



AUGUST 12, 2009

**MEMORY KEEPERS**

Marilyn Settee  
BRANDON

Mary Jane McKay  
KEEWATIN-ONT

Gwen Adams  
CALEDONIA

**TRADITIONAL TEACHING**

HONESTY (MATT 20:15-20)

**WEATHER**

HOT AND SUNNY

**A self-determining structure?**

Sacred Circle members spent much of today discussing how or if Indigenous Anglicans should move towards a new self-determining structure within the Anglican Church of Canada.

The conversation began with a presentation from members of the Governance Working Group (GWG)—David Jones, Harry Huskins, and Randall Fairey—who are considering several governance issues within the church.

As part of their work on national Indigenous ministry, GWG members have been visiting many diocesan gatherings and Indigenous communities to learn how the church structures (dioceses, provinces, etc.) can be better organized to support Indigenous self-determination, as described in “The Covenant, and Our Journey of Spiritual Renewal” (1994).

Already Indigenous Anglicans are moving towards self-determination: a National Indigenous Anglican Bishop Mark MacDonald, was installed in 2007, and an Indigenous area ministry is being developed in northern Manitoba, bringing together parts of Keewatin and Brandon. Many other dioceses have Indigenous ministries and self-sustaining Indigenous parishes.

One future option for national Indigenous ministry is to create a fifth Indigenous ecclesiastical province within the Anglican Church of Canada. The leadership, membership, and terminology of this province could be decided by the Indigenous members.

However, “the fifth province is far from being a done deal,” said Mr. Fairey. Some groups they consulted had questions and concerns about the fifth province, and some were not interested in heading in this direction at all.

These discussions at Sacred Circle are essential in shaping what GWG will report to General Synod 2010, the Anglican Church of Canada’s next national meeting.

**Arctic music delights**

Swaying rhythmically in traditional white coats, Liza Iqaluk and Annesie Nowkawalk performed throat singing for the delighted Tuesday night gospel jamboree crowd, who snapped photos and cheered.

Liza and Annesie travelled from Inukjuak, Que. along with their minister, the Rev. Iola Metuq.

“After seeing the throat singing last night, I felt good, and I felt refreshed,” said one memory keeper. “I wasn’t sleeping well because it takes a while to get settled after travelling, but this morning I perked right up.”



## Mixed feelings

From fear to excitement, Sacred Circle members had many reactions to the future of national Indigenous ministry in the Anglican Church of Canada. They discussed the subject at the morning plenary and their talking circles, which were reported on at the evening plenary.

"I'm very afraid," said the Rev. Arthur Anderson. "Churches are very good at planting flags with exuberance and ignorance." He asked Sacred Circle members if they were courageous enough to wait until going to the promised land of a new structure, instead of leaping right away.

Another talking circle member said "We need to express a lot of sincere appreciation to the Governance Working Group. They have done tremendous work."

Sylvia James expressed concern about the future funding of national Indigenous ministry and how it will include urban Aboriginals.

The memory keepers agreed that these new ideas about a national Indigenous ministry, particularly the proposal of a fifth province, were good things to ponder. "Let's talk about it and see where it's going," said one memory keeper. "I'm confident that this idea will go far."

## Communication challenges

"What is a canon? A big gun?"\* Many Sacred Circle members had questions about the terms and structures mentioned in the Governance Working Group's presentation on national Indigenous ministry.

In the talking circles many people worked to understanding the basics: some required translation into their own languages, and others

asked how the Anglican Church of Canada was organized, and what words like "ecclesiastical province" meant.

Many Sacred Circle members come from remote northern communities, where they often feel out of touch with the rest of the Anglican Church of Canada. One memory keeper said that she has no source of national church news and her community was lucky if their bishop visited once a year.

This same memory keeper said she wasn't sure what Sacred Circle was when she agreed to go, and when she got here, she was surprised to learn that there was a National Indigenous Anglican Bishop.

The memory keepers agreed that Sacred Circle is a good place to catch up. As one woman said, "We need to educate ourselves so we can take information back to our communities."

\*A canon is a church law

## Words heard

"You can fool yourself and you can fool other people, but you can't fool God."

## Odds & Ends

Have you heard the one about George Bush in Heaven? Go ask Morris Fiddler.

## Sacred Circle on the web

You can read, comment on, and share these daily reflections online:

<http://notes.anglican.ca/sc2009>

Watch a video of National Indigenous Anglican Bishop Mark MacDonald's Aug. 11 talk:

<http://notes.anglican.ca/sc2009/131>