

The Journey of Reconciliation

The Salvation Army is hosting a [Family Gathering and Pow Wow](#) in August 2018 at Pine Lake Camp. What will it be like? We asked Major Cathie Harris to share her experience at last year's event. Major Harris is a retired Salvation Army officer who instructs at Booth University College and volunteers at her local zoo.

From the time I saw the advertisement for the Salvation Army Pow Wow at Pine Lake Camp to be held in September 2017, I knew I wanted to attend. Prior to the Pow Wow I attended four sessions on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) with churches in our area of Winnipeg. I heard first hand stories of residential schools and their ongoing impact on people and their families. I listened to well-crafted lectures by Indigenous scholars. I read books and articles and guided conversations with cadets, seeking to build understanding. I wept when I heard Prime Minister Stephen Harper apologize to Indigenous Peoples in 2008.

But attending the Pow Wow was transformative in a different way. It was all about being in community together. It was being with people as we sang together, danced together, worshipped together and learned together. It was a true journeying *with*. I reflected on the life stages of myself as a Christian woman in a sweat lodge. I prayed with others in a pipe ceremony at sunrise. I sang a traditional doxology to an Indigenous melody and drumming. We were Christians together, celebrating the wonder of Creator. My mind, my heart, my body, my senses were fully involved as I was led by Indigenous brothers and sisters in Christ.

So I will keep seeking to deepen my understanding. I have just finished reading *Seven Fallen Feathers* by Tanya Talaga. Set in Thunder Bay Ontario, it is a heart-wrenching yet inspiring story. Any Canadian who truly wants to work towards reconciliation should read this book. It is one way of listening to Indigenous stories and walking with the parents and communities who faced devastating loss. We need to become part of the story to make the TRC recommendations reality.

We are all connected. Indigenous and non-Indigenous people need to be together, form community, and work together towards common goals. This is the journey to which Christ calls us – the journey of reconciliation.