

**The Road to Warm Springs**  
The National Consultation on Indigenous Anglican Self-Determination  
Anglican Church of Canada  
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Transcript: Plenary Panel on Reconciliation – *A Non-Indigenous View Point*

More information including a video of this panel at [www.anglican.ca/roadtowarmsprings](http://www.anglican.ca/roadtowarmsprings)

**Ms. Jennifer Henry**  
**Executive Director**  
**KAIROS: Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives**

I'm thinking this is the blondest panel I've ever been on. I'm very grateful to be gathered here, to be here on Sagkeeng lands, and I want to thank the welcome provided by Richard and Nancy. I'm also honored to be asked to speak. We were asked to introduce ourselves. I'm a mother, an eldest daughter, a partner. I've served the church for the last 25 years in ecumenical social justice ministry. I grew up in Treaty One territory, and I now live under the Dish With One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant, and I go to the Church of the Holy Trinity.

I understand myself to be a settler. That's a term that I use out of my own truth. My first set of ancestors came to Turtle Island in the early 1600's. Without knowing in detail the individual actions of the people, I must acknowledge that my ancestors of blood were part of the process of colonization and dispossession that led to such terrible consequences and impact for indigenous peoples. I'm also a Christian, an Anglican. I must acknowledge that my ancestors of faith were collaborators in processes of colonization, specifically what now we can use the word that the Truth and Reconciliation Commission gave us, the process of cultural genocide. In my identity, in my blood, in my bones, in my spirit, I feel like I have this double complicity, settler, Christian. Not because of my own personal actions, yes I'm accountable for those, but because I am a beneficiary of this process of colonization. In striving now to be an ally with indigenous peoples, what I'm trying to do is to withdraw my consent, to stop collaborating with these processes that benefited me and my peoples, and as much as possible, to be part of the work of dismantling them and redistributing the benefit.

One of the greatest honors of my life was to attend six of the seven national events of the Truth and Reconciliation process as an ecumenical witness. I think all of you will understand that it was something that shook me to the core, the core of my identity, but also my faith. There are questions that plague me still. How could we, who said that we knew what sacred was, have endeavored to break the sacred bonds between parents and their children? How could we who

said we believe that all people are made in the image of God, replace children's names with numbers and buried them in unmarked graves without notifying families? Those are only two of the questions that stirred me to my soul and shook my faith and shake it still.

As we strive to move from this very profound collective truth-telling towards reconciliation, I think that there are two parts. On the one hand, there's the process of healing and self-determination, a process largely for and with indigenous peoples. On the other, for settler and even newcomer communities, a process of unsettling and de-colonizing. Despite the grateful and gracious invitation to be here, I believe that I have very little to contribute to the question of indigenous self-determination. That's kind of the point, except to affirm the profound right to it. The right to reclaim the authority that was assumed or taken away. The right to reclaim authority that is inherent. I think in the numerous processes over the last years, we've been talking about those. The indigenous church is articulating the direction of self-determination, and my role as a settler Anglican is to affirm it, to welcome it, and to urge us to move in action towards it, and to do so even if, at moments or in some ways, I might not agree with the direction or a decision.

However, I don't think it puts me or folks like me in a passive role. I believe that my work, our work, is to focus on the unsettling and decolonizing. Unsettling from the benefits of colonization, trying to unpack the ideas of superiority and racism that are attached, that get stuck to my identity, and to actively work to de-colonize communities in the church and in the country. Sometimes I think we overly focus on the changes that are required in the indigenous church, as if the dominant church is just going to stay the same. Really, I think it's us who have to make the most profound change towards decolonization, to change in order to become a worthy partner, so that together, distinct but connected, we might thrive and fulfill the dreams of God for justice and equity and fullness of life that we all hold in our hearts.

For me, this process of decolonizing ourselves and the church is multi-leveled and ambitious, and I feel like we've only just barely begun. For me, it starts with our theologies. Where do concepts of racial superiority, empire, domination, the centrality of western knowledge systems, as Esther spoke about. Where do those still stick? Where are they still attached to our hymns, to our prayers, to our interpretations of Scripture?

Second, it means, for me, fundamentally assessing notions of mission. What did residential schools teach us about launching initiatives relying largely on our good intentions? What have we learned about the spiritual harm caused by denominational divisions?

Third, for me, it means addressing racism at all levels of our churches. It's about how we behave towards one another, how the quality of our relationships. It's also questions of who's in leadership, who decides, what representation is their there? I think as we detach from those concepts of racism and those experiences of racism, we might also want to talk a little bit about gender, as Barbara mentioned this morning, because it's kind of connected.

It's about our witness in the world. How are we withdrawing our consent from the colonial structures and policies of our governments, and speaking fervently and persistently the ways of justice, even when our perspectives are not popular, like affirming the right of indigenous people to say no to a pipeline crossing their traditional territory, or starting to talk creatively

about land return or sharing revenue? It's definitely about holding deep in our hearts and in our work the 94 calls to action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission until they are done.

Perhaps it's hardest, it's about how we in the church are dismantling and redistributing the benefits of colonization. Where the wealth lies in our church isn't accidental. It's not just a product of wisdom or of work ethic. It's in no small part a product of colonization, the benefit that comes from dispossessing indigenous peoples of their land. How are we going to redistribute that wealth within the church? Reconciliation can't just be about changing attitudes and behaviors, but about redistributing power and resources, and there's no easy answers here. It means we have to begin to tackle it with truth and with creativity and with a framework not of charity, but of justice.

The Primate's Commission, for example, proposed an audit of all clergy or ministerial salaries across the church, saying by gender, indigeneity, who's getting paid what, as a beginning of truth-telling. What about a jubilee tax on the sale of every church in a dominant church in a settler community that goes directly to the self-determining indigenous church as a beginning towards redistribution? What can we do to model to the world out there that redistribution is possible, that it's possible to address that? If we can begin to model that, perhaps we can share some of those ideas with the world.

As I close, I just want to say that in my journeys with indigenous peoples and communities, I've often been taught about original instructions of the Creator. The indigenous peoples are given instructions about how to live and care for the land, and that they need to live into those, and that they're claiming those. I've come to recognize that we, too, I, as a settler Christian, have been given original instructions. They are this. Do justice. Love kindness. Walk humbly with our God. Do justice passionately in the world and in the church. Love kindness. Seek that justice as an act of love, because justice is just love made public, or love when you have a million people to love. Walk humbly in the recognition that your reality culture experience perspectives is not the one, but one color in a beautiful tapestry that's God's creation. Do justice. Love kindness. Walk humbly. May I and may settler Christians, may the dominant church be idle no more in fully living up to those sacred instructions. Thank you.

**The Very Rev. Shane Parker  
Dean, Anglican Diocese of Ottawa  
Rector, Christ Church Cathedral**

My name is Shane. I was born to Irish immigrants on Treaty Six land. My first memories are from Treaty Eight territory, and I've spent most of my adult life on the unceded territory of the Algonquin Anishinabeg. For that I'm very grateful. I'm a grandfather. I don't say that very much at all, but somehow it just seems right to say that here tonight.

Sometimes I'm called upon to do mediation, and have done a bit of training in mediation. I'm going to start by borrowing a bit from the theory and practice of mediation as it might reflect on reconciliation. There's a phrase that's used that goes like this. Mediation is empowering and transformative. It's empowering because it enables parties to solve the issues between them, and it's transformative because parties have to enter into the experience of the other in order for that to happen effectively.

I attended the reconciliation pilgrimage to Coventry Cathedral last fall, where the Community of the Cross of Nails operates. There was a wonderful set of phrases shared at that gathering. It sounds like this. Reconciliation happens when I tell your story and you hear your story, and when you tell my story and I hear my story. Entering into the experience of one another. Very important.

Norm suggested we speak from our hearts, from our experience, and I'd like to share some of my story with you as it may help you, in some way, understand what I believe reconciliation to be and what is important in reconciliation. My very first memories are from Fort Nelson, Treaty Eight territory. My family would drive into town. We lived in military housing some distance from town. If ever there were Dene families or individuals walking on the road, my parents, to their great openness, would stop and pick folks up. My early memories are of these closed little spaces in some old kind of car, well-used, peering over the seat, looking at other little kids and their parents or individuals, and just sharing the smiles and joy of traveling together into town.

My brother was a bit older than me and used to go to the school in town where a number of Dene kids would be sent during the day. One day he came home ashen, shaken. My parents asked him, "What's happened? What's wrong?" What had happened is that the teacher, who was a member of our church and had been to supper in our home, had brutally beaten a Dene kid in the front of the class. My brother had never seen that kind of violence, and to see it coming from someone who had been in our home and was a member of our church was devastating. I'll never forget it.

A lot of time passed and I was always interested in what used to be called native issues. My earliest sense of vocation to serve as a priest was to serve in the North. I had a spiritual director who was a priest who had worked in the North for many years. I discouraged myself from that because I thought, "Another white man going North to be helpful. Not going to be me. Not going to be me." To which he said, "You might want to think about that."

Between the time when I lived in Fort Nelson and the time I was contemplating Native Studies, some things happened in my life. Those things, shall we say, parallel a lot of the experiences suffered by survivors of residential schools. When the stories began to emerge and when I was

a priest in the Church, I was utterly blown away that I could be part of an institution which visited that horror on children. The horror I had experienced. I represented that church in a significant way, and I felt like I didn't have any right to involve myself in indigenous ministries.

Things changed at the time of the Truth and Reconciliation final events. They were held in Ottawa. Jennifer's organization set up some events at the cathedral. Great job making that happen. Someone said, "There's this guy who wants to know if he can smudge in the Lackey room." I said, "Well, I better go see." I went into the room, and there was Albert Dumont, an Algonquin traditional teacher and he said, "Is it okay if I smudge here?" I said, "Just don't smudge near the smoke detectors and it will be fine." We ended up sitting beside one another for some reason. We just felt this need to sit together. A friendship began in that room. Eventually I said to Albert, "Albert, you need to come to the cathedral, and you need to walk with me in the procession on Thanksgiving Sunday and you need to stand in the pulpit and you need to teach, because your spirituality is equivalent to ours, to mine." He did that.

I visited Kitigan Zibi with him, the reserve where he was born. It was kind of a funny time because on the way up we talked about snowshoeing. He was really interested in snowshoeing. I've snowshoed all my life, so I was telling him about different kinds of snowshoes. I said, "Yeah, you can buy an old dog bone thing, rawhide, soak it in water. You can repair a snowshoe with it." He said, "Oh, that's really interesting." We go up to his cabin and he said, "My canoe is not the best." I looked at it, and it's 12 feet long and 14 feet wide and the bottom goes up and down. In the lake it goes in circles, kind of hard to steer. I said, "Albert, I can help you find a better canoe. I've canoed all my life." Then I said to him, "Albert, I'm not sure if you're appropriating my culture or I'm appropriating yours, because you're the people of the snowshoe and the canoe." Tragically lost along the way.

Albert pointed out a tree on the way up to Kitigan Zibi and he said, "Look at that tree up there." It was a maple tree on the edge of a cliff which had eroded away. Half of the roots of the tree were exposed. He said, "That tree is like my people." "We're slowly losing our connection to the earth," he writes. "Our roots are gripping the precious little remaining topsoil that defined who we were as human beings long ago, but unlike the proud maple, which will eventually come crashing to its end, we can take steps that will return our real identity back to us. For only then we'll be again the peoples God meant us to be."

Albert would say that indigenous and non-indigenous roots need to lock together on this land, and then we'll be strong together. Albert knows my story. I know Albert's story. I can tell his story and he will recognize his story. He can tell my story and I will recognize my story. It's very powerful. There are consequences when we hold one another's stories in our hearts, when we choose to walk together.

The cathedral where I serve developed its property with a development company known as Windmill Development Group. We chose them because they were high sustainability, very environmentally conscious. Windmill also has an interest in the lands around the Chaudière Falls, and it's called Zibi. It's an important development. When I first heard it described, I thought, "Wow. This is amazing." They work closely with Algonquin people to come to an agreement on how to proceed, how to involve. They talk to the unions about having young indigenous workers come, breaking union rules to work there. I thought, "This is terrific." There was this council of Algonquin folks that were working with them, and everything else.

Really great. I thought, "Good. Our development is associated with Windmill and they're doing this great reconciliation work." Except, my friend, Albert, believes that Akikodjiwan, Chaudière Falls, is a sacred site, should not be developed, and a number of Algonquins are very opposed to that development. There I was right in the middle of all that. Reconciliation gets messy sometimes.

Albert asked me to walk on a protest march with him from Chaudière Falls to Parliament Hill. Because I hold Albert's story and he holds mine, I thought, "I have to walk with him. I have to walk with him, despite everything else. I have to walk with Albert." I chose to walk with him because I wanted to recognize him as a spiritual leader, just like me. I'm a senior spiritual leader in my spiritual tradition, and so is he. I had to recognize him as such and to walk with him and to support him in that.

The challenge and the opportunity in reconciliation, both the challenge and the opportunity, is that it must be borne from a meaningful relationship, in personal ways, in messy ways, in conflicted ways, because I believe reconciliation is born when there is profound solidarity borne from a real relationship between indigenous and non-indigenous people. I believe that with all my heart.

I'll conclude with a story from my story, a little parable you might say. Going back to Fort Nelson and my earliest memories, for some reason I was put in hospital for a couple of weeks. I shared a room with a little Dene kid. In a perverse twist of fate, we had cowboy and Indian flannel pajamas on. We both liked the cowboys better, I've got to say. We got to know one another. I don't remember his name, sadly. We decided we didn't really like the confined space. We didn't like the walls. We didn't like how it smelled, how it felt and how it tasted. We decided we were going to head out together. Those two little kids walked out of that room, walked down the corridor, and walked out of that hospital together into the fresh air. They went a very, very long way before anyone thought to stop them.

**The Rev. Canon Martha Tartarnic  
Rector, St. George's Anglican Church**

Thank you. I serve as a priest in the diocese of Niagara on traditional Anishinabee and [inaudible 00:24:14] land. I can't pretend to be anything other than a beginner in this conversation. I will share with you tonight a couple of the beacons that I have received along the way.

I grew up in a small town in rural Ontario. In the public school that I attended, we did learn about colonization. We learned about the broken promises of colonization. We learned about residential schools. I understand that that wasn't a part of the public school curriculum in the 80's and 90's, but for whatever reason we did learn that in Hanover, Ontario. What we didn't learn is how our past as a country still informs our present as a country. We didn't learn that indigenous issues are Canadian issues. We didn't learn to take responsibility as citizens of this country in addressing the need for truth and reconciliation today.

A number of years ago I was serving in an Anglican church, an Anglican Lutheran church in Orillia. We were raising money to build a well in a third world country through Canadian Lutheran World Relief. We were feeling really good about ourselves because we were raising the \$1,700 necessary to build one well for a whole village. We just thought that was awesome. Somebody took me aside in my congregation and said, "This is fine, great. What about the people in our own country who don't have clean water?" I'm well-named. I'm a Martha. There are people in our country who don't have clean running water? Let's do something about that. I said, "Okay. Next year ... this advent we're raising money through CLWR. Next year we'll build a well in a First Nations community." Totally hook, line and sinker into the charity model of addressing problems. There's a problem, let's fix it.

I'm very grateful that the spirit was moving across a number of hearts all at the same time around water and First Nations and truth and reconciliation. All of us ended up talking to Bishop Mark. Bishop Mark called us together to talk about water, talk about water, and truth and reconciliation. In a very gentle and loving and wise way, he absolutely trashed that charity model that I charged into the room with. "We're going to raise \$1,700. We want to build a well or something like that. Just show us how to direct the money." He laid out four pillars for our group: advocacy, education, giving, and relationship or partnership. I think that those four pillars, in a lot of ways, are also represented in the seven pillars that we've identified in our gathering here. I keep hearing across our group that desire for action. It makes my Martha heart glad. Talk is cheap. We need to act.

What I have learned, and I'm so grateful to have learned, is that action without love is nothing. It took us several years to be able to develop a relationship with Pikangikum, Ontario in order to begin to partner with them. Not to give them charity, to partner with them, to follow their lead in identifying priorities and strategies for their community, to offer support to them in those priorities and those strategies. I've watched my congregations in Orillia and now in St. Catharines, I've watched them come into this relationship with this particular community and shed tears when there is a youth suicide in Pikangikum, and shed tears when there is a tragic house fire that takes the lives of 10 people. Also, that feels this incredible joy when their new school is finally built and when people are trained to be able to do the work, to put in these water systems into their community, and then go and take that knowledge and that wisdom to

other communities and help other communities as well. I'm glad that my whole charity model was smashed open in such a loving way.

Bishop Mark said something else at that first meeting, and I try to always be guided by it, not just in terms of seeking to be a partner in truth and reconciliation, but across the decisions that I make as a mother and as a priest and as a friend, as a citizen. He said that the road was going to be tough. He didn't give us any false illusions. He said, "It's going to be slow. It's going to be tough. There's going to be setbacks. There are not going to be easy answers." It was a warning to all of us in the room that night, but it was a warning given in love. He said, "The most important thing that you need to be willing to offer going forward is faithfulness." That's kind of the warning. If you're not up for faithfulness, then don't keep on with this conversation. If you can do that, if you can keep coming back, if you can keep listening, if you can keep showing up, then we can do something.



**Ms. Melanie Delva  
Reconciliation Animator  
Anglican Church of Canada**

Good evening. Thank you for replying. I wanted to start by thanking the Bruyeres for their generous welcome to this land, and acknowledge the Sagkeeng, the Ojibway and the Metis nation on whose land we are meeting. I would like to recognize the elders who are in the room, and I would like to honor the survivors of the residential schools who are in the room. I'd also like to take a moment to acknowledge and recognize my papa, Coyote Terry Aleck, who's over there in the corner. He's a residential school survivor and my adoptive father. Coyote and his family adopted me into the Grizzly Clan of the Nlaka'pamux people in 2015. I couldn't have made it to this place in my journey without him. I told him I was especially nervous tonight because this is his first time hearing me speak. He said, "No matter what you do, I will be proud of you." I said, "What if I throw up?" He said, without hesitating, "If you throw up, I will still be proud of you." If that's not the words of a father, I don't know what is.

I now live and work in Vancouver, B.C., on the unceded, unsurrendered territory of the Musqueam, the Squamish and the Tsleil-Waututh First Nations. For 12 years I was archivist for the Anglican church in the diocese of New Westminster and the ecclesiastical province of B.C. and Yukon. In that time part of my job was to bring together thousands and thousands of pages of residential school records for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Before they were sent to the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation in Winnipeg, I had to review them all. Tens of thousand of papers. Our archives was the only religious archives in Canada that had a full set of student records, so I was the only archivist of religious background to go through those records.

This process completely decimated me and everything I had grown up believing. In this process, I had a personal, professional and spiritual transformation. This was a process of witnessing the greatest human rights violation in our country's history, and this was a process of witnessing a genocide. I know that the Truth and Reconciliation Commission has called it a cultural genocide, but many have begun to call it a genocide. As someone who has seen all of the records, I call it a genocide. It completely broke me, and it was devastating. For that I am so grateful. I have never been so grateful for anything so painful. It has formed me to who I am today.

I believe reconciliation to be a spiritual practice, and this very passionate belief is borne out of my own transformation in this area, and in my mind, is clearly played out in the gospel. The stories of Jesus Christ are often, if not always, about reconciliation. The good Samaritan. Who is my neighbor? The prodigal son. Reconciliation not just between father and son, but giving rise to questions about what happens between siblings. Who seems to be favored? Why is that person favored? I believe we need to think about reconciliation the same way as we think about our other spiritual practices: prayer, fasting, worship. In fact, all of our current spiritual practices really are about reconciliation. Before we approach the Eucharistic table, we are called to self-examination. In prayer we reconcile with God and we reconcile with one another. Perhaps the practice of reconciliation is in part a practice of recognizing how our customs already involve reconciliation.

I believe reconciliation needs to be part of the spiritual air we breathe, a way of life that affects all we say and do and particularly the decisions we make and how we make them. As I see it personally, self-determination is a necessary element to reconciliation. Spoiler alert, I am terrible at baking. I know that seems random, but I'm going somewhere with this. I'm also terrible at cooking. Just putting that out there, but I'm really really bad at baking. The reason I'm bad at baking is inevitably, I make it half way through the recipe and I realize that I'm either missing one of the ingredients, or I haven't read the recipe correctly. I decide that I can probably just replace one ingredient with another one, or maybe that wasn't necessarily required, and maybe it's just a suggested ingredient. Baking soda, baking powder. Really, how important could it be? I end up with hockey puck scones, unintentionally unleavened bread, and dismally collapsed cakes. I think of reconciliation without self-determination as a hockey puck scone. It might look okay on the outside, but it's not the real thing.

I spent some time recently with some indigenous Māori Anglicans, and was inspired by their description of the new constitution that was written in order that the Māoris would have self-determination, including equal representation and voting at synods, and the ability to control their own finances and their own worship practices. One thing that one of the Māori representatives said to me was, "We just left. We just danced the Haka and we got out of there." He said, "We have self-determination, but we don't have reconciliation." He so admired that we had taken the long view. In that long view, over and over, I have been amazed and in awe of the loyalty and steadfastness of Indigenous Anglicans in Canada in the face of on-going paternalism and discrimination.

One of my favorite things that I have ever heard Bishop Mark say is that self-determination is not Anglicans threatening to leave, but Anglicans threatening to stay. Isn't that the truth? Reconciliation sounds lovely but it can look threatening sometimes. It threatens colonial structures. It threatens inequality and injustice. It threatens bureaucracies that both help us to have a seemingly functioning organization, but that we can sometimes hide behind to avoid hard truths or fears of uncertainty. I think this is why God said so many times in the Bible, "Do not be afraid."

Article 12 of the UN Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples states that "indigenous peoples have the right to manifest, practice, develop and teach their spiritual and religious traditions, customs and ceremonies." Although this vision belongs to all of us, decisions about what that looks like in our church must be in the hands of indigenous people. Right now, it is not. I don't see this as something that just benefits Indigenous Anglicans. Not something that is done for the sake of someone else. I believe the entire Church is made better in this.

If you will allow me another analogy, how can we say that the Body of Christ is whole and healthy if circulation to one limb is cut off? When one part of it is not able to function as it was created to? One of my favorite Bible verses is in Deuteronomy, when God says, "I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Choose life." I believe that reconciliation is our life in Christ. My friends, let's choose life. Thank you.