

Study Guide: Wearing a Broken Indigene Heart on the Sleeve of Christian Mission

Introduction to This Study Guide

- **Purpose of this Guide:** This guide will help you explore Carmen Lansdowne's powerful and personal book, which critiques colonial legacies and calls for a decolonized Christian theology and mission. It aims to make complex theological and philosophical ideas accessible, focusing on how they impact real lives and relationships.
- **Why This Book Matters Now:** Lansdowne offers a "transformative vision of justice, reconciliation, and solidarity". Her work is described as "thoughtful and timely", providing a courageous voice in a "messy age" by reinterpreting Christian mission through decolonial discourse as political theology.
- **About the Author, Carmen Lansdowne:** She is a member of the Haítzaqv First Nation and an ordained minister in The United Church of Canada. Her personal experience as an Indigenous woman, whose heart has been "broken repeatedly" by church and society, profoundly shapes her scholarly work and commitment to Christian faith and mission. She seeks to "bear witness" and embrace hope despite the pain.

Redefining Christian Mission: An Indigenous, Decolonial, Political Theology – A Summary of Key Arguments

Carmen Lansdowne redefines Christian mission through an Indigenous, decolonial, and political theological lens by offering a **profound critique of colonial legacies** and advocating for a **bold, transformative vision of justice, reconciliation, and solidarity**. Her work aims to reclaim and reinterpret Christian mission through decolonial discourse as political theology, challenging non-Indigenous readers to rethink missiology through the eyes of the marginalized.

Here's how Lansdowne redefines Christian mission:

- **Through an Indigenous Lens:**

- **Prioritizing Indigenous Voices and Epistemologies:** Lansdowne emphasizes the necessity of **giving primacy to the stories and perspectives of the oppressed and colonized**. She argues that Christian mission must incorporate Indigenous epistemologies, which recognize multiple interpretations of truth and reality and are comfortable with ambiguity, contrasting with Western epistemologies that often limit what is considered true, valid, or valuable.

- **Focus on Right Action and Relationships:** Indigenous epistemologies are described as pedagogically grounded, with the intent not to theorize about knowledge but to extrapolate meaning from truth, emphasizing experiential knowledge, relationships, and **right action within a moral universe**. Human relationships are focused on the "other"—their needs and inherent right to exist—rather than purely internal inquiry.

- **Holistic and Interconnected View:** Indigenous theologies consider the interconnectedness of all aspects of life – environmental, political, social, religious, and intellectual – and challenge anthropocentric views by asserting that "God's kingdom intends that each being should have life and have it in abundance".

- **Rejecting Binary Dualisms:** Indigenous worldviews are often "unbounded, nondiscrete, and nonbinary," embracing the plurality of truth and experience rather than viewing the world in exclusive binaries like good/bad or knowledge/doubt.

- **Through a Decolonial Lens:**

- **Acknowledging Ongoing Colonialism:** Lansdowne asserts that colonization is **not an event that is "over" but an ongoing process** that continues to shape Indigenous realities

in North America. She highlights the "logic of genocide," where non-Indigenous people assume Indigenous peoples must disappear for land claims to be legitimate.

- **Decolonization as Active Resistance:** Unlike *post-colonialism* (which assumes colonialism is over), **decolonization is an active, ongoing resistance** against colonial forces that exploit minds, bodies, and lands. For non-Indigenous people, this involves disrupting European epistemologies and challenging systems that privilege those of European descent.

- **Interculturalism for Mutual Transformation:** True engagement means moving beyond multiculturalism or cross-culturalism to **interculturalism**, which demands "mutual transformation" where cultures intentionally impact each other, critically evaluating contexts, and re-creating reality together. This approach identifies and addresses racial and economic power imbalances as a defining characteristic.

- **Confronting Denial and Complicity:** Decolonial theology requires dominant society to confront its psychological resistances to acknowledging complicity in systemic racial injustice and the "illusion that progressive thinking and improved attitudes have brought fair treatment to Indigenous people". This "disavowal of our aggression does more harm than the aggression itself".

- **Through a Political Theological Lens:**

- **Indigenous Theology is Inherently Political:** Lansdowne, inspired by George "Tink" Tinker, argues that "any useful commentary by American Indians speaking to the Indian context today must reflect on the political state of Indian affairs and the political hopes and visions for recovering the health and well-being of Indian communities". This means laws, policies, and rights are integral to Indigenous theology.

- **Critiquing and Reclaiming *Missio Dei*:** While acknowledging that the concept of *missio Dei* (God's mission) was intended to save mission from secularization and detach it from colonialism, Lansdowne argues it failed to fully account for the lived realities of marginalized communities and needs "deeper theological engagement from an Indigenous perspective". She emphasizes that mission must be "grounded in the material realities of the people".

- **Mission as Quest for Justice and Liberation:** She highlights "mission as quest for justice" and "mission as liberation" as crucial components. Justice, from an Indigenous perspective, is defined as a "perpetual process of maintaining that crucial balance and demonstrating true respect for the power and dignity of each part of the circle of interdependency". Liberation involves "**conscientization**" (**critical**

consciousness) leading to the liberation of *both* the oppressed (from being sinned-against) and the oppressors (from sinning).

- **Power Analysis and Financial Accountability:** Lansdowne insists on explicit power analysis within missiology, including the role of finance, noting that "money still comes with strings attached" in aid to the marginalized.

- **Dialogue as an End in Itself:** Dialogue between dominant and marginalized communities should be viewed "not just a means to a solution" but **an objective in itself**, crucial for undoing colonialist challenges and leading to mutual liberation.

- **Bold Humility and Humble Boldness:** For the Christian community, this means adopting **"bold humility"** to explicitly acknowledge its colonial entanglement and systems of oppression, while Indigenous theologians need **"humble boldness"** to share the Gospel despite Christianity's painful history in their communities.

- **"Theology Matters":** She concludes that "theology matters"—what non-Indigenous people believe about God profoundly affects their actions regarding Indigenous issues, making Indigenous theology inherently political and vital for challenging the status quo.

Carmen Lansdowne's work powerfully illustrates how a "broken heart" and "interculturalism" can inform a transformative path toward liberation and reconciliation within Christian faith, particularly in the context of Indigenous experiences of colonialism.

The "Broken Heart" as a Catalyst for Truth-Telling and Transformation

Lansdowne describes her personal experience of the **"church and society have broken my heart repeatedly"**. This brokenness stems from the pervasive history and ongoing reality of colonialism, where Christian mission was deeply complicit in the genocide—both physical and cultural—of Indigenous peoples in North America. Missionaries, entangled in Euro-Western social structures, were largely unable to avoid complicity in this genocide, imposing Euro-Western civilization as a prerequisite for Christian faith and attacking Indigenous cultural and value systems.

Despite this profound pain and the "theological battering" she has experienced, Lansdowne chooses to **remain committed to the church**, believing in its potential for "liberating word that speaks justice and truth to power". Her "broken Indigene heart" serves not as a source of defeat, but as a **"constructive act of both political truth-telling and embracing what is ever hopeful in Christian theology and mission"**. It provides a cathartic and evocative "why" for her scholarship, demanding changes and inspiring healing.

This "broken heart" necessitates a deeper engagement with the realities of ongoing colonialism, which manifests as oppression, racism, alienation, eradication, and silencing of Indigenous peoples. It confronts the "illusion" among non-Indigenous people that fair treatment has been achieved, masking persistent political injustices. Lansdowne argues that this acknowledgment of a "broken heart"—the historical harms and present pain—is an **"essential prerequisite" for a renewed relationship of fairness and mutual respect**. It forces a confrontation with the "logic of genocide," which insists Indigenous peoples must disappear to legitimize non-Indigenous claims to land and resources. For Lansdowne, the healing of Indigenous communities is inextricably linked to the healing of non-Indigenous communities, requiring "systemic confession and repentance" from the latter.

Interculturalism as a Framework for Mutual Liberation and Reconciliation

Interculturalism, as defined by The United Church of Canada and embraced by Lansdowne, offers a distinct and profound approach to living together in culturally diverse societies. Unlike multiculturalism (which fosters superficial tolerance) or cross-culturalism (which builds bridges), **interculturalism demands "deeper engagement and mutual transformation between peoples and cultural groups"**. It is characterized by **"justice, mutuality, respect, equality, understanding, acceptance, freedom, diversity, peace-making, and celebration"**. Crucially, it requires **"examining ourselves, building relationships, and distributing power fairly"**.

Key aspects of interculturalism in fostering liberation and reconciliation include:

- **Addressing Power Imbalances:** Interculturalism directly confronts racial and economic power imbalances, recognizing that these are not merely individual prejudices, but systemic issues perpetuated by widely supported social structures. It challenges the notion that treaty negotiations are between equal powers when one party dictates the parameters and privileges its own interests.
- **Mutual Transformation:** It rejects approaches like "integration" which often amount to assimilation for marginalized groups. Instead, it calls for both dominant and marginalized communities to be transformed. This is a "co-intentional liberatory move towards both *metanoia* (change or conversion) and *koinonia* (joint contribution)".
- **Prioritizing Indigenous Epistemologies:** For interculturalism to be effective, Settler societies must first believe that Indigenous Peoples have valuable knowledge and perspectives to share. Indigenous epistemologies, with their comfort for ambiguity, multiple truths, and non-binary dualisms, can liberate both Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities from the "epistemic hegemony" of Western thought. They offer

alternative worldviews that emphasize right action, relationships, and a moral universe, contrasting with Western epistemologies' focus on propositional truth and justification.

- **Dialogue as an Objective:** True intercultural dialogue is not merely a means to solve problems but an objective in itself. This process of dialogue, reflection, and mutual conscientization—where the oppressed become aware of oppressive structures and the oppressors become aware of their complicity—is crucial for liberation.
- **Solidarity and Interdependence:** Interculturalism fosters solidarity, calling for engagement in the struggles of others and being transformed by their lived experiences of injustice. It recognizes "**interdependence involves recognizing the ways in which one person's affluence is built on another person's poverty**". This risky and intimate work requires vulnerability and a willingness to be changed by the "other".

A Liberating Path Forward

Lansdowne's work, driven by her "broken heart," seeks to construct an Indigenous missiology grounded in these principles. It is an "open-ended theology that represents the liberative demands of Indigenist perspectives". This vision of Christian mission, seen "from below", emphasizes:

- **Mission as solidarity** (church with others), which requires deep emotional and psychosocial intimacy and a commitment to transforming sinful social structures.
- **Mission as quest for justice**, which creates a vision for a future that insists on both forgiveness and restitution, liberating both the sinned-against and the sinning.
- **Mission as liberation**, which is a process of conscientization that uncovers the divine mystery through deep relationships and challenges static ideologies.
- **Mission as theology**, which demands re-engagement with diverse theological disciplines and acknowledges that "what we think about God and God's mission in the world matters, and it profoundly affects what we do or don't do".

By embracing the vulnerability of a "broken heart" and committing to the mutual transformation inherent in interculturalism, Christian faith can move beyond colonial legacies. This path involves acknowledging the inherent rights and unique position of Indigenous Peoples, valuing their epistemologies, and actively seeking "**right action**" towards both the Earth and each other. This commitment to interculturalism, where "my gain as an Indigenous woman is not necessarily your loss as a non-Indigenous Settler/Arrivant", offers a way to deepen the mystery of God's mission and achieve genuine liberation and reconciliation for all.

The historical and ongoing impacts of colonialism and Western epistemologies on Indigenous peoples are central to Carmen Lansdowne's work, revealing a pervasive system that has profoundly shaped their realities and continues to demand transformative change.

Here are the key historical and ongoing impacts:

I. Historical Impacts of Colonialism:

- **Genocide (Physical and Cultural):** Colonialism in the Americas, starting from 1492, led to an unparalleled genocide, with pre-contact Indigenous populations estimated at 125 million or more. This included not only physical destruction but also **cultural genocide**, defined as the systematic destruction or undermining of a people's culture and values. Missionary activity, both historically and in the present, is identified as complicit in this genocide, often attacking the core cultural and value systems of Indigenous peoples.
- **Missionary Conquest and Imposition of Euro-Western Civilization:** Christian mission historically involved the **imposition of Euro-Western civilization as a prerequisite for Christian faith**, contributing to the conquest of North America. Missionaries were largely unable to avoid complicity in the genocide due to pervasive European and Euroamerican social structures. This resulted in an association of mission and evangelism with colonialism and Western cultural hegemony.
- **Broken Promises and Dispossession:** Indigenous peoples have endured a history of broken promises, dispossession of land, disruption, and dislocation. The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP) in Canada, for instance, documented extensive injuries caused by residential schools, community relocations, and discriminatory policies.
- **Suppression of Self-Governance:** New Christian converts were often removed from their traditional communities, prohibited from returning, forced into physical labor for missions and military governments, and required to relinquish all aspects of self-governance.

II. Ongoing Impacts of Colonialism (Socio-Political & Economic):

- **Continued Oppression and Racism:** Colonization is an **ongoing process** that continues to shape the lived realities of Indigenous peoples in North America. Indigenous peoples face **continued oppression, racism, alienation, eradication, and silencing**.
- **"Logic of Genocide":** A foundational "pillar of white supremacy" is the **logic of genocide**, which posits that Indigenous peoples must disappear (or always be disappearing) to legitimize non-Indigenous peoples' claims to land, resources, spirituality, and culture.

- **Illusion of Fair Treatment:** There is a prevalent "illusion" among non-Indigenous people that "progressive thinking and improved attitudes have brought fair treatment to Indigenous people". This illusion allows contemporary political injustices to persist and masks ongoing systemic issues.
- **Denial and Resistance to Reparations:** The dominant society often reacts to the true story of Indigenous genocide and dispossession with **shame, challenge, denial, ignorance, and defense**. There is widespread ignorance of historical dispossession, making it difficult for non-Indigenous people to admit the need for restitution. Phrases like "Why don't Indigenous people get over the past and pull themselves up by their bootstraps?" exemplify rhetorical tactics that support a Settler mentality disconnected from historical conquest.
- **Unfulfilled Recommendations and Policy Failures:** Despite comprehensive reports like the RCAP (1996), which provided hundreds of recommendations for justice and reconciliation, very few have been acted upon by the Canadian government. Media often focused on the *cost* of the commission rather than its findings, and the report's recommendations were largely ignored by policymakers and society.
- **Racialization of Poverty and Health Disparities:** Indigenous peoples consistently lag behind the general population in measures of well-being. For example, life expectancy for First Nations in Canada plunged by 6 years between 2017 and 2021. These disparities are part of a **racialization of poverty** in North America, where Indigenous peoples (and other marginalized people of color) experience higher poverty rates and lower life expectancies.
- **Paternalism and Dependency:** Historical "aid" from the oppressor to the oppressed has often been conditional, presented as a gift rather than an obligation, creating **unhealthy dependencies** and discouraging challenges to the status quo. Dominant institutions often express "weariness of paying for colonialism" while failing to acknowledge their complicity in creating the impoverished conditions.
- **Psychological and Social Pathologies:** Centuries of colonial oppression have led to profound psychological ramifications, including the **internalization and externalization of oppression**, manifesting as social pathologies like rampant health problems, drug and alcohol abuse, sexual violence, gambling addictions, and homelessness. This can lead to self-hatred and nihilism, which Cornel West identifies in other marginalized communities and is seen in Indigenous circles as "lateral wounding" or "lateral violence".
- **Silencing and Invisibility:** Indigenous voices are often silenced in discourse, particularly when they challenge the dominant political history. There's a notable **invisibility of Indigenous concerns and voices** in North American theological scholarship.

III. Ongoing Impacts of Western Epistemologies:

- **Epistemic Hegemony:** Western epistemologies, rooted in figures like Descartes and Kant, have established a **hegemony of thought** that limits what is considered true, valid, or valuable to reason and rationality, often excluding Indigenous ways of knowing. This creates an "epistemic hegemony" where dominant groups are blind to their own privilege and ignore or disavow it.
- **Binary Dualisms and Devaluation:** Western thought is characterized by **radical binary dualisms** (mind/body, knowledge/doubt, good/bad) which often lead to hierarchical valuing. This framework has been used to impose on Indigenous communities, devaluing their worldviews as "primitive" and "undeveloped".
- **Dismissal of Indigenous Knowledge:** Indigenous epistemologies, which are comfortable with ambiguity, multiple truths, and non-binary dualisms, and emphasize experiential knowledge and right action, are often **disproven, discounted, fictional, anecdotal, and "inappropriately subjective"** by the academy due to their perceived incompatibility with Cartesian thought.
- **Objectification in Research:** Western approaches to knowledge and research have historically **objectified Indigenous peoples** in empirical studies that lack a relational element and fail to respect cultural boundaries around questioning. This is why "research" can be a "dirty word" in Indigenous contexts, stirring up bad memories.
- **Privileging Western Narratives:** Western epistemologies privilege historical authority and tradition as justifiable, even when new information emerges. This contrasts with Indigenous oral traditions, which are primarily pedagogical and political, focused on teaching moral truths and consensus-based decision-making rather than solely historical accuracy or propositional truth.
- **Resistance to Interculturalism:** The "Eurocentric arrogance of conscience" assumes that sufficient information alone can lead to understanding the "other," but this overlooks the fundamental epistemological differences. Attempts to "make space" for Indigenous voices are often quickly reasserted by dominant perspectives, attempting to eradicate difference rather than embrace mutual transformation.
- **Conflation of Universalism with Western Ideals:** The "theological fallacy of Christian universalism" often masks theology produced from a position of cultural privilege, failing to embrace the "interdependent particularity" of a global Christianity. This contributes to the idea that assimilation into colonial notions of "success" is the only viable path for Indigenous peoples.

Chapter-by-chapter Study Guide & Discussion Questions

Part 1: Setting the Stage – A Personal and Political Context

Chapter 1: A Heart Committed to Mission, Despite the Pain

- **Key Idea:** Carmen Lansdowne's unwavering commitment to Christian faith, despite the deep hurt caused by colonial practices within the church. Her writing is a "constructive act of both political truth-telling and embracing what is ever hopeful".

- **Discussion Questions:**

- How does Lansdowne's personal experience of a "broken heart" resonate with your own understanding of faith and institutions?
- What does it mean for an Indigenous theologian to reclaim and reinterpret Christian mission from a decolonial perspective?
- Lansdowne states she "can't leave" the church. What inspires her to stay, despite the challenges?

Chapter 2: Understanding Colonialism – More Than Just History

- **Key Idea:** Clarifying crucial terms like **postcolonial**, **decolonial**, and **anti-colonial** to understand the ongoing impact of European imperialism, especially in North America, where colonization is seen as *fait accompli* (a done deal). Lansdowne argues that Indigenous discourse is necessarily decolonial.

- **Discussion Questions:**

- How do you typically define "colonialism"? How does Lansdowne's distinction between "post-colonial" (after active colonization) and "decolonial" (active resistance to ongoing colonialism) challenge or expand that understanding?
- Why is it important for Indigenous voices to define these terms themselves, rather than having them defined by dominant society?
- What might "revisionist revolution" look like in acknowledging shared histories and privileging Indigenous positions in the Americas?

Part 2: The Hard Realities and Different Ways of Knowing

Chapter 3: The "Facts on the Ground" for Indigenous Peoples

- **Key Idea:** Presenting the stark contemporary realities of Indigenous Peoples in Canada, highlighting continued oppression, racism, and marginalization, often obscured by an "illusion that progressive thinking and improved attitudes have brought fair treatment".

- **Discussion Questions:**

- What "facts on the ground" about Indigenous communities in Canada (e.g., health indicators, RCAP report, life expectancy) were surprising or new to you?
- How does the dominant society's tendency to resist a "renegotiated and renewed relationship" contribute to the persistence of colonialist thinking?
- Consider Michelle Reid's "How not to respond to Indigenous experiences of racism in Canada" list. Have you encountered or used any of these rhetorical tactics? How can we avoid them?

Chapter 4: Indigenous Epistemologies: Diverse Ways of Knowing

- **Key Idea:** Exploring how Indigenous ways of knowing (epistemologies) differ fundamentally from Western ones. Indigenous epistemologies are often **nondiscrete**, **nonbinary**, comfortable with ambiguity, relational, and grounded in experiential knowledge, prioritizing right action over abstract truth claims.

- **Discussion Questions:**

- How does the Western philosophical focus on "justified true belief" and binary dualisms (e.g., mind/body, good/bad) contrast with Indigenous perspectives?
- What does it mean to be guided by "the limits of questioning rather than the limits of reason," as suggested by Indigenous epistemologies?
- How can embracing "multiple truths" and "complementary" worldviews lead to deeper understanding and liberation for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities?

Part 3: Re-envisioning Christian Mission for the 21st Century

Chapter 5: Reclaiming *Missio Dei* (God's Mission)

- **Key Idea:** The historical concept of *missio Dei* aimed to shift mission from human activity to God's activity, but it largely failed to disentangle itself from colonialism and has often remained abstract. Lansdowne argues for a "more holistic and engaged interrogation" to deepen its mystery rather than dismiss it.

- **Discussion Questions:**

- What were the original intentions behind the concept of *missio Dei*, and how did it fall short in addressing colonialism and secularization?
- Why is it a "contradictory nature" for *missio Dei* to still be discussed as something humans *do*?
- What does it mean to move towards "mission as humans seeking to know God" (*missio humanitatis qua itinerarium in Deum*) instead of focusing solely on God's mission to humanity?

Chapter 6: Why Indigenous Mission Must Be Political

- **Key Idea:** Indigenous theology and mission are inherently **political**, requiring direct engagement with laws, policies, and rights, to confront systems of injustice and overcome the "unfinished business" of colonialism. It's about bringing "healing, wholeness, and new life" through justice.

- **Discussion Questions:**

- How does Lansdowne's argument that "all Indigenous theology is political theology" challenge traditional understandings of faith and politics?
- What does it mean to seek justice for healing, rather than retribution, in the context of historical harms against Indigenous peoples?
- How can mission actively dismantle systems of oppression and challenge "colonialist thinking" that persists today?

Chapter 7: Bold Humility and Humble Boldness in Mission

- **Key Idea:** Lansdowne proposes two essential postures for Christians: **bold humility** (speaking truth about the gospel while acknowledging the church's historical

harms with humility) and **humble boldness** (witnessing to the gospel with a profound awareness of oppression and the need for reform).

- **Discussion Questions:**

- In what ways has Christian mission historically lacked "humble boldness" when engaging with Indigenous cultures?
- How can the Christian community embrace "bold humility" to address its complicity in colonial enterprises and systems of oppression?
- How do these concepts offer a "hopeful way of interrogating and reimagining *missio Dei* that avoids radical binary dualisms and allows for diverse forms of flourishing"?

Part 4: Pathways to Re-Integration and Transformation

Chapter 8: "Church with Others": Embracing Interculturalism

- **Key Idea:** Moving beyond paternalistic "church for others" to "**church with others**" demands genuine interculturalism, where diverse cultural groups engage in mutual transformation and address power imbalances. This requires deep emotional and psychosocial intimacy, confronting societal denial and historical traumas.

- **Discussion Questions:**

- What are the differences between multiculturalism, cross-culturalism, and interculturalism as defined by The United Church of Canada?
- How does societal denial, as described by Ulanov and Holler, prevent genuine reconciliation and transformation within the church and wider society?
- What practical steps can individuals and communities take to foster "deeper emotional and psychosocial intimacy" in their relationships with Indigenous peoples?

Chapter 9: Mission as a Quest for Justice and Liberation

- **Key Idea:** Justice, from an Indigenous perspective, is a "perpetual process of maintaining...balance and demonstrating true respect for the power and dignity of each part of the circle of interdependency". Liberation requires **conscientization** (critical consciousness) for both the oppressed and the oppressors, leading to "conversion" from both "sinned-against" and "sinning" contexts.

- **Discussion Questions:**

- How does the Indigenous notion of justice, focused on balance and interdependence, contrast with Western individualistic and materialistic conceptions?
- What does it mean for oppressors to undergo "conversion" by unmasking their hidden privilege and complicity?
- How can communities "allow marginalized and traumatized people to voice their own perspectives on the past and the present" to initiate liberation?

Chapter 10: Mission as Theology: A Fleshy and Vulnerable Jesus

- **Key Idea:** Missiology must re-engage with contemporary theological developments, including "**indecent theology**" and "**the weakness of God**," to confront heteronormative and colonial assumptions. This means embracing a "fleshy and vulnerable Jesus" who connects with suffering bodies and inspires liberation for the "outcasts".

- **Discussion Questions:**

- How can challenging traditional theological assumptions about Jesus (e.g., through Althaus-Reid's "indecent theology") transform our understanding of mission?
- What does John Caputo's concept of "the weakness of God" and a "fleshy and vulnerable Jesus" imply for Christian action in response to physical suffering and injustice among Indigenous peoples?
- How does the "inauthenticity of the spectres who are biologically Indian but far removed from the romanticized imaginary of the Western mind" challenge dominant societies to acknowledge present-day brokenness?

Conclusion: Hope for a Transformed Future

Chapter 11: Embracing Plurality, Relationships, and Right Action

- **Key Idea:** Lansdowne champions **epistemic pluralism**, recognizing that Indigenous epistemologies are nondiscrete and nonbinary, allowing for the co-existence of local and universal truths. This challenges fear of relativism and emphasizes relationships and "right action" as guiding principles for navigating a complex world.

- **Discussion Questions:**

- How does accepting "multiple truths" – where different perspectives are not always competing but complementary – change how we approach dialogue and problem-solving?
- What is the significance of "original instructions" and the "survivor spirit" in the ongoing development of Indigenous epistemologies?
- How can recognizing our interdependence lead to a more balanced and just approach to environmental and social challenges?

Chapter 12: Reclaiming *Missio Dei* with a Broken Indigene Heart

• **Key Idea:** The ultimate vision for *missio Dei* is its transformation to challenge conditional aid, problem-solving-as-end approaches, and competitive resource allocation. It means prioritizing dialogue as an end in itself, ensuring equitable access to resources, and understanding the world as a source of abundance for all. This leads to liberation and justice for both oppressed and oppressors through **conscientization**, **metanoia** (conversion), and **koinonia** (joint contribution).

- **Discussion Questions:**

- Reflect on the three "tenacious dynamics" in Indigenous-Settler relationships that Lansdowne identifies (conditional aid, problem-solving focus, competition for scarce resources). How can we actively challenge these in our own lives and communities?
- What does it mean for "dialogue [to be] an end itself, not a means to an end" in working towards reconciliation?
- How can we embrace the "wondrous diversity of the world" (stories, songs, art, nature, theology, liturgy, preaching, prayer) to embody a transformed *missio Dei* grounded in right action?

For Further Exploration

A curated list of books and authors mentioned by Lansdowne that offer deeper dives into the themes of decolonization, Indigenous epistemologies, liberation theology, and critical theory. (See original source for full list and descriptions).

- **Benevolent Predecessors:** Works that laid the groundwork for contemporary Indigenous thought, such as Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* and Albert Memmi's *The Colonizer and the Colonized*.
- **Manifestos:** Bold political declarations and calls to action from Indigenous scholars like Taiaiake Alfred.
- **Historical Revisions:** Books that retell history from Indigenous perspectives, including Thomas King's *The Inconvenient Indian*.
- **Education and Education Reform:** Works addressing Indigenous education and the preservation of traditional knowledge, like Linda Tuhiwai Smith's *Decolonizing Methodologies*.
- **Indigenous Spiritualities and Psychologies:** Resources on healing from intergenerational trauma and addiction, such as George "Tink" Tinker's *American Indian Liberation* and Gabor Maté's *In The Realm of Hungry Ghosts*.

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Aboriginal:** A term used in Canada to refer to First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples collectively. Lansdowne generally prefers "Indigenous."
- **Acculturation:** The process by which an individual or group adopts cultural traits or patterns from another group, often implying a one-way imposition.
- **Anarchic An-ethics:** A concept by John Caputo based on biblical "strategic reversals" where the kingdom of God acts as a counterbalance to worldly kingdoms, emphasizing heteronomy (responsibility to the other) over autonomy (individual freedom).
- **Anti-colonialism:** A discourse or movement actively resisting and challenging colonial structures and ideologies. Lansdowne uses it to describe the intent to disrupt European epistemologies that privilege those of European descent and oppress Indigenous communities.
- **Arrivant:** A term, inspired by Kamau Brathwaite and used by Jodi Byrd, to signify subsequent waves of immigration to the Americas, distinct from early Settlers.
- **Autoethnography:** A research method that connects the autobiographical and personal to the cultural, social, and political, often used therapeutically and vulnerably.
- **Bold Humility and Humble Boldness:** Two concepts originally phrased this way by South African missiologist David Bosch, upheld by Lansdowne. *Humble boldness* is the stance theologians should assume when witnessing to the gospel, acknowledging historical oppression. *Bold humility* is a corporate posture for the Christian community, proclaiming the Good News with humility due to entanglement with colonialism and systems of oppression.
- **Coloniality:** A concept, particularly from Walter Mignolo, that refers to the logical structure of colonial domination underlying global economic and political control, which persists even after formal colonialism ends. Distinct from "colonialism" which refers to specific historical periods.
- **Colonization (Fait Accompli):** The state where European colonization is no longer a reversible context but has become the new normal, as argued for Indigenous peoples in the Americas.

- **Conscientization (Critical Consciousness):** A process, introduced by Paulo Freire, where individuals become aware of their political realities and are empowered to work for their liberation from systems of oppression.
- **Constructive Theology:** An approach to theology that acknowledges theological understanding as constructed and engages in the ongoing construction of theological meaning, often challenging traditional categories.
- **Copy Principle:** David Hume's idea describing a causal relationship between simple impressions, simple ideas, and complex ideas, where thoughts originate from sensory experiences.
- **Cultural Genocide:** The effective destruction of a people by systematically destroying, eroding, or undermining the integrity of their culture and system of values.
- **Decolonial Theology:** A theological approach that critiques colonial legacies and calls for the reclaiming and reinterpretation of Christian mission through decolonial discourse, often from Indigenous perspectives.
- **Decolonization:** Defined by Waziyatawin Angela Wilson and Michael Yellow Bird as "intelligent, calculated, and active resistance to the forces of colonialism that perpetuate the subjugation and/or exploitation of our minds, bodies and lands, and... engaged for the ultimate purpose of overturning the colonial structure and realizing Indigenous liberation."
- **Doxastic Ideal:** The concept in Western philosophy, dating back to Plato and Aristotle, concerning the "ideally formed belief" or "justified true belief."
- **Epistemological Hegemony:** The dominance of a particular way of knowing or understanding truth, often Western, that makes it difficult for alternative epistemologies to be recognized or validated.
- **Epistemology:** The study of knowledge, concerned with questions like "What is knowledge?" and "How do we know what we know?"
- **Euangélion (εὐαγγέλιον):** Greek word for "the good news," which Lansdowne seeks to reclaim for evangelism.
- **Haíticístut:** A Haítzaqv word meaning "to turn things around and make them right again," which Lansdowne prefers over "reconciliation" as it implies repentance and transformation.

- **Haítzaqv (Heiltsuk):** The Indigenous First Nation to which Carmen Lansdowne belongs.
- **Indigene:** A term used by Lansdowne to emphasize the personal and subjective quality of her Indigenous identity.
- **Indigenist:** A term referring to collective Indigenous perspectives (pan-Indigenous) and sometimes perspectives of allies to Indigenous thought, often challenging Western philosophical traditions.
- **Inculturation:** The process of inserting Christianity into a specific cultural context.
- **Interculturalism:** An approach to living together as distinct cultures that emphasizes justice, mutuality, respect, and intentional transformation through deep engagement and relationship-building, acknowledging and addressing power imbalances.
- **Lateral Wounding (Lateral Violence):** The phenomenon where individuals within an oppressed community direct their anger, shame, and resentment towards each other, rather than against the systems of oppression.
- **Liberation Theology:** A theological movement, originating in Latin America, that interprets Christian faith through the experiences of the oppressed and seeks to address systemic injustices that cause poverty and marginalization.
- **Logic of Genocide:** Andrea Smith's argument that a pillar of white supremacy is the logic that Indigenous Peoples must disappear, enabling non-Indigenous claims to land and resources.
- **Missio Dei:** Latin for "God's mission." A concept popularized in the mid-20th century to shift the focus from the church *doing* mission to mission being an attribute of God, with human participation.
- **Missiones Ecclesiolae:** Latin for "the mission of the churches," meaning what the Church is called to be and to do – including its nature, purpose, hopes, structures, and practices.
- **Nero Complex:** Albert Memmi's concept describing the self-defeating process in the oppressor where increasing oppression leads to increased hatred of the oppressed and self-condemnation.
- **Nihilism:** A profound sense of psychological depression, personal worthlessness, and social despair, often observed in oppressed communities, as described by Cornel West in *Race Matters*.

- **Ontology of Continental Divides:** Walter Mignolo's concept arguing that the idea of place is a colonial construction, serving the colonizer by organizing the world around a European center.
- **Pedagogies of the Oppressed:** Educational models, largely influenced by Paulo Freire (author of *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*), that advocate for transformational community-based learning where marginalized individuals use their lived experience to critique oppressive systems.
- **Persuasio:** Latin term used by Descartes to describe a form of conviction based on strong belief but open to the possibility of being disproven, contrasted with *scientia*.
- **Political Theology:** A theological approach that explicitly considers laws, policies, and rights as part of theological discourse, particularly in contexts of social and political oppression.
- **Post-colonial:** Refers to the period after active colonization, when formerly colonized countries have gained independence.
- **Postcolonial (without hyphen):** Refers to the various cultural effects and continuing legacies of colonization, often used in critical theory.
- **Preferential Option for the Poor:** A central tenet of liberation theology, articulated by Gustavo Gutiérrez, meaning a commitment to hearing, understanding, and allying with the experiences of the marginalized first, not that God favors the poor over others.
- **Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP):** A comprehensive Canadian report (1996) that investigated the relationship between Aboriginal peoples and Canadian society, making hundreds of recommendations for justice and reconciliation.
- **Scientia:** Descartes' concept of "true knowledge" or "justified true belief" that is so strongly held it cannot be undermined by any stronger belief, preferred over *persuasio*.
- **Settler:** Refers to communities who settled in North America more than one or two generations ago, distinct from Indigenous Peoples.
- **Strategic Essentialism:** A concept by Gayatri Spivak (and adapted by Chela Sandoval) where marginalized groups strategically use essentialist claims about their identity to achieve political goals, while still acknowledging the constructed nature of identity.

- **Theandric:** A term used by Jayakiran Sebastian to describe mission as both a divine and human enterprise, where binaries become intertwined as the very nature of the divine.
- **Underside of Modernity:** A concept, influenced by Enrique Dussel and Nelson Maldonado-Torres, referring to the experiences and perspectives of those who have suffered under the systems and narratives of modernity, particularly colonization and oppression.
- **Universalism (Christian):** The belief that all people will ultimately be saved or that Christian truth applies universally, which Lansdowne critiques as potentially foundationalist and a product of cultural privilege.
- **White Supremacy:** A system of structural or societal racism which privileges white people over others, regardless of the presence or the absence of racial hatred.