

Our Thirty Years War and the ending it heralds: A Final Retrospective

by Kevin Annett / Eagle Strong Voice



Even in the sunlight, the Alberni valley was draped in fog that first morning I arrived there in the spring of 1992. Jesus once said that when we welcome the stranger, we're really welcoming him. But how could I have known that by opening the door to him and to so many others, I would be closing the door to all that I knew.

– The author, from his award-winning documentary film *Unrepentant* (2007)

My life is over now, I know that. But that doesn't matter. You're the one I worry about, Kev. You're the one who's in real danger. The evil thing that killed all those native kids is hiding in the churches, and it hates you for ripping off its mask. It wants you dead because it knows you'll never give up. So now you can't trust anybody, not even your wife. Everybody's going to abandon and betray you. You'll be fighting that thing all alone with only God in your corner.

– Mark Angus to the author a week before Mark's murder, Port Alberni, January 9, 1994

Then I heard the voice of the Lord God, saying, "Whom shall I send? And who shall go for us?" And I said, "Here I am, Lord. Send me!"

And God said, "Go, and say to this people, 'You shall hear but not understand, you shall see, but not perceive.' Make the heart of this people fat, make their ears heavy and shut their eyes, lest they see, and understand, and change, and be saved."

And I said, "For how long, Lord?"

And God answered, "Until the cities be wasted without inhabitants, and the houses stand empty, and the land be utterly desolate ... For not even the remnant tenth shall be saved, but only the holy seed."

- Isaiah 6: 8-13

When I was a boy coming of age in Winnipeg, I was warned by sundry relatives to never ask my severely alcoholic uncle Earl about his wartime experiences. But I did, anyway, expecting him to recite stirring battlefield accounts that would fuel my ten-year-old ardor for soldiering. Instead, my uncle said,

“It was a nightmare. My best friend Sandy got blown to pieces right next to me. But it was the best time of my life because I was doing something that mattered. We laid our lives on the line for each other every day. Everything since then has been a lot of crap, just the same old dog eat dog world. Nobody now gives a shit about what we did or what we went through, they’ll never understand. You had to be there.”

Earl’s words ring true in me these days as my own war memories return with a vengeance on the thirtieth anniversary of their commencement.

On July 15, 1992, a week after the birth of my youngest daughter Elinor, fate brought me to a United Church pulpit in a war zone called Port Alberni. From out of the tumultuous years that followed and ended my life, I would know the agony of every veteran: that a victory won at the cost of everything would never be appreciated by those for whom I struggled and bled. But like my uncle Earl, I discovered the hidden secret described by another war veteran, General Joshua Chamberlain of Gettysburg fame, that *“It is only when a man supremely gives that he supremely finds.”*

The world now barely remembers the extraordinary changes achieved over the past thirty years by a handful of us, that have shaken Canada and the pinnacles of Church and State. Those powers have done their best to bury that memory of their crime of mass murder, and the horrific truth we revealed of an ongoing genocide that now threatens all humanity. But the truth abides, as does the verdict against a murderous corporate culture whose time is over. And it all began three decades ago today, when my young family and I drove unsuspectingly into the Alberni Valley on Canada’s west coast, and I began to meet survivors of the “Indian residential school” death camps.

That story has been told in pieces over the years, but the bigger panorama eludes our present “one second memory” culture. Not even our historic common law court trial that deposed “Pope Benedict”, and that convened on another July 15 just ten years ago, is recalled in official memory. But the victory remained.

For the truth is that our initial campaign to expose the Canadian residential school crimes broadened over the next quarter century into three equally successful movements that spanned the globe: our common law court prosecution of Canada, Rome, and London for the Canadian genocide, the exposure of Vatican-led trafficking and ritual killing of children, and the establishment of sovereign Republics to replace criminally convicted regimes like Canada, the British Crown, and the Vatican.

Those four epic assaults on centuries-old tyrannies not only deposed a Pope and Papal-Crown authority, but popularized issues like the common law, religious child torture, and personal/political sovereignty. It also led us to confront an even deadlier and ultimate enemy: the present global Corporatocracy and its extermination of our liberties and our lives. But that latest struggle has illuminated an outcome and a fate that none of us ever expected.

The other night, I sorted through the two dozen boxes whose priceless contents summarize the majority of my adult years: news clippings, faded documents, photos, excavated artifacts, and hundreds of eyewitness statements. In memory and those images I saw long-dead friends defiantly picketing the Catholic, Anglican, and United churches that killed over 60,000 of their child relatives; government reports citing fifty percent death rates that spanned decades; banal media and "official" acknowledgements of the truth known personally to so many survivors of our homegrown holocaust; small buttons off the uniforms of slaughtered children buried in secret; and the happy smiles of my own young daughters from a time long past when innocence and naivete still had room in my life.

What struck me suddenly was an incredulity I had not felt since my novice time wading through horror. *It's been thirty years!* I thought. *The truth has been known for that long! And yet still the world acts like nothing happened, and even people who care do nothing about it. Still this evidence is banned from our schools and libraries and official discourse. How can these churches still be operating? How can people allow them to when they still traffic and kill children? And why am I a banished and erased person in my own country, and so many eyewitnesses and friends are murdered and forgotten, while the child killers walk free and hide their guilt?*

I put it this way in my book *Fallen: The Story of the Vancouver Four*, concerning some of the residential school survivors I had come to know:

Harry Wilson had been the most helpless of the four, and watching him stumble and crumble every day and finally end up dead in a garbage dump was a final break for me. Nothing made sense after that, and everything was estranged.

The moral equation was a simple one for me: if someone as innocent as Harry could be so easily ripped apart to his dying day while his killers prospered and the world yawned, I could have no part of any of it anymore. My mind eventually told me that, but first something visceral snapped in me. After Harry Wilson died, I lived only in the moments that mattered.

Nowadays, I don't witness any visceral disgust for our blood-soaked system from many people, including the self-described "awake" ones. The latter spend a lot of time abstractly castigating the latest criminal acts of the system while continuing to dutifully pay their taxes and vote. Over the decades while under the gun, I learned to grow beyond such trite, limited Pavlovian responses.

The issue for me is not the criminality of those in power but how they're enabled by the cooperation they receive from the rest of us – including the "awakes".

Over the past thirty years, only two people have ever told me that they quit in protest one of the genocidal churches, after seeing our evidence. Only two. Our church demonstrations and occupations never drew more than a few dozen people, nearly all of them aboriginals. And today, when we cite international law and call for the seizure and disestablishing of these criminally convicted churches and the arrest of their leaders, the "activists" of every stripe fall back in fear, like abused children who are asked to confront their violent parent.

My analogy to fearful children is not simply rhetorical. The more our campaigns moved beyond merely talking about genocide but confronting and prosecuting those responsible, and disestablishing their authority with that of our own, the more people grew confused and hostile. This reaction became most pronounced after we established local Republic Assemblies and courts, and began passing our own laws to oppose the so-called COVID regulations.

In a word, people self-sabotaged.

Significantly, the pattern has always played out in the same way everywhere. After showing great enthusiasm for the Assembly, participants hesitated when they were asked to pass and enforce their own laws. Most of them then either dropped away or found reasons not to be involved, including by attacking me. In some cases, people turned informant for the RCMP and actively disrupted and smeared our efforts. Yesterday's allies became overnight enemies.

Of course, I had witnessed such rapid turnabouts before, among Indian residential school survivors whose "Stockholm Syndrome" caused many of them to minimize or even defend their own torture and refrain from accusing their tormenters. "*The Indians act like they're being attacked when we confront the churches,*" observed an astute observer of one of our early "healing circles".

And yet psychological explanations for peoples' identification with their oppressors and resulting flip-flop in their loyalties go only so far. A deeper, less visible, and more insidious manipulation was at work, whether among aboriginal survivors or Republic Assembly participants.

Among these people, I learned that anyone still attached to a criminal system and its Group Mind are incapable of seriously fighting it, for it owns them. And that revelation was like the moment when I conducted an exorcism outside the Vatican and a tornado struck Rome the next morning. I realized that our battle was indeed a profoundly spiritual one that was challenging the real controlling entity behind the throne of matter and appearance.

Mark Angus had warned me. He was a diminutive member of my Port Alberni congregation who was found dead in his hotel room after speaking out about local child and drug traffickers. But before he died, Mark told me that the evil thing responsible for the residential school genocide was hiding in the churches, and like others in our valley it wanted me dead for pulling back its mask. And he said that I would be alone in the fight that was to come, with only God on my side.

His words proved truer than any that have ever been spoken to me.

The mask of the bloody thing we have all served has indeed slipped enough for even the dullest person to see what lies behind it, if they choose to see. But as I've experienced and the prophet Isaiah foresaw, the people have eyes, but they do not see, ears that do not hear, and hearts that are fat; for otherwise, they might change and be saved. And that deliverance is something that history, or fate, or God, is not allowing to happen. Just look around.

Is it not undeniable that we have refused our chance to be different by being changed by the horror done to the innocent in our name with our support? We could have stopped child murder and the encroaching corporate COVID tyranny years ago, but we chose instead to look the other way and live off the fruits of genocide as we suckled at the Moloch monster that was devouring our children. And so now a judgment is upon us: not from a vengeful deity, but due to the consequences of our own choices and complicity. Our society is not meant to survive itself, nor is any part of ourselves that belong to it, for our Group Crime is too massive and continual, and its lies are too entrenched, for any of it to end peacefully or rightly.

This understanding is one of the few gifts granted to me by three decades of unrequited struggle and suffering, and it is a crucial lamp in the dark during these, our final days. Without such inner insight, we cannot navigate the present madness. And so, when people demand to know from me how "Pope Francis" will be stopped when he comes to Canada on July 23 to parley with the Chinese and harm more children, I ask them if his arrest will change the judgment descending on all of us. We are told that not a single just soul was found anywhere in the city of Sodom before its final destruction. Who, then, was the enemy, and the cause of their fall? The Sodomites, and we ourselves, need only look in the mirror.

That said, Nature's Law shows that for individuals as for entire cultures, death comes so that new life can begin. Today's global power struggle between a Vatican-financed resurgent China and a declining America is but a passing moment in the death-knell that is sounding for the governing Corporatocracy. In the shadow of that dinosaur lingers those of us who are to embody a new society in the shell of the old. And the hard-won lessons like those of the past three decades will inspire and lead those who may achieve the liberty and justice of a godly people within their own Republics.

Years ago, in a pub in Liverpool, England, I spoke to a group of survivors of church torture who were much like my aboriginal friends. At the break, an elderly woman approached me.

"I've been trying to figure you out for years, Kevin," she said quietly. "And now I think I finally understand you."

She paused and smiled, and said,

"You were sent here to uproot and tear down the old so the new can grow. You're a systems smasher."

I nodded at the simple truth she had nailed so precisely. She took my hand and said with tears in her eyes,

"And your Indian friends, they knew that about you, too. That's why they stood by you to the very end."

In the only photograph I have of Harry Wilson and me, taken a few years before his murder, the little, tortured man smiles awkwardly as he drapes his arm over my shoulder. Something undying stares out from him: a spark that has helped sustain my own fire through the ten thousand days that we have battled Goliath.

That light honors all the fallen as well as the past thirty years and whatever is to come. May it enliven all of us, and make us restless fighters for the new world!

For darkness crept up until from all earthly sight, I was buried as with those before;

But oh! What radiant companionship rose around, what baring of heroic souls!

Oh, the glory of living through those days and nights, nobody will ever know.

But that which lifts up such splendid valor and drank in such high hearts' blood, shall hold the mighty secret in its bosom, 'till the great day of revelation and recompense!

- General Joshua Chamberlain, *Gettysburg Remembrance*



Harry Wilson (left) and Kevin Annett, Vancouver, 1998



Ricky Lavalley (in cap) and Kevin Annett with media at Holy Rosary Catholic Church, Vancouver, after its successful occupation by Indian residential school survivors, March 2007



Kevin Annett and his family upon arrival in Port Alberni, BC, July 15, 1992



Mohawk elder Bill Squire begins excavation of mass grave of children's remains at the Anglican Mohawk "mush hole" residential school, Brantford, October 2011



The only Canadian media coverage of the Mush Hole dig (picturing Kevin Annett with mush hole survivor Geronimo Henry)

Former minister alleges officials killed students

By NELSON BENNETT
Daily News

Beatings and rape weren't the only crimes committed at the Port Alberni Indian Residential School, says a former United Church minister.

Kevin Annett, who was removed from the pulpit in 1995, says at least four children at the Alberni Residential School may have died under suspicious circumstances. He's convinced they were murdered.

He says witnesses are only now beginning to come forward with stories of children being beaten to death.

Four of those witnesses will speak at a seminar being organized by Annett tonight, starting at 6:30 p.m., at Simon Fraser University's Harbour Centre Campus in Vancouver (515 West Hastings St.).

Annett served as minister at St. Andrew's United Church in Port Alberni from 1982 to 1995.

When he started asking local native people why they didn't attend church, he was told the incredible history of sexual and physical abuse

at the Alberni residential school, which had been run by the United Church.

"All the visits I did in native homes, they all said the same thing," Annett said. "And they said even worse. They said that kids are buried out behind the Alberni school."

"I found it incredible. But I couldn't deny what people were telling me and what I was increasingly finding out."

Annett began inviting former residential school victims to speak at Sunday services about the abuses they experienced.

Annett was dismissed in 1995, and though he said he was never given a reason for his dismissal, he suspects it was because he was digging up history the church would rather keep buried.

Annett is convinced one former residential school employee was responsible for the deaths of two students.

The first was Albert Gray, who was allegedly beaten to death in 1938. And according to one former student, a 14-year-old girl named

"I found a 16-year-old native girl beaten to death, with no clothes on,"

HARRY WILSON

Maisie Shaw died in 1946 after being kicked down a flight of stairs by the same employee.

More recently, Dennis Tallio—who is one of the plaintiffs in the ongoing Alberni Indian Residential School trial—told Annett he accidentally stumbled across the partially decomposed body of a girl in 1965 while he was student at the school.

Harry Wilson, who is also a plaintiff in the trial, reported a similar incident occurring in 1967.

Wilson, who had snuck out of the school around 6 a.m. one morning to meet up with two friends from the nearby reserve, said he came across the body of a girl who had only recently come to the school.

"I found a 16-year-old native girl beaten to death, with no clothes on," Wilson said in a phone interview Sunday.

He said he told the principal. He was soon sent away to hospital in Nanaimo. He never did find out what happened to the girl.

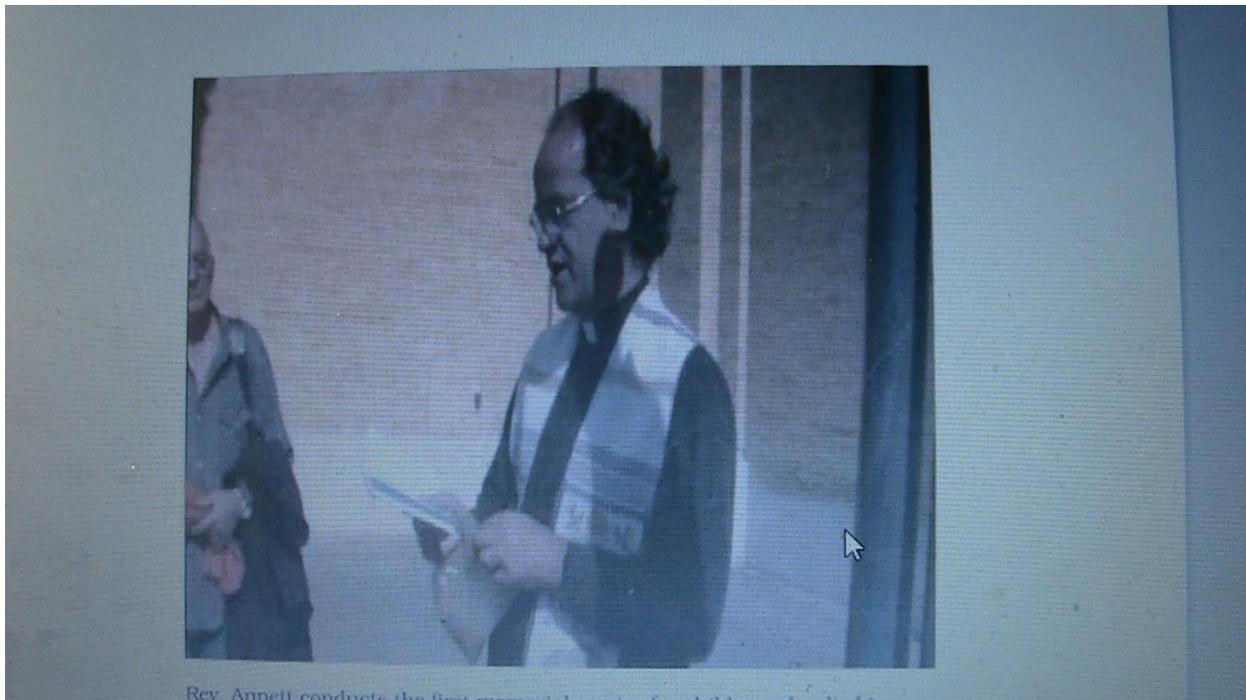
Annett said the deaths have never been satisfactorily explained by either police, school or church officials, and he thinks he knows why.

"They're trying to protect reputations of senior people," said Annett, who is currently pursuing a Ph.D. at the University of British Columbia.

Stories of children who died mysteriously at residential schools have been rumored within the native community for some time. Only recently have eyewitness began to go public with their testimony.

Annett hopes tonight's meeting will encourage others who may have knowledge of mysterious deaths at residential schools to come forward.

"It requires more people coming forward," he said. "These things are not going to be written down on a document somewhere."



Rev. Annett conducts the first exorcism outside the Vatican in St. Peter's Square, Rome, October 11, 2009

Kevin Annett conducting public exorcism in St. Peter's Square outside the Vatican, Rome, October 11, 2009

The Vancouver Sun, MONDAY, DECEMBER 18, 1995

Claim of murder goes back to '40s

A report that a girl was killed by a residential-school official has sparked an investigation.

AREN GRAM
Vancouver Sun

RCMP are launching an investigation today into an allegation that a young girl was murdered at a United Church residential school for Indians on Vancouver Island 50 years ago.

Art Anderson, an official with the United Church, said Sunday that police were notified of the allegation as soon as the church learned of it.

Rev. Kevin McNamee-Annett, a former United Church minister for the Alberni area, reported the allegation to the current minister Thursday. On Friday, both McNamee-Annett and the church lawyer reported it to the police.

"We are uncertain what this means, but we have to treat it seriously," Anderson said. "As of tomorrow, the police will be beginning an investigation."

The investigation was triggered by a statement from a North Vancouver woman who told McNamee-Annett she was nearby when a six-year-old girl was kicked down some stairs and died.

Harriet Nahanee, 60, is the first witness to come forward to support recent allegations about killings at residential schools on the island.

DEADLY NIGHTMARES: Harriet Nahanee, 60, says she is haunted by a murder she witnessed at a United Church residential school in Port Alberni 50 years ago.

In another case, a boy is said to have been beaten to death after he was punished for breaking a jar at the school in Ahousaht in the 1940s.

Reports of sexual and physical assaults at the Port Alberni area schools sparked a province-wide investigation of residential schools by an RCMP task force. It has been gathering evidence for about one year.

Please see RCMP, B3

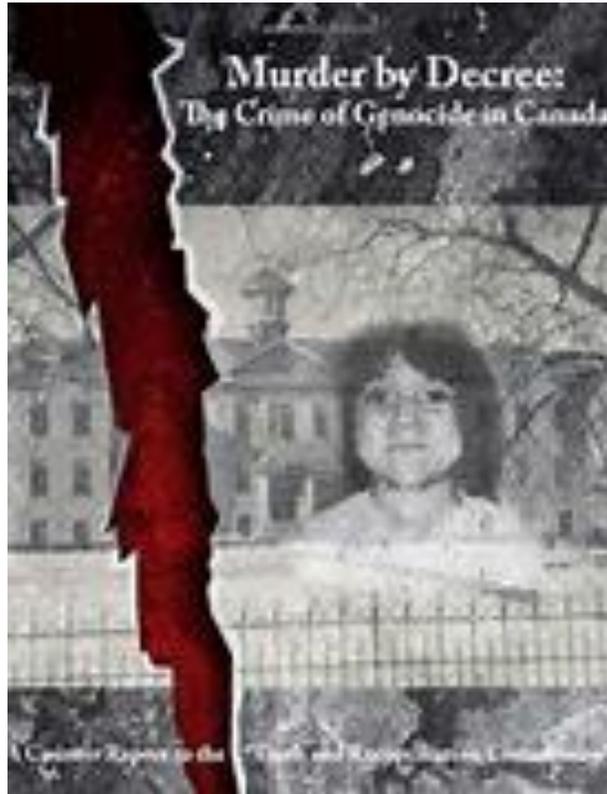
PETER BATTISTONI / Vancouver Sun



(Bottom) Dead children at Lejac Catholic residential school, January 1939



Kevin Annett (left) at the Protest the Pope March,
London, England, September 2010



Kevin Annett giving testimony at the first independent tribunal into Canadian residential school crimes, Vancouver, June 1998

