

Report of Primate's Commission
on Doctrine of Discovery, Reconciliation and Justice
to General Synod 2016

Our Mandate:

At General Synod in 2013, the Primate announced his intention to establish a commission of 18 Indigenous and non-Indigenous members from across Canada to respond to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (UNDRIP) and to focus on three concerns:

- 1) The Repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery.
- 2) Reconciliation – what does it look and feel like?
- 3) Injustices in our Indigenous Communities (reserve and non-reserve).

The Commission worked with the following Vision and Mission Statements:

Vision Statement - The Primate's Commission believes in:

- A church that no longer supports or tolerates European domination over Indigenous peoples and lands.
- Communities of mutual respect, shared resources and equitable power between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people that embody healing and reconciliation.
- A country that recognizes Nation-to-Nation and Treaty relationships, honours Indigenous rights and nurtures Indigenous justice, out of a vision of abundant life for all peoples and creation and commits to support each other, our church and the wider community in this journey.

Mission Statement – The Primate's Commission will:

- Review the Church structure, policies and programs and recommend ways to dismantle the affects of the Doctrine of Discovery in the life of the church.
- Formulate a plan for reconciliation (Residential Schools and other historical trauma that impact the spirituality of First Nations and other Canadians) for the Anglican Church of Canada.
- Assess injustices experienced in First Nation's communities (rural and urban) and determine those injustices where the Church can make a difference.

In the beginning, when we gathered we spent considerable time sharing our stories, listening and recognizing the centrality of the Gospel and the sacredness of the circle. We are grateful for the assistance of Nancy Hurn, Henriette Thompson, Esther Wesley, Ginny Doctor, and Teresa Mandricks (General Synod Staff). After five gatherings we recognize that, due to the extensive nature of the three tasks, we are only able to present an interim report to this General Synod, and anticipate a more detailed report to General Synod 2019. We therefore request the Council of General Synod (CoGS) extend the mandate for a further three-year

period, and provide the necessary funding for the commission to meet and do its work during this time.

We understand that the recommendations that we are making would go first to the Primate for his consideration, and then to the House of Bishops and the Council of General Synod. We expect that our recommendations would then, where appropriate, be considered by local clergy and congregations by July 31st, 2017.

- 1) Each congregation in the Anglican Church of Canada (ACC) begin a study of the concept of Terra Nullius (“Land belonging to no-one”) and the implications of the Doctrine of Discovery in both the Indigenous and Colonizing church.¹
- 2) That both the Indigenous and non-Indigenous church engage in a study of their present models of governance, with a view to recognizing the value and sacred process of the Circle.
- 3) That the ACC acknowledge the traditional territory where the churches sit before each gathering and in their signage.
- 4) That the churches of the ACC study the history of their land (treaties, diocesan development, history of Church Missionary Society (CMS) and the United Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (USPG)
- 5) In this study, the irregularities of land acquisition may become clear, requiring the consideration of acknowledgement, consultation and possible reparation with local Indigenous communities.
- 6) We are concerned that the financial generosity of the colonial church for indigenous ministries may not be reaching indigenous clergy and therefore request CoGS to initiate such a study and report to General Synod 2019. This study may include (but not be limited to): stipendiary / non-stipendiary, race, gender, location, cost of living factors. Many clergy working in Indigenous contexts are currently non-stipendiary and extending support to non-stipendiary clergy would be a tremendous help to their work in Indigenous communities. This recommendation affirms and reiterates the request made by ACIP in their report
- 7) To assist in providing the resources for all of the recommendations, we request CoGS to provide a salary for a full-time, permanent staff person for the Commission. The responsibilities of this position would be animating the indigenous justice and reconciliation journey (including but not limited to):
 - Interfacing with ecumenical partners and agencies.
 - Linking people from Diocese across the country who are working on reconciliation efforts.
 - Contact person for resources needed or returned by congregations.
 - Administering and animating the Settler church aspect of the work.

¹ “The Doctrine of Discovery” excerpted from *Canada’s Residential Schools: The History, Part 1 Origins to 1939, the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada Volume 1*.

- Oversight responsibility for seeing that the TRC Calls to Action addressed to “All parties to the Settlement Agreement and churches” are being met (ACC is represented by General Secretary so that position would be responsible for following up on these Calls to Action).
- 8) We request the Primate, in consultation with the Council of General Synod, to invite Senator Murray Sinclair’s assistance in the establishment of the National Council for Reconciliation as articulated Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s Calls to Action #53, #54, #55, #56.
 - 9) We commend the Primate in his call to parishes to read the articles of UNDRIP on Sunday June 21st 2016. To assist with this call and, on future occasions, we suggest the resource prepared by the Reverend Gregory Smith².
 - 10) Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples (ACIP) and Indigenous House of Bishops (IHoB) explore and identify possibilities for partnership between Indigenous and non-Indigenous church.
 - 11) All bishops should have discretion to appoint indigenous people as delegates of Synod proportionally representative, especially in urban settings.
 - 12) To help provide transparency to how Indigenous People are included or excluded from governance and decision making structures, and to determine how equitable representation can be achieved for all decision making bodies of the church, an audit of governance ways would be most helpful.
 - 13) In response to TRC Calls to Action #81 and #82, that Indigenous artists be invited to submit draft plans for memorial stained glass windows in each diocese, to honour the missing and murdered Indigenous people of Canada.

² (we got it at the April 2016 Primate’s Commission meeting in hard copy – heading on page one is “An Action in Solidarity with the Indigenous Peoples of Canada”).