

LGBT and Faith Communities



BY: CHELSEA LOPETRONE & MEGAN KERR

The group name "LGBT" has been around since the 1990s; it stood to unite people who love people of the same gender and oppose the norm of relationships.

Now many refer to the umbrella term LGBTTIQQ2SA, which stands for lesbian, gay, bi, Transsexual, Trans-gender, Intersexual, Queer, Questioning, Two Spirited, and Ally.

As a whole, the LGBT society and many faith communities have had a love/hate relationship, with some very vocally against homosexuality while others are very welcoming.

In terms of Christianity particularly, opinions vary. Many Orthodox and Catholic churches believe that homosexuality, bi-sexuality, lesbianism or being transgender, is sinful. This is what the church says; it is not necessarily what members of those denominations feel is true.

The Protestant churches vary even more, with some of them accepting some aspects more than others. The Evangelical Lutheran church, the Presbyterian church, and a few other denominations have stated outright that they will accept members of

clergy that are lesbian and homosexual, and their relationships.

This is a promising statement as that says that if their leaders can be of the LGBT community, they will also be welcoming of people going to those churches and not having to fear being shunned and turned away for who they love and even who they are.

Churches still hold a lot of political power, and understanding the relationship between homosexuality and faith communities will be crucial to ensuring that all people have equal rights and equal treatment.

Canada has celebrated 10 years of legal gay marriage. Being part of a faith community and being part of the Rainbow community - either as a gay person or as a straight ally - does not have to be impossible.

The novel *Oranges are not the only fruit* by Jeannette Winterson explores the challenges and discoveries of a young girl in a very strict Protestant Church family in the 1940s in England. At this time, if you were openly homosexual, you were shunned and ostracized from your family and society. If you are interested in the subject of LGBT and small town life then this book is a wonderful read for you.

The Tragedy of Residential Schools

BY: KODI PAGE & SIERRA WOLFE

Throughout Canada's history, its relation with Aboriginal communities has been one of pain and suffering. Young Aboriginal children were stripped of their homes and culture and forced to assimilate through the process of church-run Residential Schools that received much financial support from the government. The effects of their experiences are still being felt today.

In the 19th century Canada adopted the practice of "aggressive-assimilation" when interacting with Aboriginal people through what we now know as Residential Schools. The government felt it was their responsibility to educate the "uneducated."

The government felt children were the easiest targets and made it mandatory that all children attend. In order to prepare them for the new Canadian society children were forced to learn English, adopt Christianity (usually Catholicism) as their new belief system, and learn Canadian customs. The government now recognizes 132 federally supported Residential

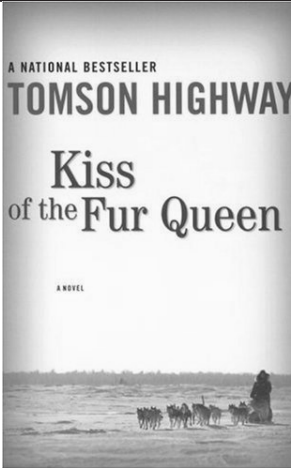
Schools but this does not include all of the church and provincially run schools. Over 150 000 students went through these schools and there are approximately 80 000 still living survivors today.

It was believed Aboriginal children could thrive in Canadian society through the assimilation of Canadian religious beliefs and customs. After attending a Residential School children became ashamed of their Aboriginal heritage as they didn't have the skills to help their parents on the reserve. The skills they learned within the school were substandard so they couldn't function successfully in Canadian society either. Because of the physical, emotion, and sexual abuse they endured through their schooling put them at a disadvantage

within society as they were trying to cope.

In 1996, the last residential school was closed and more and more experiences of abuse were made public. Recently under the government compensation package, school survivors can receive financial compensation. They receive \$10 000 for their first year spent and \$3000 for every year after that. So far \$1.55 billion has been spent on over 75 800 cases. Many churches and the Canadian government have apologized for their actions but many were found inadequate as they weren't official apologies.

The aftermath of the abuse felt by Residential school survivors will be felt for generations as experiences are passed down. As a society we need to be more ac-

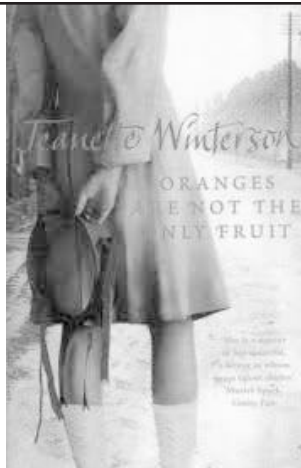


cepting towards those of Aboriginal descent and help to aid them in healing. Like the Idle No More movement, it begins with a vision. The only way to make this vision a reality is to stand up for the rights of those who can't always be heard.

The many Canadians who are white and of European descent do have an advantage in society; we can't deny that. But what matters is how we use this advantage to change the system.



Thomas Moore before and after his entrance into the Regina Indian Residential School in Saskatchewan in 1874.



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contact Ms. Kennedy. Thank you Mr. Omar for all of your support! The Red Raider Post would like to wish all of our 2013 graduates congratulations!

