

Notes towards a Framework for Self-Determination

Self determination is . . .

- ~ promoting our sacredness as Indigenous people
- ~ living where we choose and living with the sacredness we find upon the land
- ~ being able to practice our traditional ceremonies and our Grandfather teachings
- ~ restoring and speaking our own language in meetings and worship
- ~ finding the best way to live in harmony with others and our Creator
- ~ helping others to understand our spirituality as Indigenous people
- ~ to lead the way in finding ways to heal and reconcile from historical trauma

-Ginny Doctor

Indigenous Self-determination is not a political movement but a spiritual and theological movement. It is, however, directly related to the Indigenous political sovereignty that is at the heart of reconciliation outlined in the 94 Calls to Action of the TRC. You cannot recognize Indigenous Sovereignty and deny Self-determination. Thus, at the heart of the churches reconciliation, Self-determination is the right of Indigenous Peoples to become their own Peoples – a right that has been denied by colonialism.

Indigenous Ministry wants a seat at the table with the Anglican Church of Canada. We do not wish to leave the Anglican Church. As we seek self-determination, we also seek a full voice and presence in the ACC.

Self-determination is part of a spiritual movement to revitalize and energize Indigenous Ministry throughout the Church. We believe it is a move of the Spirit.

In this movement we reflect our life and of the self-determination of the People of the Land. We are also building upon the foundation the Covenant of 1994 and the Call of Sacred Circle of 2005.

Self-determination, though vital and important at any point in a peoples' existence, is absolutely necessary to respond to the pastoral and social crisis in Indigenous communities. It is a missional imperative.

The principles of our response to the pastoral and social crisis are simple:

- People make the best choices for themselves.
- Others making choices for Indigenous People is at the heart of the crisis.
- The most critical and urgent response to the pastoral and social crisis is to enable, resource, and support local ministry.

In service of this, Sacred Circle 2015 voted generally to pursue the development of a Fifth Indigenous Province. This is the stated goal of Sacred Circle's understanding of Self-Determination. The Fifth Province, or an equivalent, must be the goal of those who seek to follow the lead of Sacred Circle.

The Focus Group proposes three documents in support of the above items.

1. The Memorandum of Chancellor David Jones on the next steps in governance towards Self-Determination.
2. Corn Soup I and II on the necessary steps in pastoral ministry to enable implementation of Self-Determination.

The Anglican Church of Canada, itself, needs to develop and adopt a framework towards Self-Determination. This, at a minimum, would involve the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, as well as a theological understanding of Indigenous Self-Determination. The Primate's Commission on Discovery, Reconciliation, and Justice is already convened and could propose this structure and work.

Today, most of the financial decisions about Indigenous Ministry are made by non-Indigenous People and structures. There must be a true partnership and sharing of the decision making over financial matters.

Under the leadership of ACIP, a strategy for self-determination and ministry among Indigenous People will be developed and brought to Sacred Circle. After this is finished, a joint task force of the larger church and ACIP will be convened to implement this work together.