(1:13:25 – 1:16:32) Kimberly Fairman:

Yeah. I agree. I think this idea of, on an individual level, understanding our own truth and searching for the truth, and having those hard conversations is a big piece of it. I love, what Albert said about how as Indigenous people, these gifts are... and our abilities to seek the truth are innate. And so for me, like, a big part of my own journey has been around recognizing when people are trying, or not people, but systems are trying to enforce this fear-based sort of approach to things. Like, oh, well, you're not Indigenous enough, or you're not living in your community, or you're not... like, these are all fears that are being sort of put on us as Indigenous people and particularly now in a modern sense when all of those connections were stripped away through residential schools and through colonization of all sorts. So now they can just easily throw out these ideas that create fear for us as Indigenous people and fear in our ability to connect with who we are, our Indigeneity, our identities, like, in, you know, all areas of our lives. And so if we can find a way to be supportive of that kind of recognition that these fear-based approaches are there. They're, you know, really hard to recognize and address. But if we can do that as individuals, I think that's huge. And I also really like, you know, Albert, what you're saying, like, the idea of having the church contribute to the reparation in the sense that, there are resources that can be provided to Indigenous people to explore this issue, to regain their strength, to regain, you know, that sense of self and strength that exists in all of us, that'd be huge. And I think from... what really resonated for me is that in our culture, we have this idea that, you know, if you have enough for yourself, it doesn't have to be, like, more than enough or more than anybody else. But if you have enough for yourself, then you should give to others, you know, whether it's food or whatever it is that they need money. And that that exists every time you look at your what you've got in front of you. If it's enough, then you have enough to give. And to me, that principle should really be guiding the way the church takes its next steps in reparation with Indigenous people.

(1:16:37 – 1:16:41) Albert McLeod:

Are there any questions in the chat or in the...

(1:16:41 – 1:17:18) Miranda Black:

I was going to say I'm, like, to open it up for folks to write in some questions here in the chat. We do have one. And Doris would like to know what heavy lifting do we need to do with from within our own communities as part of our own reparations in terms of recognizing or rekindling our kinship systems. She says she's asking from... as a grandmother of trans children, what roles do we have as families that support and celebrate the choice of our family members?

(1:17:22 – 1:17:24) Albert McLeod:

Well, I think part of it... Oh, go ahead.

(1:17:23 – 1:20:21) Marjorie Beaucage:

Where do people learn about their own sexual identity? You know, who are the teachers? And, like, because of the shame and the notion of sin and sex and all of that, that's been so entrenched, especially those who are still believers in the church. And there's lots of... and that's okay. But it's like, it has to be balanced with: what are you going to teach your children about who they are, and how to find out who they are. It's like... and not judge them. Or help them to explore because that's what people used to do before. They'd let people be who they were and unfold it as they as they were growing, and recognize the gifts that they had and develop them, and didn't hide them.

You know, now it's like all hush-hush or hidden, and you can't be who you are and explore who you are in the communities a lot of the time. And the families are on their own. There isn't a safe place in the communities for that I've seen. I mean, I go to visit a lot of communities and schools and whatnot to do teaching and help people with that. But it's... there should be a place that's safe for everyone for these things to be discussed openly. That's what I mean by having that... And the church, piece, like, yeah, it has come from there. And so in the communities, the parish priest still controls everything that goes on in the schools and in the homes and and still preaches the same messages that it's sinful. Right? So there's no safe place to have the conversation and without blaming or judging each other. And that's what I feel we have to do is hold those sacred places. Me, I say, like creation, we are creators. We're in the... they say, you know, in the bible, and that we're in the created in the image and likeness of God. We are creators. Just and and whether we're creating babies, art, or a loaf of bread, it all comes from that sacred creation energy, and we have to help people learn that because they haven't learned that. Very few people have been given those teachings around sex well-being and creation and our connection to it as creators of life.

(1:20:22 - 1:22:26) Albert McLeod:

Yeah. There's an author, language specialist, Pat Ninegwance Ojibwe language specialist in 2017. She published a book 2018, I think, called the 19 Legends of Lac Seul, and these were legends that were preserved and shared by her mother. She transcribed them in 1986 and published in 2018. And of these 19 legends in her launch, she said, you know, I will not apologize because some people will perceive these legends and stories as explicit. She said, you know, the people were not shy about education, about sexuality, normal body parts, body functions, how babies were made. One of her stories is the giant penis. Another one is when Nanabozho was a woman. Mhmm. The rolling skull. The man who taught his penis how to talk. These are very sophisticated, stylized, complex stories. Legends for children that they were devised to prepare them for life for the next phase, their teenage years. Yet we question it, their efficacy. Right? And we banish them. We abolish them. They're taboo because they're too explicit. Right? And that's what I mean. That shyness is not ours. It was common sense, you teach your kids about body functions, about sexuality. And yet, you know, it's something that would be impossible to put into a modern school system today, the 21st century, yet we think we're progressive. And, these legends are there, you know, and she preserved them for us.

(1:22:26 - 1:23:09) Marjorie Beaucage:

That's what we took before, those Wisakedjak stories, those teaching stories about how to be a good human and everything you needed to know. And now you don't find that on the Internet, and you don't find that on Facebook, you know, and TikTok and all of that. This has to be shared in the way that those stories are told in the winter time. And how many places are there that people can go to learn those things. We have to restore some of those teachings and places or winter traditions of storytelling and things like that because it's just not there for people to access.

(1:23:10 – 1:23:21) Albert McLeod:

Well, I shared, one of her stories at a 2-spirit gathering in, Northern Alberta. And all the youth thought I was this old fuddy duddy until I read that story. And then after I read that story, I was cool.

(1:23:24 – 1:24:03) Marjorie Beaucage:

Yeah. We had a week of, Wisakedjak comes to town during Valentine's Day week, you know, love stories and other things. And, that that was great. And some were contemporary youth that

wrote their own stories and poetry and whatnot, but there was also traditional teachers. So it was a nice exchange between generations as well, and it wasn't, you know, it wasn't threatening. It was safe for everybody, and everybody had fun.

(1:24:04 – 1:24:06) Miranda Black:

Kimberly, would you like to add anything here?

(1:24:07 – 1:26:33) Kimberly Fairman:

I could just pick up on that last point that Marjorie brought up around safety. This is so important, you know, in the transmission of knowledge and the sharing of... particularly things that are so important to us, like elements of our identity. And that sense of safety isn't something that happens in one interaction or in, you know, one instant. This is something that I also think in our traditional teachings, we know as parents and community members that safety and that sense of, security around being able to have these discussions is something that is... has to be upheld by everybody in the community, and it has to be an undercurrent of everything that we do. And I think if we're not feeling safe ourselves and, for example, as, you know, many of our community members and Elders have gone through the residential school system, they're... they don't, you know, experience that sense of safety. And so that's really what we're trying to restore and address, I think, is the ability, for all of us to hold that space. And it's very challenging, but I think, you know, I think about the intentions, that were brought here and the people that are around us are, you know, our friends and our family and our community members, and we definitely can do this. We can create safe spaces for people to grow and learn about themselves and their... and then in turn, you know, be able to do that for next generations, like, as Doris was kind of questioning. And this idea, somebody in the years past, I remember somebody saying, you know, a really important question anytime you're needing to make a decision about your own actions is to think, how can I be a good ancestor? Because at some point, we will be, all of us will be ancestors, and we'll be in a different space. And so that question to me is, you know, it's so important. How can we be good ancestors?

(1:26:34 – 1:28:02) Albert McLeod:

You know, one of the things I've noted as we started to send into more conflict around the world than just this, you know, masculine toxicity and, fascism and violence, particularly against women and gay people wherever you go. There's, a rise of drag queens and an army of drag queens is out there to combat these toxic masculine men to counter that violence. Right? And I noted that, you know, it is that role of 2-spirit people to show the feminine within the male. Right. And that being these sort of violent, you know, dictators or fascists is which... we're moving away from that, you know, like Trump and Putin, you know, their paranoia, their fear of homosexuality and trans people, you know, is, you know, it's visceral, but it again, it becomes the tool for them to stay in power. But I just love these drag queens. I don't give a shit, and they're on stage. And there's like, I'm a biological male, and I'm gonna be a female, and I'm gonna entertain you. It's a good counterpoint to that siloing of the masculine identity around power and violence. Right?

(1:28:11 – 1:29:15) Marjorie Beaucage:

Yeah. There was this old Elder that asked me one time when I was doing one of these workshops with art and creation, you know, and he said how come there's so many of you now? And I just kind of laughed. And I thought about it for a minute. And I said, what? And I said, I thought about it for a minute. And I said, well, because the world needs us right now. You know? And it's like what you're saying about the drag queens, Albert, it's like, we're here because there's work that we need to be doing, and we're making ourselves visible. Just like when the babies

were found in BC, they came forward to have their... to be heard, to be seen so that so that the work could continue. And they are they're they're they they showed the way to wake up the rest of Canada. I mean, nothing had stirred the rest of the nation to actually hear what was happening with residential schools until those babies in BC woke us up.

(1:29:16 – 1:31:37) Albert McLeod:

And I think, you know, Sacred Cows, Queen Victoria statue was pulled down in Manitoba in front of our legislative building, and that's such an evocative expression of resistance and decolonization and bursting that colonial bubble of empire building and idealizing these Euro-Christian states as superior. And, you know, it's a good metaphor because when that statue was over, people saw that it was hollow. It wasn't a solid bronze statue of the queen Victoria. And that's a great metaphor for colonialism, with all its, you know, drumming and loud noise, it's hollow. And the empire building is over. When her statue went over, you know, that bubble burst, and people said, you know, it's like the Wizard of Oz, right, when you pull the curtain back. And so that was... a part of that response to, you know, colonialism and the imposition of these Euro Christian values to residential schools and the situating of privilege and power, through politics, because church was in hand in hand with the state. This did not happen without funding from the federal government, and I've looked at lists of inventories from, the federal government for these schools. Every nail, every pencil was counted. There was an amount attached to it. Right? And it's all there. You could read it. Right? And then some of these reports had showed an update. How many had converted to Christianity? How were how many were still heathens? And it was like a sport. Like, you know, some communities, the heathens were winning. Some communities, the converted were winning. And you saw how that was monitored generation after generation and the constant pressure to convert, and you saw it. And it happened. There was no more heathens. Right? They eventually, converted. But it was monitored.

(1:31:37 – 1:34:12) Marjorie Beaucage:

They made it against the law. And it was only with the sixties-seventies that it that it came back, started to come back. But the problem with it was that, it was mostly the men that took over because they were in the colonial model of power. And so the women and the 2-spirit were not included in that revival. And that's why we're still fighting to find our place. And, you know, somebody was asking about, you know, continuing to break these protocols that have been set up like, it's like, where did that come from? Like, I question every protocol that is presented to me. And I urge people to do the same. Like, one of the Elders called the cloth, you know, Walmart offerings. What did we use to offer before the cloth? How did we make offerings to people? And what did we give people? And how did we make offerings to the land? It wasn't Walmart offerings. It's like the ribbon skirts came from... the ribbons came from France, back in the 1800s when it was no longer in fashion to wear ribbons in France. So they brought them over here then and people started using them over here to adorn their dresses. You know, it wasn't till the 1800, but not till they they came over here with the ribbons. We didn't have ribbons before that. What did we use before that? And there was, like, the shells and the stor..., all the beautiful things from the land, and the dyes and the different things that people made, the beauty, there's a lot of these things that are being restored, you know, in our fashion that were before those things. And now if you don't have a ribbon skirt, or if you don't wear a ribbon skirt to ceremony, and you're 2-spirit woman, you're kind of like, frowned upon. And so these are not our protocols for ceremony. What Creator... I was told what Creator cares about is your intention and what's in your heart,

don't care what you wear. So if you have people that are imposing those kinds of so called protocols on you, then go find somebody else to do ceremony with because you don't need that.

(1:34:13 – 1:34:50) Miranda Black:

Before we close it, I think that it's really great to just remark a little bit more on gender and ceremony. And, someone asked in the chat, how can we continue breaking those Indigenous protocols that harm drug users, and or 2-spirit around being sober and clean. But also yeah. Just a little bit more about, gender and ceremony as well. Because those are things that perpetuate... not being included in ceremony or in community.

(1:34:53 – 1:35:53) Marjorie Beaucage:

Well, when I did my... I did a series on harm reduction, and it confirmed that what people need is community, ceremony... like a belonging, a sense of belonging, kinship, and they need ceremony, and they need, purpose. They need to have their place and to be able to use their gifts. And if there's yeah, there's housing, there's safe injection sites, there's all those things that people are responding to from a crisis place. But really, in terms of the spirit of people, if they have those three things, there's a better chance that they will be supported in their journeys and will be able to find their way.

(1:35:56 – 1:39:35) Albert McLeod:

I think part of it again is that belief, you know, when we say to people to make your tobacco offering, you know, you do it as an individual for whatever purpose and in terms of people who are using alcohol and drugs. That realization, just as I said earlier, when we petition the spiritual realm is to understand from that moment that tobacco is working for you. And in the future, you will be provided those opportunities, that knowledge. And the challenge is to recognize that that's what you asked for. Right? And it may take a year, 10 years, 20 years. And so those who people who are around harm reduction and ceremony is, you know, about using and not using. That tobacco is something that is still there working. Right? And there will be doors open to you. It's your decision to whether to enter them or not. Right? And I think the other piece around the trauma. So if we're developing programs to deal with addictions and drug use and homelessness, we're not developing programs to deal with genocide. That's the problem. We're not listening to the story of trauma that could begin when someone's 5 years old and is mad and is decided in their psyche. I'm gonna do this. So now we're working within the adult who's 40. We have to be available to listen to that story as they unwrap that journey they've been through. Right? That patience, that dedication to be there, to listen, to let that story. And many of those stories are unbelievable. We couldn't believe it that this happened to people. But it is that foundation of strength that we need to let these stories be told. I'll just share 1, from a residential survivor from out east. He was about 7, he said, and the priest knew he was afraid of a bull in a pen where there was a farm next to the school. And that priest would intentionally take him out to that pen and put him in that pen with that bow, knowing that it would terrify that little boy. Eventually, that boy that bull befriended that boy. And in the morning when the priest put him in that pen, he would lay up against that bull for comfort. That's where we are, those minds that conceive that torture, that manipulation of a child's spirit. But it was the animal who was more human than the humans. Right? Unbelievable. We couldn't believe it. And that's what we have to receive. In receiving those stories, we help people heal, and we let them let that story go into the fire, that tobacco go into the fire, and help them move on and not carry that baggage. It's not theirs to carry.

(1:39:36 – 1:39:42) Marjorie Beaucage:

That ceremonies... those places where they can do that are really critical.

(1:39:42 – 1:41:39) Albert McLeod:

Mhm. Well, I think with the 2-spirit community. We set out 1988 with the International 2-spirit gathering. And this year will be the 36th gathering in the Halifax area, and it was reconciliation. Right? We travelled across the border to our relatives, And we created for 4 days, at a minimum, a safe space where we were regular people. You know, we just laughed and talked and enjoyed our lives. A rare opportunity in a colonial experience. And it's manifested itself for 35 years from just the will of 2-spirit people that we need that 4 days at a minimum. What if it was every day? You can wear a sequin tiara, have a magic wand, eat bannock. And that's what I mean. We've never let that go. Right? And it is that connection where we do those dances, those fertility dances to petition the natural world that have not happened for 200 years where transgender Indigenous people dance in the circle and are connecting to spirit. Right? They were revered and honoured for that ability, and we've always protected that. So it's an ongoing process. In terms of harm reduction, we're kind of up with the smoking cannabis that people do, you know, it's not an issue at our gatherings, at least smoking cannabis anyway, smoking pot. We progressed a little.

(1:41:46 – 1:41:49) Miranda Black:

Kimberly, is there anything that you'd like to add here?

(1:41:51 – 1:42:52) Kimberly Fairman:

Well, I just would say I'm so, touched and moved and, like, called to action by the things that both Albert and Marjorie have shared. You know, underlying that to me, there's this really crucial thing that we could... that we need to do so that people feel safe to be in relationship with themselves. Like, that's really what we're talking about here. Like, to understand and, be open about our identities in a way where we are intimate with ourselves. We love ourselves. We have this ability to feel, esteem for who we are. You know? And I think I love that, with Marjorie and Albert, these examples, but also their words are leading us in that direction, not to isolate and to be in relationship with ourselves in a way where we can create that space for others.

(1:42:59 – 1:44:23) Marjorie Beaucage:

One person at a time. That's one group at a time. Like, it's just I've been doing this all my life, like, over the last 40 years anyway. I'm 76, and, like, it took me a long time to come to my own expression because of all the conditioning that I had received the first 30 years of my life from the church, and there was no place for me to be authentically myself. And it took a while to figure that out, you know, and to heal from the abuse as well and and, abuse of power and all of those things. So finding my own power as... and now I'm a proud self governing Metis, and nobody's gonna tell me how I'm going... who I am or how I'm supposed to be. And because it isn't in our way, we never told each other what to do, or we help people to make their choices and to make good choices, but we never told them don't do this, don't do that. That wasn't our way. And there was that that space for you to figure it out with some guidance, but not being told you can't do this and you can't do that. No ten commandments, thou shall nots. You know? We didn't have that.

(1:44:26 – 1:45:14) Miranda Black:

I feel like our conversation has come to a close. It's 7:50 PM. I wanted to thank all of you for coming out to this conversation and how much it means to me as a person who is Mohawk and also identifies as non binary and to hear all of your words. Yeah, finding our place within communities can sometimes be hard, especially as the youth. And what I see from you is that they're striving forward. And I'm so proud to see people younger than me continue to go out there and make way for everyone, including those who are older than them to finally be

ourselves. And, so I wanted to thank all 3 of you for coming out tonight. And, Albert, would you like to do a closing this evening?

(1:45:15 – 1:46:43) Albert McLeod:

Yeah. Thank you, Kimberly and Miranda and Marjorie and as well the people online who should listen to us, and this will be recorded and available. And so we're told, you know, about the faith and belief that we have that we called in those spirits, to, listen to us, to see us, and to guide us if they can, and to be appreciative of that time they spent with us. And, we thank them and send them back from where they came, and we close those doors to the different directions. And, you know, tonight, it's been important night, and, we will receive what we are meant to receive from tonight, in the future. And as I said, the challenge for us is to recognize when we receive it and to remember that we asked for it. Right? And the spirits have responded. And some of that will come through our dreams, the dream world. We'll see things. We'll hear things. We'll see people. We'll see spirits. We can take from that as well that our petition, our asks, have been answered. And, I'm older now and the dream world is fabulous. It's so busy. So thank you everyone and, good night.

(1:46:44 - 1:46:45) Marjorie Beaucage:

Night, love you!

(1:46:46) Miranda Black:

Yeah, Bye!

(1:46:47) Kimberly Fairman:

Bye!