

their extended families, and their communities. Children who were abused in the schools sometimes went on to abuse others. Many students who spoke to the Commission said they developed addictions as a means of coping. Students who were treated and punished like prisoners in the schools often graduated to real prisons. For many, the path from residential school to prison was a short one. Mervin Mirasty was a student at the Beauval residential school.

I ran away from school. I'd go out, I'd walk around town, and steal whatever I could steal.... I started stealing cars. I got caught at fifteen. I ended up in jail. From that point of fifteen years old 'til ... to the year 2000, I got sentenced to twenty-five years all together, twenty-five years all together. And I don't know what I was fighting, what I was trying to do. I didn't care who I stole from. I drank. I started drinking when I was about seventeen, eighteen. I drank, I stole, I hardly worked. I used the system, the welfare system, and plus I stole, and I drank.<sup>3</sup>

Children exposed to strict and regimented discipline in the schools sometimes found it difficult to become loving parents. Genine Paul-Dimitracopoulos's mother was placed in the Shubenacadie residential school in Nova Scotia at a very early age. Paul-Dimitracopoulos told the Commission that knowing this, and what the school was like, helped her understand "how we grew up because my mom never really showed us love when we were kids coming up. She, when I was hurt or cried, she was never there to console you or to hug you. If I hurt myself she would never give me a hug and tell me it would be okay. I didn't understand why."<sup>4</sup> Alma Scott of Winnipeg told the Commission that as "a direct result of those residential schools because I was a dysfunctional mother... I spent over twenty years of my life stuck in a bottle in an addiction where I didn't want to feel any emotions so I numbed out with drugs and with alcohol.... That's how I raised my children, that's what my children saw, and that's what I saw."<sup>5</sup>

The Commission is convinced that genuine reconciliation will not be possible until the complex legacy of the schools is understood, acknowledged, and addressed. Parliament and the Supreme Court have recognized that the legacy of residential schools should be considered when sentencing Aboriginal offenders. Although these have been important measures, they have not been sufficient to address the grossly disproportionate imprisonment of Aboriginal people, which continues to grow, in part because of a lack of adequate funding and support for culturally appropriate alternatives to imprisonment.

More First Nations child-welfare agencies have been established, but the disproportionate apprehension of Aboriginal children also continues to grow. In part, this has happened because of a lack of adequate funding for culturally appropriate supports that would allow children to remain safely with their families, or to allow children to be placed in foster or adoptive environments that are culturally appropriate and capable of giving children a sense of identity, self-respect, and self-worth.

Many of the individual and collective harms have not yet been redressed, even after the negotiated out-of-court settlement of the residential school litigation in 2006, and