

CANON XXII

The National Indigenous Ministry

The origin of this Canon is the Covenant made by the participants at the 1994 Journey of Spiritual Renewal sponsored by the Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples:

“...We acknowledge that God is calling us to a prayerful dialogue towards self-determination for us, the Indigenous Peoples, within the Anglican Communion in Canada. Through this new relationship we can better respond to the challenges facing us in a relevant and meaningful way...”

“We, representatives of the Indigenous people of the Anglican Church of Canada, meeting in Winnipeg from the 23 to 26 April 1994, pledge ourselves to this covenant for the sake of our people and in trust of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ:

“Under the guidance of God’s spirit we agree to do all that 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 vision and give us grace to accomplish it.”

The purpose of this Canon is to provide canonical recognition of structures through which the National Indigenous Ministry may be a self determining community within the Anglican Church of Canada.

1. The National Indigenous Anglican Bishop

The National Indigenous Anglican Bishop (NIAB) has a pastoral episcopal relationship with all Indigenous people in the Anglican Church of Canada. This role may be exercised in partnership with diocesan bishops.

The NIAB is a member of the Sacred Circle, the Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples, the House of Bishops, General Synod and the Council of the North.

The NIAB has the style and title of an archbishop, and ranks with the Metropolitans of the Ecclesiastical Provinces.

Selection Process for the NIAB

A person is eligible for selection as the NIAB if that person

- (a) is Indigenous;
- (b) is of the full age of thirty years;
- (c) is a priest or bishop in Holy Orders of The Anglican Church of Canada, or of a church in full communion therewith;

- (d) is faithful in the doctrines and discipline of The Anglican Church of Canada as determined and defined by the official formularies of that church;
- (e) is known and recognized as being a person of integrity and moral stature, and
- (f) has those qualities and abilities of leadership, experience and learning that will enable that person to fulfil the duties of a chief pastor in the Church of God.

When a vacancy occurs (or is about to occur) in the office of NIAB, ACIP will create a search committee (which must include an elder) to determine the specific qualities and additional qualifications that might be required or desirable with respect to the person to fill the vacancy; identify potential candidates; assemble information from the persons who are prepared to become candidates; and prepare a short list of candidates for ACIP.

ACIP will elect a person from the short list submitted by the selection committee, and will send the name of the NIAB-elect to the Primate for concurrence by the Primate and the four Provincial Metropolitans.

Following concurrence, the Primate will consecrate the NIAB-elect (if not already a bishop) and install the NIAB in office.

At the first opportunity following the NIAB's installation in office, the Sacred Circle will receive the NIAB as its presiding elder.

Term of Office for the NIAB

The NIAB must retire on reaching the age of 70.

Vacancy in the Office of the NIAB

If the NIAB dies, resigns, retires, or for any other reason the office of the NIAB is vacant, or the NIAB is unable to act by reason of absence or illness, the Primate in consultation with the chair or co-chairs of ACIP will designate the senior Indigenous bishop in The Anglican Church of Canada willing to undertake the task as the Acting NIAB.

2. The Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples

The Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples (ACIP) consists of representatives from dioceses where significant Indigenous ministry is taking place, the National Indigenous Anglican Bishop (who is the ACIP liaison with the Council of the North and the House of Bishops), and additional members as determined by ACIP.

The members of ACIP must be indigenous members of The Anglican Church of Canada, and active in their parish or diocese.

Until otherwise determined by ACIP, ACIP will consist of the following persons:

- (a) The NIAB;

- (b) Ten persons elected by Provincial Caucus at the Sacred Circle. The number for each Provincial Caucus shall be determined by ACIP at their meeting before the Sacred Circle; and
- (c) One youth, one elder and one member-at-large appointed by the NIAB.

Until otherwise determined by ACIP, the terms of the persons selected under (b) or (c) above will end at the conclusion of the second Sacred Circle after their election, with the terms of half of the members expiring at the end of each Sacred Circle.

Where a vacancy occurs prior to the end of a member's term, ACIP may appoint a replacement for a person who was elected by the Sacred Circle, and the NIAB may appointment a replacement for a person whom the NIAB had appointed. The replacement's term will be for the remainder of the term of the person being replaced. A person who has served on ACIP is eligible for re-election.

ACIP will select its chair or co-chairs.

ACIP maintains relationships with the House of Bishops, General Synod, the Council of General Synod, the Council of the North, and the International Anglican Indigenous Network.

ACIP organizes the Sacred Circles.

3. The Sacred Circle

The Sacred Circles have met approximately every three years since 1988.

The Sacred Circles are organized by ACIP.

The Sacred Circle will consist of the following voting members:

- (a) The NIAB, who is the presiding elder at its meetings;

and until otherwise determined by ACIP:

- (b) Up to ten Indigenous members from each Indigenous diocese or area mission identified by ACIP;
- (c) Other members from urban and other areas with significant Indigenous ministry as determined by ACIP at their meeting before Sacred Circle;
- (d) Up to three Indigenous members from the Anglican Military Ordinariate; and
- (e) The Indigenous bishops of The Anglican Church of Canada, as identified by ACIP.
- (f) The NIAB, who is the presiding elder at its meetings.

The Primate is always an invited guest at the Sacred Circle, and has voice but not vote.

Invitations are also generally sent to the bishops from the Council of the North dioceses and the diocese in which the Sacred Circle is being held (if not otherwise included). In addition, ACIP may invite up to twelve partners to attend the Sacred Circle. These invited persons may be granted voice but shall not vote.

The date and location of the meeting of the Sacred Circle are determined by ACIP.

The Sacred Circle performs many of the functions of a “Synod” for the Indigenous ministries: it provides an opportunity for representatives of the Indigenous communities to come together to worship, to discuss, and to communicate with the broader Church.

4. Organization of Indigenous Ministries

ACIP may adopt and from time to time amend a constitution to regulate the affairs of the National Indigenous Ministry which are not otherwise specified in this Canon.

Developments in the organization of the Indigenous ministries will take place over time, and can be accommodated by changes to the existing constitutional and canonical structures.