

***Children of the Broken Treaty: Canada's Lost Promise and One Girl's Dream* by Charlie Angus.  
Published by University of Regina Press, 2015.**

**A Study Guide: Prepared by Gillian Schell on behalf of the Manitou Intentional Learning Community**

Section 1: Discussion questions

1. Doug Cuthand of the CBC claims that *Children of the Broken Treaty* is an “eye-opening read for Canadians.” <http://www.cbc.ca/news/indigenous/children-of-the-broken-treaty-eye-opening-read-for-canadians-1.3218232> What are some of the ways in which your eyes have been opened by this book.
2. When this book was first published, it was described as “expos[ing] a system of apartheid in Canada.” Apartheid is a very emotional term and one which offends many people who are proud of Canada’s record of defending human rights. Having read the book, do you think the use of this term is justified? Helpful?
3. The story is at times inspiring, at other times infuriating.  
<http://www.quillandquire.com/review/children-of-the-broken-treaty-canadas-lost-promise-and-one-girls-dream/> What infuriated you? What inspired you?
4. Christine Smith McFarlane claims: “If you think that all Canadians are treated equally, Angus' excellent job in detailing the history of the Treaty 9 area makes you see otherwise. Canada should be ashamed of the way it has treated the children of Attawapiskat, the people of Treaty Number 9 and Indigenous people.  
<http://rabble.ca/books/reviews/2015/12/children-broken-treaty-exposes-canadas-shameful-treatment-indigenous-people> . How do you react to the inequalities exposed in this book? Do you share McFarlane’s sense of shame? Shame is often a negative emotion. Can this sense of shame be used as a motivator for change? How?
5. For years some members of Canada’s indigenous community were referred to as “treaty Indians.” More recently there has been an effort to make Canadians aware that “we are all treaty peoples.” How has reading this book influenced your understanding of the treaty relationship?
6. In many ways this book is a difficult read, but there is hope in the darkness of Shannen’s story. Where in the book do you find hope? Where in the news or in your personal relationships with indigenous people do you find hope?
7. The subtitle of the book refers to “One girl’s dream”. What are your dreams for the relationship between Canada’s indigenous and non-indigenous people? What can you and your faith community do to make these dreams a reality?
8. The United Church has apologized twice to First Nations peoples –see the texts at <http://www.united-church.ca/sites/default/files/resources/1986-1998-aboriginal-apologies.pdf> After reading this book, how well do you think the church is living out these apologies? Are there new initiatives you would like to see?

9. In receiving the final Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and through resolution at General Council 42, the church has committed itself to an agenda for reconciliation and justice.

Consider the following statement in the light of your reading of *Children of the Broken Treaty*:

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission unveiled a history that is not simply about misguided and profoundly abusive attempts to assimilate Indigenous peoples.

It also revealed a colonial legacy that continues to this day, making itself known in inequities and injustices in areas as far-ranging as education and child welfare, violence against women, and violation of treaty and nation-to-nation rights in the face of resource extraction on Indigenous lands.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission has confirmed for Canada that the path towards reconciliation is also unquestionably the path towards justice.

The author continues: “We still have a very long journey ahead of us.”

What are some ways in which we can take the next steps on this journey?

See <http://www.united-church.ca/social-action/justice-initiatives/reconciliation-and-indigenous-justice>

10. Many United Churches now routinely acknowledge traditional territory as part of their worship and their meetings. How does your reading of *Children of the Broken Treaties* influence your response to this practice? See <http://www.united-church.ca/sites/default/files/acknowledging-the-territory.pdf> How can we move from acknowledgement to action?

Perhaps after reading the book, you would like to try writing your own acknowledgement, prayers or reflections to be used in your faith communities.

## Section 2: Resources for Devotions

1. The words to the following hymn were written by S Curtis Tufts as part of the commemoration of the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the United Church's Apology to First Nations Peoples. Tufts writes:

I was a commissioner from Saskatchewan Conference at the 1986 General Council in Sudbury and have a vivid memory of the evening when the Apology was brought on our behalf by the Moderator to the waiting Elders. The whole council was gathered in an amazing circle dance around a bonfire as the Moderator and Elders met in a tipi nearby. I remember clearly the strong feeling that we were in the midst of a historic turning point kind of moment. I hope that, as a part of our acknowledging the anniversary of that moment, this hymn will remind us of the need to continue faithfully on the journey that was begun then.

The hymn can be sung to the tune of "O WALY WALY" 372 in *Voices United*. This Path We Walk <http://www.united-church.ca/sites/default/files/apology-30th-anniversary-hymn.pdf>

This path we walk, through joy and tears, a living Way of faith and fears, through each step's risk, each sorrow's pain, when walked in love, we'll rise again. When life is shared, together, free we'll grow to be all we can be: a circle wide will call us home, when wrapped in love, we're not alone. These gifts we bring, this light we hold, our songs of grace, our stories told, remain un-done, told just in part, till shared in love, and known by heart. When life is shared, together bound, God's richest gifts, together found; together walk the Spirit's Way when love's the guide, we shall not stray. This life we share, a blessing deep; a promised gift, now ours to keep. God grant our words were spoken true, now clothed in life, each day anew.

2. For New Understandings from "The Dancing Sun, Volume VIII"

**One:** Let us give thanks to our Creator, for the Creator is always with us.

**All: God is with us in the call of a loon and in the flight of an eagle.**

**One:** Our Creator is with us in the changing of the seasons.

**All: God is with us when we gather together and when we are alone.**

**One:** Our Creator is with us in our giftedness and in our search for new understandings of ourselves, new visions of our communities.

3. Holy One, Creator of all that is, seen and unseen,  
of story and of song, of heartbeat and of tears  
of bodies, souls, voices and all relations:  
you are the God of all truth and the way of all  
reconciliation.  
Uphold with your love and compassion all who open their lives  
in the sacred sharing of their stories  
breathe in us the grace to trust in your loving forgiveness,  
that we may face our histories with courage;  
touch us through the holy gift of story  
that those who speak and those who listen may  
behold your own redeeming presence;  
guide us with holy wisdom to enter through the gates of remorse  
that our feet may walk gently and firmly on the way of justice and healing.  
Amen.

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4. Hear our prayer for those who gather here today to seek reconciliation between our  
peoples.  
Give us a sense of justice, give us an awareness of new beginnings.  
Thank you, God, that you promise us your fresh new start each day of our lives.  
Guide us, God, so that ancient wrongs may be redressed, broken promises forgiven, and  
a new  
covenant forged.  
Open our minds, our mouths, our hearts, our whole beings to your healing presence, as  
we seek  
ways to walk together.  
We pray for wisdom for our leaders, our elders, and ourselves.  
Our God and Creator, Great Spirit, listen to our prayer.  
Walk with us, and guide us as we walk with one another.  
In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

<http://www.anglican.ca/wp-content/uploads/Worship-in-the-Vision-of-New-Agape-2004.pdf>