

# A NEW AGAPE APENDIX

# JUSTICE AND HEALING: A JOURNEY TOWARD RECONCILIATION OF RELATIONSHIPS IN THE ANGLICAN CHURCH OF CANADA

A NEW AGAPE



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*The following text is an adapted and expanded version of an address given by Donna Bomberry at Episcopal Divinity School, Cambridge, Mass., on Oct. 25, 2001. Part I, History: An Overview, was adapted from the Anglican Church's submission to the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples.*

## I. HISTORY: AN OVERVIEW

Before contact with Europeans, the First Peoples of North America lived in sovereign communities within the circle of Creation, grounded in a spiritual and sustainable relationship with the land and their Creator. They expressed this relationship through diverse cultural forms and political structures. Their worldviews were based on the concept of the circle, and could generally be described as non-hierarchical, communal, holistic, and inclusive.

At the time of first contact, the British recognized the nationhood of the Aboriginal peoples, and approached them as political allies and trading partners. Those British with a strong religious bent also saw the Aboriginal people as potential sisters and brothers in the Christian faith.

But as the British Empire grew, its success coloured the attitude of British people towards their neighbours throughout the rest of the world. Anglicans of British origin (like many Christian groups within other European imperial powers) were convinced their own culture and faith represented the truest reflection of Christianity, and therefore, of God's will. They believed they had both the right and the moral duty to tell others how to live.

They viewed the expansion of the British Empire as good for everyone. Aboriginal cultures worldwide were doomed to extinction, said the common wisdom of social Darwinism, and the only hope for the people of those cultures was to adapt to the dominant culture. The Anglican Church, along with the political, economic, and social structure of the British Empire, formed a complete cultural package. Christian missionaries did at least consider Aboriginal peoples to be fully human, and capable of joining "civilized" society; some social Darwinists did not even believe that. Today there are 210 active Anglican congregations in Aboriginal communities across the country westward from Quebec. Four of the Church's 44 bishops, and approximately 130 of its clergy, are Aboriginal people.

One Aboriginal diocesan bishop (Gordon



Beardy of Keewatin Diocese in northwestern Ontario and northeastern Manitoba) resigned in August 2001 to pursue his community's and his family's political struggle for land and resources.

Aboriginal people constitute approximately four percent of the total Canadian Anglican membership. In the Diocese of the Arctic, approximately 90 percent of Anglicans are Native people, mostly Inuit. In four dioceses (Keewatin, Saskatchewan, Moosonee, and Caledonia), Aboriginal Anglicans account for more than a third of the Church's membership. These demographics tell only a fraction of the story. Aboriginal people today, both in church and in society, speak repeatedly of their desire to recover the values and freedoms that have been lost to them through the impact of the Europeans.

We seek:

- to become self-determining once again;
- to regain our own land bases and relationship with the land;
- to recover our spiritual values and practices;
- to rediscover and revive our cultures; and
- to recover our dignity, integrity, intellectual confidence, and self-worth.

These struggles intertwine in the process of recovery and healing, and the work to make the circle whole again is carried on in many ways at once. Each is equally important, for a broken circle is a broken circle no matter where the break is found.

The Anglican Church acknowledged its role in breaking the circle. In partnership, it is seeking ways to mend it.

### A LONG AND COMPLEX HISTORY

The relationship between the First Nations and the Anglican Church is long and complex. It began in 1753 in Atlantic Canada with missionary efforts to the Mi'kmaq (pronounced mig-maw) people sponsored by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (SPG), an independent church mission society in England. An SPG pamphlet of 1756 expressed a common view:

"How can it be supposed that the untutored

mind of a poor Indian should be capable of imbibing the truths, or digesting the precepts of the Gospel, however plainly proposed to him? But first civilize the barbarians by friendly intercourse and gentle treatment; let them see and partake of the good effects of Christianity in our honesty and justice; calm their savage dispositions, and rescue them out of that wilderness they have unhappily fallen into; and then we shall find them well prepared for the reception of the truth."

The seeds of much that followed, including the establishment of residential schools, can be found within the attitudes expressed in that statement.

In Upper Canada, the first Aboriginal Anglicans were Mohawk loyalists who arrived as refugees from the American War of Independence (1786). The New England Company began to work among the Ojibwa (1827) and the Five Nations of the Iroquois Confederacy who also were loyalist settlers along the Grand River (1829).

The first generation of missionary effort produced Native leaders within the Church, who themselves became missionaries to their own people. Aboriginal Church leaders like Augustin Shingwauk among the Great Lakes Anishnabe, and Thomas Vincent among the James Bay Cree, also acted as political advocates in their people's relations with the developing colonial administrations.

In the Hudson Bay Territories the first Anglican missionaries arrived in 1820, where the Hudson Bay Company had already been operating about 150 years.

In the Prairies, throughout the 1800s, competition was intense between Anglicans and Roman Catholics establishing mission points on the Saskatchewan River.

Missionaries and Indigenous Christians together developed the syllabic writing system that is still in limited use today. Initially it was conceived for the production of religious literature, but its existence also helped to preserve Native languages and enabled Aboriginal groups to communicate at great distances.

In British Columbia, the first Anglican



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chaplain arrived in 1836. In 1862 a school teacher and Church Mission Society (CMS) missionary began the most famous Anglican experiment in Christian living, apart from colonial society, when he founded the village of Metlakatla with a group of Christian converts from the Tsimshian nation. He was not able to work easily with the ordained missionaries who opened a mission among the Haida. In 1867 a school at Lytton was opened in the interior of the province.

Missionaries and the First Peoples of the Pacific Northwest seriously clashed over traditional religious practices, notably the Potlatch, which the missionaries attempted to suppress. The colonial administration went even further, outlawing the practice, and imprisoning those who continued it.

In the mid nineteenth century, the expansion of voluntary missionary societies led to a new consensus about the role of missions, which were henceforth financed from contributions from the whole church membership. The British government, which had previously thought of the First Nations only as military allies, also began to provide modest support for missions and missionaries. Such support carried with it, however, the provision that the missionaries avoid controversy and not seek too radical a social change for Aboriginal people.

#### A SHIFT IN FOCUS: RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS

The move to establish residential schools in the mid nineteenth century represented a major change in missionary policy, as mission workers realized it would be more productive to focus on converting Aboriginal children than to try to convert the adults. This profoundly affected Aboriginal people, as it reduced their input into the missionary project and discouraged the further development of indigenous Anglican leadership.

In 1820, the Rev. John West became the first CMS missionary in Canada. He was also the Hudson Bay Company chaplain at the Red River Settlement (Winnipeg). On his way to the post, he took several Aboriginal children, from as far away as Hudson Bay, and established at the Red River Settlement the first Anglican

residential school for Native people. Twelve years later William Cochran began an experiment in teaching agriculture and Christianity together to a group of Aboriginal people on land down-river from Fort Garry. With these initial efforts began what was to become the cornerstone of Anglican policy related to Aboriginal peoples: the residential schools.

During the next 150 years, until 1970, the Anglican Church opened and administered more than 26 Indian residential schools, as they were commonly known. These schools were generally funded by the federal government, which shared the goal to “Christianize” and “civilize” First Nations peoples. The children were taken from their families and communities and put in a residential setting where they were provided with – in the case of the Anglican Church – a British and Anglican education.

The intention and the effect was to cut them off from their own families, cultures, languages, and lifestyles. The expected outcome was the disappearance of Aboriginal culture, language, religion, and values and the absorption of the First Nations people into the mainstream anglo-Canadian culture, generally at the bottom end of the labouring classes as farm workers or domestic servants.

In 1924, the second General Secretary of the Missionary Society of the Church of England in Canada, the Church structure that administered the Anglican residential schools, stated the aims of both the Church and the society as clearly as anyone when he said that Canada was:

“...and must increasingly become a country of white men rooted and grounded in those fundamental scriptural conceptions of the individual, of society, and of the state as the same have been conceived and found expression through the struggles and conquests of the several peoples of British blood and traditions.”

The Church was convinced it had a Christian responsibility to assist the Aboriginal people in this transition. Assimilation, like medicine,



might be intrusive and unpleasant, might even hurt a great deal, but in the long run it was for the people's own good, and they were going to have to learn to take it with a "stiff upper lip." The schools were most active between the 1880's and the 1950's. In 1954 there were 14 Anglican, 2 Presbyterian, 46 Roman Catholic, and 5 United Church schools. Enrollment that year for the Anglican schools was 11,000, which appears to be the highest for any one year. A rough estimate suggests between 50,000 and 100,000 people passed through the Anglican residential schools during the course of their operation.

Some Aboriginal leaders wanted their children to become familiar with the settlers' language and culture, and to have a Christian education; they encouraged the establishment of the residential schools. More commonly the schools were imposed on the people out of a sense of mission, and with little or no consultation. The Church and the Canadian government worked as partners and decision makers in the administration and funding of the schools, with the overall aim of assimilation or "cultural replacement" for the First Nations who were the objects of this education project.

From the beginning, residential schools had faced problems in obtaining and keeping students. Parents were disinclined to trust their children to an alien culture. Runaways were always a problem, with some attendant loss of life.

In one school (Shingwauk) a significant number of the children had physical and emotional problems. They entered schools later and left earlier than the program was designed for. At another (Calgary) in 1907 a medical officer of the Indian Department reported that up to 25 percent of the students had died. The cause was listed as tuberculosis, though this could not be verified, and concerns were repeatedly raised about the quality of the water at the school.

In 1910, the Church Missionary Society in England turned the administration of its Canadian missions over to the local, Canadian dioceses. Most of the missions were located on reserves; in addition to churches, they included

small day schools, and the more prevalent residential schools. But the dioceses found this administration too much for them to handle, so the Mission Society of the Canadian church established the Indian Residential Schools Commission in 1919.

The federal Indian Department sought to maintain Christian influence in the schools, and to balance it by apportioning financial support among the four denominational institutions contracted to administer the schools. The churches and the government signed agreements setting clear standards for the construction and maintenance of school buildings and dormitories.

The "industrial" nature of the curriculum, and its assimilationist objectives, were clear. The government, in addition to the annual per-pupil grant, was required to provide the schools with medicines, school books, stationery, and school appliances, and to provide sanitation supplies for the maintenance of the buildings.

In 1945, growing student enrollment, staff shortages, changes in educational theory, and rapid growth in the operating deficit for the schools led the Church to initiate a National Commission on Indian Work. The commission argued:

"We cannot, however, be content to carry on the Residential Schools according to existing standards. The evidence makes it perfectly clear that there is urgent need of drastic changes in regard to diet, health, sanitation, hours of work, housing, social life, recreation, dress and so forth. New ideas and modern standards must be introduced. In this connection we again refer to the partnership with the Dominion Government on which the work is based."

The Commission recommended curriculum changes to include not only English and arithmetic but also to teach the children: "the geography of their own regions, the history of their own people and something of the history of the people with whom they are proud to associate; their own folklore, the handicrafts natural to them."



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If these changes had been implemented it might have advanced the Aboriginal national movements by a generation. Instead of pushing the government to revise its curricula, however, the Church chose to place renewed resources in an Ottawa office. Indian Affairs increased its responsibility, taking on recruitment of teachers. The deficit was eliminated for a time and, with the end of the war, the staffing situation eased somewhat. By 1953, the government had decided the students should have a full-day academic curriculum, and the school administrators were working to wind down the farm operations. By 1959 the federal government recognized that for teacher recruitment it needed to pay salaries competitive with local municipal school boards (in 1967, the teachers became civil servants). Following an internal Indian Affairs investigation, and without consultation with the churches, the per capita grant system ended. Principals were now directly responsible to the government for the schools' administration and the Church became only the agent for providing residential accommodation.

By 1970 the Anglican Church had withdrawn from all residential schools work with Aboriginal peoples.

#### A CHANGE OF DIRECTION

With the phasing out of residential schools, and the political and social ferment of the 1960s, the Anglican Church was challenged to re-examine the theology and approach to mission that had governed its relationship with Aboriginal peoples. The Afro-American civil rights movement of the '60s, and the Christian leadership of Martin Luther King Jr., had a profound effect on many Canadian Anglicans. King's passion, commitment, and courage, and his ability to articulate the struggle in Christian terms, were a challenge to all Christians to re-examine where they stood in relation to the demands of justice. Anglican leaders began to recognize that the First Nations had been severely marginalized and oppressed throughout Canadian history, and also began to understand the Church's complicity.

National Aboriginal organizations were now finding their own voice, bringing an eloquent, committed leadership, many of whom had learned in the residential schools how to deal with the mainstream society.

In 1967 the Anglican General Synod commissioned a sociologist, Charles Hendry, to make a detailed examination of the relationship between the Anglican Church of Canada and the Aboriginal peoples. In the 1969 General Synod he tabled his report, *Beyond Traplines*.

Regarding residential schools, Hendry reported that many former residential school pupils interviewed had revealed a common thread of resentment and bitterness running through accounts given of their school days:

- they spoke of boys and girls being whipped or slapped when they spoke their Native language. The aim was to make the children speak English;
- they told of being taught to despise the way of life of their parents as pagan and disagreeable;
- they spoke of being absent from home for 10 months of the year, or for several years;
- common themes were of the coldness of residential school staff towards parents;
- parents felt like intruders;
- accusations of cold, harsh, punitive attitudes on the part of staff, and cruel punishments for offences that ranged from speaking a Native language to running away;
- punishments included girls having their hair cut off, and boys forced to walk around hobbled with their legs tied together with ropes.

Non-Aboriginal members of the Church felt the sting of shame and confusion at Dr. Hendry's words. He called the Church to develop a new partnership with Aboriginal peoples based on solidarity, equality, and mutual respect. The Church response focused on decisions that attempted to "put the past behind us" and concentrate on the future. The 1969 General Synod approved several resolutions taking the Church in new directions.

The first provided for efforts to work "in



consultation with Native peoples, and with other churches and governments.” It affirmed that:

1. The Church must listen to the Native Peoples.
2. The Church must clarify its basic intention.
3. The role of the Church must be redefined.
4. The Church must re-deploy its resources.
5. The Church must vitalize its education for ministry.
6. The Church must develop strategies looking toward basic innovation.

The resolution gave “due recognition to the unique contribution which is being made to the life of all Canadians by the culture of our Native Peoples,” and promised to “speak clearly and directly at all times to all levels of government concerning the conditions under which our Native People live.”

Other resolutions established a fund for the implementation of the Hendry Report, called on the government to consult with Aboriginal people in developing any new policies that might affect them, supported “the Indian people in their efforts to obtain justice through recognition of treaty, Aboriginal and other rights and through a just settlement of their land claims,” and urged the federal government to “provide funds to the National Indian Brotherhood for necessary research relating to Aboriginal and other rights.”

A proposal for a staff position or liaison officer to be funded by the Church but accountable to the Aboriginal organizations received significant support in the Church, but in the end was not adopted.

#### **IMPLEMENTING THE NEW DIRECTION: SOLIDARITY WORK**

The Anglican Church began to engage in solidarity actions with Aboriginal peoples in three areas:

- self-determination,
- treaty and land rights, and
- industrial and environmental development.

Much of this work was carried on through ecumenical agencies such as the Aboriginal Rights Coalition and today through a restructured ecumenical agency called KAIROS which continues the Aboriginal Rights

Coalition’s solidarity work.

Today the Anglican Church of Canada utilizes staff and financial resources in a continuing effort to support aboriginal peoples’ rights working with national committees, EcoJustice and the Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples and staff who support this solidarity work.

#### **SELF-DETERMINATION**

Resolutions passed by the National Executive Council of General Synod in 1980, 1981, and in 1983 supported efforts by the First Nations to have their rights enshrined in the repatriated Constitution (1982). The Church stated that Aboriginal self-determination is a moral question for the country and reminded the federal government that “abdication of moral responsibility is fundamentally abhorrent and ultimately self-defeating” (1981).

The Church holds the principle that Native leadership has “a place at the table,” and that Aboriginal rights entrenched in the Constitution should include but not be limited to:

- treaty rights,
- the right to land and resources, and
- the greater right to self-government.

Members of General Synod have struggled to understand what Aboriginal self-government means from both a theological and a practical perspective, and have continued their advocacy to the Government of Canada. In 1986 they called on the Government:

- to recognize Aboriginal authority in defined areas of jurisdiction;
- develop structures for exercising that authority, by providing economic resources to make structures work; and
- requiring consent for Aboriginal peoples regarding constitutional amendments.

The 1987 ecumenical initiative, *A New Covenant: A Pastoral Statement by the Leaders of the Christian Churches on Aboriginal Rights and the Canadian Constitution*, states in part:

“Self-government is the means by which Aboriginal peoples could give concrete expression of themselves as distinct peoples, develop the economic potential of their own lands, and design their own cultural, social,



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and religious institutions to meet the needs of their own people. Through this process, Aboriginal people could break the bonds of dependency and retain a sense of human dignity and self-worth as self-determining peoples and nations in this country. This calls for explicit entrenchment of Aboriginal self-government in the Canadian constitution.”

The Church has intervened when it has seen the federal government to be abrogating its responsibilities:

- In 1985, it opposed Nielson task force recommendations “to reduce spending and shift responsibility to the provinces, ultimately to the bands, without consideration of the expressed needs and future priorities of the Indian people.”
- In 1989, it opposed reductions in funding to Aboriginal university and college students, and
- In 1990 it protested reductions to core funding for Native organizations and band councils.

The Church has also taken stands in solidarity with Aboriginal peoples organizations, such as tribal councils. In 1990, opposition to the Meech Lake Constitutional Accord, and the military sieges of Kanehsatake and Kahnawake affected the whole country, including the Church.

#### TREATY AND LAND RIGHTS

Since 1969 the Anglican Church has actively supported First Nations in the land rights process, and General Synod has affirmed support for “the Indian people in their efforts to obtain justice through recognition of treaty, Aboriginal and other rights, and through a just settlement of their land claims.”

Over the past 30 years the churches have learned much from their Aboriginal partners. The experience has taught us that governments, industry, and Canadian society have underestimated the commitment of Aboriginal people to the land and to their own history. As Thomas Berger noted: “it is more powerful than any ideology.”

#### INDUSTRIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL DEVELOPMENT

In 1970 an Anglican task force recognized that “the Church can no longer be satisfied with a ministry of picking up the wounded and of protest but must make a creative contribution to the building of a new society.”

The Church was called to act, to take political action with governments and corporations on social issues, rather than just responding after injustice had been done. The took the position that no new major industrial development in the North of Canada should be initiated on unsundered land until either Native land claims are justly settled, or terms governing that development are negotiated satisfactorily with the Native peoples concerned. The Church affirmed these principles in resolutions regarding Hydro Quebec and James Bay I (1973, 1975, 1977) and many other development projects throughout the 1980s: (AMAX in BC, Norman Wells pipeline, BC Hydro & Stikine-Iskut Dam, Lyell Island, BC offshore oil exploration, Cinola Gold project, Manitoba Hydro & Grand Rapids Dam), and into the ‘90s (James Bay II and military lowlevel flight training over Innu and Inuit lands in Labrador).

The decision to stand with Aboriginal peoples in the struggle for justice has had serious and positive implications for a renewed theology in the Church. It has helped the Anglican Church to rediscover an authentic biblical tradition that has much in common with the traditional spirituality of the Aboriginal peoples.

At the heart of this action has been a change in the Church’s understanding of the connections between human beings, societal relationships, and the natural world. The search for an ecologically sustainable society has led the Church to learn from Aboriginal peoples that environmental justice is an integral part of social justice.

In addressing environmental concerns relating to energy production, mineral extraction, forest management, and fisheries we continue to recognize our need to affirm the organic connection of all of human life to all of creation.



## IMPLEMENTING THE NEW DIRECTION: INTERNAL SHIFTS

Soon after the Church began its solidarity work, First Nations people within the Church began to recognize the need for a parallel response within Church structures, to make space for the concerns and spiritual and cultural expressions of Aboriginal Anglicans. This need too, had been identified in the Hendry Report.

Although progress was slow, some concrete signs of the Church's intentions included hiring a full-time national Consultant on Native Affairs in 1969, and establishing a Sub-committee on Native Affairs in 1973. The staff person and Sub-committee played an intermediary role in relaying Aboriginal voices and concerns to the Church. During this time Aboriginal people within the Church were wrestling with their identity and developing a sense of community among themselves.

The sub-committee was reconstituted as the Council on Native Affairs (CNA) and was established by Act 30 of the 1975 General Synod (maximum 20 people). Act 23 of the 1980 General Synod gave Council members the responsibility to carry the concerns of the people directly to the National Executive Council (Council of General Synod) and General Synod. This gave Aboriginal peoples increased status and a stronger voice within the decision-making structure of the Church. Since the mid 1980s [when Donna Bomberry began sitting on the national Program Committee as the lone Aboriginal voice], Aboriginal representation on various other national Church committees has increased dramatically, although as a proportion of membership it is still rather low.

Both the Aboriginal members of Church committees and the Council on Native Affairs focused much energy on enlisting the support of the Church in advocacy for the Aboriginal issues outlined previously. The task of the Aboriginal peoples appointed to committees was to help the rest of the Church understand and support their positions.

## REDISCOVERING TRADITIONAL SPIRITUALITY: JUSTICE WITHIN THE CHURCH

In the late 1980s the Council on Native Affairs became increasingly aware that any process of recovery must begin within the Church itself, and must focus on social justice issues within its life and structure. The Church must begin to put its own house in order at the same time that it is pointing a finger at governments and Canadian society in general. To mark this shift in focus the council changed its name to Council for Native Ministries (CNM).

The Council took the initiative in organizing what turned out to be an historic event – the first national Native convocation, held in Fort Qu'Appelle, Saskatchewan, in late September 1988. This gathering brought together 180 Aboriginal Anglicans from across Canada to share their experiences and dreams as Aboriginal peoples and as members of the Anglican Church of Canada. Our Primate, Michael Peers, was with us for the nine days as a partner, to listen, and to speak at the end of the gathering.

The video *Sharing the Dream* documents this first national convocation. This was a Pentecostal moment in the life of the Church, a time of affirmation and empowerment. From it came recommendations to the General Synod and to the National Executive Council proposing a second convocation. Further proposals enabled the participation of Aboriginal peoples in all aspects of the Church. It became part of a long process of rediscovering and reaffirming the Aboriginal heritage, and of sorting our Aboriginal identities.

One of the resolutions expressed:

“the desire on the part of the Native peoples of the Anglican Church of Canada for a greater degree of self-expression both in the services of the Church, and control and government of the work of the Church among the Native peoples of Canada, and more particularly, how to incorporate into the work of the Church the ideals, hopes, and aspirations of the Native peoples of Canada for their future.”



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The 1989 General Synod resolution on “Native self-expression in the Church” called on “all dioceses and parishes to review the forms of participation of the Indian peoples of their diocese with a view to improving their participation.”

The Council for Native Ministries turned its attention to advancing the implementation of that resolution.

### CONSENSUS DECISION-MAKING

In the Native Ministries Council meeting in May 1990, members were embroiled in difficult discussions around the process and style of meetings, whether to continue in the parliamentary procedure or to move to consensus decision-making. One young man made a passionate plea:

“I had a hard time yesterday. . . . I was feeling that I had to be somebody that I didn’t want to be. I respect the consensus decision-making process in the circle, which is sacred. I am open to the consensus model and to the sacred aspect of decision-making of the circle.

“I join you as a young person from my diocese. It gives me the opportunity to participate as the person I am and not the person I’m expected to be. I respect myself as a Native person and how I think and make decisions as a Native person.

“For me I feel that we are very important people to our people. I think that we should be an example of being Native people and that we should be the first people to stand up to the structure that this is how we want to make decisions. Why did God make things in a circle? Native people who are close to nature and close to their Creator, we do things in a circle.

“. . . I think we should try and communicate to the system how we like and want to make decisions. I support the consensus decision-making of the circle. I think we should not depend on numbers for quorum but that those here will make the decision. When we come to the celebration I want us to celebrate in the Native way. The system should start, let it start with us.”

The Council for Native Ministries abandoned the parliamentary procedure and returned

to the decision-making model of its members’ ancestors: consensus.

The struggle and discussions around identity, and about inculturation and the integration of Aboriginal spirituality and Christianity, resurfaced with questions like:

- what does it mean to be Native and Christian?
- can Aboriginal people embrace both traditions?
- is Aboriginal spirituality compatible with Christianity? (Elders in the Church have told us that they put these pagan traditions aside and that it is wrong to take them up again.)
- is there room in the circle for both traditional people and Christian people?

In the Spring of 1992, with leadership from the Council for Native Ministries, the National Executive Council issued a statement on Aboriginal spirituality. It affirmed the value of Aboriginal spirituality and encouraged Native members of the Church to continue this dialogue.

The Council for Native Ministries sponsored an ecumenical gathering of Aboriginal people from various communities to address the issue of spirituality. The gathering included traditional elders and Anglican, Roman Catholic, and United Church members. The video *The Spirit in the Circle* documents this gathering as participants shared their faith journeys and addressed questions of Aboriginal spirituality and what it means to be Aboriginal and Christian.

### THE RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS QUESTION

During this Native spirituality gathering it became abundantly clear that much of the confusion and struggle with identity and Aboriginal spirituality could be attributed to Indigenous people’s residential school experience.

In the Fall of 1990 the Grand Chief of the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs had disclosed his personal abuse in a residential school. The Primate also received a request from a tribal council in Manitoba asking for redress and support for healing related to the Church’s role in the residential school system.

For reasons that are revealing, it was diffi-



cult for the Church to respond to this issue. The National Executive Council felt it could not take action without advice from the Council for Native Ministries. Members of CNM were committed to being involved in the issue, and were equally determined not to assume responsibility for it. They made it clear the issue was the responsibility of the whole Church, especially the NEC.

It took several months to resolve this dilemma, after much miscommunication and misunderstanding. It demonstrated the need for the Church to exercise extreme care and sensitivity in its response to Aboriginal issues, if reconciliation was to be achieved.

In May 1991, the NEC, in consultation with the CNM, heard a presentation on the residential schools. Two survivors of the schools shared their experiences with NEC. Care was taken to provide NEC members with appropriate orientation and introduction to the issues, and to make sure they understood the need to respect the storytellers.

The next step was to set up a Residential Schools Working Group, with some members appointed by NEC and some by CNM. This new structure and the employment of two half-time special assistants to the Primate, allowed the Church to begin to respond.

During this process the CNM was growing in confidence, and experiencing a real sense of identity and affirmation as First Nations peoples. One example was when the NEC planned a focus on Native Peoples as part of its meeting in one of the dioceses without the consultation or involvement of Native people. CNM spoke out strongly and succeeded in having the original "white" planning team replaced with Aboriginal people named by the Council itself. This was painful but a necessary step in breaking down old patterns of paternalism and colonialism.

It resulted in an NEC resolution in 1990: "to ensure that before any action is taken or policy adopted by the General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada on any issue affecting Aboriginal peoples, there will be consultation with the CNM and, where possible, Aboriginal persons will be included in the implementation of any such action or development of any such policy."

Another example occurred when funding was required for an Aboriginal branch of the Church's Youth Unit. NEC responded by directing a portion of the CNM budget to this work. CNM succeeded in having the NEC rescind this motion and allocate new monies to meet the request.

During this time Aboriginal Anglicans in Canada became members and partners of the global Anglican Indigenous Network (AIN) which now reports to the worldwide Anglican Consultative Council. This network is comprised of English-speaking Indigenous Anglicans: Maori of Aotearoa/New Zealand, Australian Aborigines, Melanesian peoples of the Torres Strait Islands, Native Hawaiians, Alaskans, and Native Americans of the USA. This growing strength and self-assurance of Aboriginal Anglicans was dramatically visible at the 1992 General Synod. Drums and Aboriginal elements and rituals were used in worship and presentations; for the first time in the history of the Church some resolutions were presented in Aboriginal languages; and there was a powerful educational event, employing story, song, choreography, and gift-giving, which moved people to tears. Resolutions were introduced calling for:

- recognition and use of different ways of meeting; namely, consensus and the circle,
- evaluation and accountability of all resolutions pertaining to Aboriginal peoples since the Hendry Report, and
- ongoing dialogue regarding Aboriginal spirituality.

#### THE SECOND CONVOCATION

The video *Dancing the Dream* documents the 2nd national Native convocation held in August 1993 in north-western Ontario in the Diocese of Keewatin. It brought together 140 First Nations people and 10 non-Native observer/participants with an international partner and an AIN partner as well as an ecumenical Canadian church partner to share stories and continue the journey of healing. Much of the focus was on the residential schools and the commitment to recovery and healing.

On August 6, 1993, speaking at the



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convocation, the Primate, Michael Peers, acknowledged the wrongs done to Aboriginal peoples by the Church because of the residential schools experience, and issued an apology to First Nations peoples, stating: “On behalf of the ACC, I offer our apology. I pledge to you my best efforts, and the efforts of our Church at the national level to walk with you along the path of God’s healing.”

This gathering will be remembered for the pain that was shared, the strength and faith of a people; the involvement of youth; the generosity and willingness to forgive and the powerful presence of God’s Spirit at work in the gathering.

During this time the Church held diocesan consultations called “Preparing the Way” seeking input and direction for the necessary restructuring for the national Church and its work as we prepare to go into the next century. I was the chairperson for the CNM during this time, and we were not hearing Aboriginal voices in the reports from the dioceses. For our regularly scheduled Council meeting in April 1995, we called instead an Aboriginal Anglican leaders consultation to join CNM members. We attempted to take the prescribed consultation package to guide our discussions but quickly discovered it would not work for us. We used our own process – the sharing circle – and designed questions that

would guide our responses, which took two days:

- what was our experience as Church in the past century?
- what are the realities today of our experience as Church?
- what is our vision for the Church in the next century?

CNM’s new friend, Bishop Steven Charleston, was to be with us but was delayed and arrived the day our vision was expressed. Our “Journey of Spiritual Renewal” (see page A21) was authored, and consensus was unanimously achieved after the first go-around the circle for the “Covenant” (see page A22). Those who are familiar with the consensus decision-making process know that it usually takes many times around the circle to reach consensus.

When Steven arrived he told us that he knew immediately by our faces and the energy of the place that the Holy Spirit was present and that we had a vision for the Church – the Covenant. He spent the remaining time with us reaffirming us in our vision and encouraging us in the way that only Steven can speak to us. It was a very emotional time for many of us.

At the 1995 General Synod, the Covenant was accepted and affirmed with the following pledge:

“ Under the guidance of God’s spirit we agree to do all we can to call our people into unity in a new self-determining community within the Anglican Church of Canada. To this end, we extend the hand of partnership to all those who will help us build a truly Anglican Indigenous Church in Canada. May God bless this new vision and give us grace to accomplish it. ”



## II ANGLICAN COUNCIL OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES (ACIP)

It was also at the 1995 General Synod that the Council for Native Ministries changed its name again to reflect the diversity of Aboriginal Anglicans in the Church to ACIP – the Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples.

Twenty members represent Aboriginal, Inuit, and Métis, clergy and lay, men and women from 15 dioceses in Canada.

### ACIP'S MANDATE

It has been the philosophy and spirituality of Indigenous ministry with the Anglican Church of Canada to strengthen and support the Indigenous Peoples of Canada (Aboriginal, Inuit, and Métis), spiritually, socially, economically, and politically in line with our needs and aspirations by recognizing that the purity of the land base provides for all our needs; and that as active participants in the life of the Church, the Indigenous peoples will strive for reconciliation with the Anglican Communion towards the common objective that Indigenous people have the right to self-determination.

The mission of Indigenous Ministries is to share the cultural differences in the Church. Our task through our various ministries is to share the vision of a journey of spiritual renewal through prayerful dialogue in the good news of Jesus Christ.

### CURRENT WORK OF ACIP

The work of ACIP within the Priorities of the 1995 Strategic Plan has been diverse and varied. As a partner in the worldwide Anglican Communion and in the universal church, we have proclaimed and celebrated the Gospel of Jesus Christ in worship and action throughout the last triennium.

#### A. Strengthen our mission and develop partnerships outside Canada:

Indigenous Anglicans in Canada continue to be members and partners since 1991 of the Anglican Indigenous Network (AIN), which reports to the Anglican Consultative Council. AIN is comprised of English-speaking Indigenous Anglicans; the Maori of Aotearoa/

New Zealand, the Australian Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders, Native Hawaiians, Native Americans from the U.S.A., and the Indigenous Peoples of Canada.

The Network adopted its mission statement in 1992:

We are Indigenous minority people living in our own lands. We are committed to the Anglican tradition while affirming our own traditional spirituality. We have discovered that we have many things in common: a common spirituality, common concerns, common gifts, and common hopes. We believe that God is leading the Church to a turning point in its history and that the full partnership of Indigenous peoples is essential. Therefore we pledge to work together to exercise our leadership in contributing our vision and gifts to transform the life of the Christian community.

ACIP hosted the fourth gathering of AIN in 1997 following the national convocation now called the Sacred Circle. We sent a small delegation to the sixth AIN gathering in Cairns, North Queensland, Australia this past September.

As a member of the Indigenous Theology Training Institute located in the USA, in July 2000 AIN collectively published the first volume of the *First Peoples Theology Journal*. ITTI is a non-profit institution established in 1996 to provide formation and training for Christian leadership in the Episcopal and Anglican Church among Indigenous peoples. It offers consultation to dioceses with Native populations, and on-site leadership training for lay readers, Canon 9 priest aspirants (for the Episcopal Church in the USA), and deacons, as well as seminary scholarships and continuing education courses.

Each January for the past ten years some members of ACIP have journeyed to the Seminole territory in Oklahoma to participate in Winter Talk. This gathering, sponsored by the Episcopal Church on Indigenous Ministries, brings together about seventy-five Native people in ministry, lay and ordained, from



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across the USA. Last year we were trained in Gospel Based Discipleship, a new program developed by the ITTI.

ACIP is also a member of CoNAM (Council of Native American Ministries), an ecumenical consortium of Native American Ministries within Christian denominations (American Baptist, Episcopal, Evangelical Lutheran, Mennonite, Presbyterian, Reformed Church of America, United Church of Christ, and United Methodist) that has an office/program that relates to Native Americans/Alaska Natives within the North Americas. CoNAM is in partnership with the National Christian Council of Churches of the USA. The objectives of CoNAM are: to empower Native Americans in the areas of leadership and advocacy; to support the endeavors of Native American ministries; to enable the development of Native American culturally sensitive resources. Through CoNAM, member groups maintain ties for mutual support, information-sharing, and networking.

### **B. Clarify Anglican identity, doctrine, liturgy, and worship:**

Members of the Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples have participated in consultations and collaborative work with Faith, Worship and Ministry (FWM), our national committee engaging in theological/liturgical study and growth in understanding. The "Discernment for Ministry" task enabled ACIP to participate in the discernment for ministry and theological education with and for Aboriginal Anglicans. A report has been produced by FWM, which was based on experiences of native ministry within different communities, as well as with leaders from native communities, and reflecting with native people on needs in terms of discernment for ministry and theological education. A next step is the translation of the *Book of Alternative Services'* "Baptismal Covenant" into Indigenous peoples' languages.

Indigenous Ministries and FWM continue to collaborate on the development of liturgy and prayer resources for the June 21st National Aboriginal Day of Prayer. Our current joint task is to gather, develop, and disseminate

liturgical material relating to healing and reconciliation.

### **C. Nurture ecumenical relationships:**

Indigenous Ministries engages in discussion and activity with ecumenical partners here in Canada through the United Church of Canada's Inter-church and Inter-faith dialogues on Native Spirituality. Through our Anglican Healing Fund we have had some collaboration with the United, Presbyterian, and Roman Catholic Churches on work in communities regarding healing the legacy of residential schools. The Aboriginal Rights Coalition (ARC) and their networks –now part of Kairos – have been ecumenical partners in our justice work.

### **D. Advocate social justice and prophetic mission within Canada, especially in Indigenous people's concerns and social, economic, and environmental justice issues:**

From the inception of ACIP, an essential aspect of the work of the Council has been to "encourage the Church as a whole to be involved in advocating for justice for indigenous peoples."

During the past triennium, the capacity to carry out advocacy work was increased when the position of Indigenous Justice Coordinator was made fulltime. The budget for Indigenous justice work has been increased substantially in 2001.

Efforts were made during this triennium to increase collaboration between ACIP and the EcoJustice Committee. In March 1999, ACIP met jointly with the EcoJustice Committee to reflect upon the theme of Jubilee. At this joint meeting, two ACIP members from the Diocese of the Arctic presented information on regional justice issues.

As a central part of its mandate to advocate for justice for Aboriginal peoples, ACIP continues to support the ongoing work of the Aboriginal Rights Coalition (ARC) by sponsoring the participation of its members at ARC national meetings. One ACIP member currently serves on the ARC Executive.

ACIP has continued to monitor and advocate for further government response to the recommendations from the Royal



Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. It has been our observation, and that of many others, that it was due to the Federal Government's inaction in response to the Royal Commission recommendations that law suits began from former students of residential schools – first to the Government, then to the churches. 40 percent of the church law suits have been third-partied by the Government.

At the previous General Synod in 1998, ACIP put forward resolutions in this regard and appointed members to the working group designed to further the implementation of RCAP recommendations. As an extension of this work, ACIP members developed an educational event for this past General Synod that calls the Church to renounce the *Doctrine of Discovery* and *terra nullius*, as per RCAP Recommendation 1.16.2.

In 1998, the General Synod supported a resolution calling for the recognition of Labrador Métis and their rights as Aboriginal people. Since that time, the relationship with the Labrador Métis Nation (LMN) has been strengthened through the production and circulation of an ARC *Insider* on LMN issues, and through the participation of Todd Russell as an ACIP member, and most recently, as ACIP co-chair.

The impact of the correctional justice system upon Aboriginal peoples has also been an area of interest, concern, and reflection on the part of ACIP members. We have been presenters at two conferences called by the Federal Department of Corrections to look at Aboriginal issues related to correctional justice. Other issues that were tracked by staff and discussed at ACIP meetings included racism, globalization, and resource depletion.

In September 2000, the Rt. Rev. Gordon Beardy responded to a call from Esgenoopetitj/Burnt Church First Nation (N.B.) for support, by visiting the community. ACIP contributed towards his travel costs and later issued a press release calling for an end to harassment of the Mi'kmaq fishers and full recognition of their treaty right to fish.

ACIP members also contributed richly to the Anglican Church's reflection and action in relation to the call of Jubilee, offering valuable

reflections about what Jubilee means in relation to their lives, their communities, and to the Covenant. ACIP members participated in a Jubilee conference organized by the Aboriginal Rights Coalition to consider Aboriginal perspectives on the Jubilee theme. Insights gleaned at this conference were compiled in *Indigenous Perspectives on Jubilee*, a booklet that was circulated to members of standing committees, councils, and the Jubilee Network. As well, ACIP members attended the Anglican Jubilee conference, "Releasing the Vision," and served on the Joint Anglican Working Group on Jubilee.

In the third year of Jubilee, ACIP members, as well as diocesan native council members and delegates to the Indigenous Sacred Circle, participated in the Jubilee Year 3 Land Rights, Right Relations Campaign in a variety of capacities: by giving overall leadership to the Land Rights Campaign through their role on the ARC Executive; by organizing a Jubilee Year 3 panel presentation at the Sacred Circle; by giving leadership to or participating in regional and local land rights workshops; by serving as diocesan contacts for the campaign; and by assisting in organizing a theology roundtable in May 2001, focusing on Jubilee connections and perspectives on globalization, climate change, and Aboriginal land rights.

In June 2000, a member and staff of ACIP participated in an initial exploratory discussion regarding ways to address local expressions of racism and colonialism. Participants at that meeting identified the need for an anti-racism network that could provide support to both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people who are committed to undoing racism. A follow-up anti-racism gathering to share strategies and resources is currently being planned for this fall of 2001.

In August 2000, non-Indigenous delegates participated as partners to the Indigenous Sacred Circle in Port Elgin, Ontario. The video *Walking A New Vision* documents this Sacred Circle.

Partners expressed deep gratitude for the warm invitation, and rich learning that they received from the Indigenous people present at the Sacred Circle. Partners also participated in



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orientation and debriefing sessions, reflecting upon what it means to be “partners” with Aboriginal peoples within and outside of the Church. Such orientation and sessions will serve as the basis for future partner formation workshops that will prepare non-Indigenous Anglicans to make deeper commitments to living the Covenant and walking in partnership with Aboriginal peoples, both inside and outside of the Church.

**E. Strengthen commitment of the whole Church to domestic mission in partnership with the Council of the North, and work with the Council of the North to move toward self-sufficiency:**

The Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples is committed to working together with the Church community on issues of ministry, healing, and the Covenant.

This past triennium ACIP spent two days of joint meetings with the national House of Bishops devoted to issues of education, ministry, and healing we share in Aboriginal communities across Canada. Presentations and dialogues have been focused on our legacy of the residential schools, and we affirmed our commitment to healing and reconciliation. We were graced and blessed by the participation of the Rt. Rev. Steven Charleston (former Bishop of Alaska) who facilitated one of our gatherings.

**F. Provide services to dioceses – information, finance, administration:**

Indigenous ministries and ACIP members have participated in many synods and consultations providing education and dialogue about the ministry in the Aboriginal communities, the legacy of residential schools, the hope and vision for a spiritual renewal, and a desire for understanding and healing.

We have provided much information and updates about the activities and these are available on the website: [www.anglican.ca](http://www.anglican.ca).

Since 1988, Anglican Video has been a tremendous resource in producing for Indigenous Ministries relevant audio/video materials that document our journey as Christians and members of the Anglican

Communion. Most of these videos are available through diocesan resource centres: *Spirit in the Circle*, *Share the Dream*, *Dare to Dream*, *Dancing the Dream*, *The Healing Circle*, *The Seventh Fire*, and *A Journey Begins with a Dream*. Our newest video, *Walking a New Vision*, documents our journey at the Sacred Circle 2000 and was broadcast at General Synod this year.

**G. Other nationally co-ordinated domestic missions:**

Since 1988, four national Anglican Indigenous convocations (now known as Sacred Circles) have been held:

1988 “Share the Dream,” Fort Qu’Appelle, SK.

1993 “Dancing the Dream,” Minaki, ON.

1997 “Our Journey of Spiritual Renewal,” Lethbridge, AB.

2000 “Walking a New Vision,” Port Elgin, ON.

The 2003 Sacred Circle is anticipated to take place in the Diocese of Brandon, MB.

These national gatherings call us, in partnership, to provide a forum for Aboriginal, Métis, and Inuit people of the Anglican Church of Canada to reflect on the Church’s ministry, to do some visioning about the future in light of current developments, to provide a vehicle to empower Indigenous people, and to bring their concerns to the attention of national Church leaders.

The Sacred Circles have extended opportunities for healing and reconciliation between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal partners. In the first gathering in 1988 the issues of our historical relationship were identified, one being the legacy of the residential schools. At the 1993 gathering, the Apology was made by our Primate, Michael Peers and again the invitation was extended to journey together in the healing ministry. The Covenant vision of 1994, which was affirmed by General Synod in 1995, signaled opportunities for spiritual renewal as Aboriginal people work toward self-determina-





tion in the Church and strengthening their identity as Indigenous peoples and as Anglicans. The 1997 gathering continued identifying our movements toward healing and the needs for spiritual renewal in our communities. Memories and reflections on the Sacred Circle 2000 can be read on our website at [www.anglican.ca/acip](http://www.anglican.ca/acip)

The Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples has seen growth in the participation of diocesan Indigenous Ministries over the last triennium. We now enjoy hearing news about the events happening in the dioceses. Ten dioceses now have Diocesan Native Councils or Ministries (Cariboo, Qu'Appelle, Brandon, Moosonee, Huron, Keewatin, Calgary, Saskatchewan, Rupert's Land, and Caledonia). It is with these councils' participation that members are appointed to the Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples and collaboration on other national issues happens.

### III. THE ANGLICAN INDIGENOUS HEALING

#### FUND

The Anglican Indigenous Healing Fund supports education, healing, and reconciliation programs and events related to the legacy of residential schools. It was established in 1991, with an Advisory Group to assist the Anglican Church of Canada in responding to these issues "in an ongoing, sensitive and just manner." Grants have been made and the fund is administered by an Advisory Group to encourage and initiate programs that help educate and heal.

The Healing Fund was expanded to the level of \$300,000 in 2001. Along with this expansion came the creation of a new position to co-ordinate the fund, which includes diocesan healing initiatives to encourage our healing journey together. You can read about the projects funded on the Anglican Church of Canada's website at [www.anglican.ca/acip](http://www.anglican.ca/acip)

In summary we have assisted some dioceses and many Indigenous communities and organizations across Canada over the past ten years:

| YEARS                      | NUMBER OF PROJECTS FUNDED | TOTAL VALUE        |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------|
| 1992-1995                  | 18                        | \$ 239,020         |
| 1996-1998                  | 11                        | \$ 133,500         |
| 1999                       | 20                        | \$ 139,941         |
| 2000                       | 17                        | \$ 113,613         |
| 2001 (to March)            | 30                        | \$ 338,094         |
| <b>2002 (to Sept.)</b>     | <b>24</b>                 | <b>\$ 191,798</b>  |
| <b>Total to Sept. 2002</b> | <b>120</b>                | <b>\$1,115,966</b> |



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#### IV. BUDGET AND STAFFING IN 2001

*Indigenous Ministries Program and ACIP Meetings* \$175,000. Donna Bomberry, Co-ordinator

*Indigenous Justice Program and Networking* \$53,000. Chris Hiller, Co-ordinator

*Healing Fund, Diocesan Initiatives and Meetings* \$319,000. Esther Wesley, Co-ordinator

Total Indigenous Program \$547,000.

Our work has grown in the Indigenous Ministries, Justice, and Healing programs and five staff are part of the larger Partnerships Department, which also includes staff supporting the work of EcoJustice and Partners in Mission, under Dr. Ellie Johnson as Director. For the past four years our Church has been working ecumenically in one form of negotiation or another with the Federal Government and their departments.

General Synod and several dioceses are facing increasing anxiety about their finances. Both General Synod and the Diocese of Cariboo are facing serious financial problems. In May 2000 we told the government that we would be running out of liquid assets by the end of 2001 if the rate of litigation expenses and settlements continued. Aggressive steps taken by General Synod this year to manage its assets and cash flow, has brought about a change in this outlook, enabling General Synod to continue into 2002.

We continue to assure dioceses and donors that current income is used for the ongoing regular programs of the national Church, and none of it is used for litigation expenses.

