

The Anglican Church of Canada: Current Aboriginal Justice Work

A Chronology of Our Ongoing Walk With Aboriginal Peoples

1969 Publication of *Beyond Traplines* by sociologist Charles Hendry on the relationship between the Anglican Church of Canada and Aboriginals results in a decision by the church to withdraw from participation in the residential schools system, and to begin advocating for Aboriginal justice.

1987 The Anglican Church of Canada makes a further commitment to work towards Aboriginal justice through Project North, an inter-church social justice coalition.

1988 First all-Aboriginal Anglican national gathering in Fort Qu'Appelle, Saskatchewan.

1989 First Aboriginal Bishop Charles Arthurson is appointed in the Diocese of Saskatchewan.

1991 Creation of the Residential Schools Advisory Group and fund for healing and reconciliation. (As of 2007, the [Anglican Healing Fund](#) has distributed over \$3 million towards healing projects. This work is ongoing.)

1993 Primate (national archbishop) Michael Peers issues an [apology](#) on behalf of the Anglican Church of Canada to Aboriginals.

1994 Creation of *Our Journey of Spiritual Renewal*, a statement on the history, experience, and hopes of Aboriginal Anglicans, and adoption of *A Covenant*, a pledge from Anglican Aboriginals to work in partnership with the Anglican Church of Canada.

1996 Publication of the Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, to which the Anglican Church of Canada made a submission.

1998 *Beyond Traplines* is republished with an introduction by the Rt. Rev. Gordon Beardy and an appendix on the work of the Anglican Church of Canada and government initiatives since 1969.

2001 Creation and distribution of the *New Agape*, a resource to help Non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal Anglicans work in partnership in parish and diocesan ministry.

2003 Indian Residential School Settlement Agreement signed between the Anglican Church of Canada and the Government of Canada.

2005 Sacred Circle gathering in Pinawa, Manitoba, approves the establishment of the position of National Indigenous Anglican Bishop.

2007 First National Indigenous Anglican Bishop, Mark MacDonald, appointed to provide leadership towards the establishment of a self-determining Indigenous Anglican Church within the Anglican Church of Canada.

2007 Revised Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement accepted, confirming that the Anglican Church of Canada will provide \$15.7 million for compensation and for healing work.

Program Profiles:

Indigenous Ministries

It has been the philosophy and the spirituality of Indigenous Ministries with The Anglican Church of Canada to strengthen and support the indigenous peoples of Canada, (First Nations, Inuit and Metis) 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.

The Rt. Rev. Mark MacDonald, our first National Indigenous Anglican Bishop, provides pastoral and spiritual leadership with the assistance of Donna Bomberry, Coordinator, and Teresa Mandricks, Program Associate who support this ministry.

The work of Indigenous Ministries is carried out in consultation with the 22 members and partners of the [Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples](#) (ACIP) who represent more than 220 First Nation, Inuit and Metis church communities in Canada. ACIP reports to the General Synod. This group meets twice a year to plan and discuss the future of Aboriginal Anglicanism. Other groups of Aboriginals also meet throughout the year to discuss issues such as self-determination and local ministry.

As partners in the worldwide Anglican Communion, Aboriginal Anglicans are members of the [Anglican Indigenous Network](#) that reports to the Anglican Consultative Council.

For more information on Indigenous Ministries, click [here](#).

Indigenous Justice Working Group

The Indigenous Justice Working Group is a group of Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal Anglicans who take on particular initiatives relating to Aboriginal justice. Here are some highlights from their ongoing work.

- **First Nations Governance Act.** During the federal government hearings in early 2004, Indigenous Justice staff encouraged and facilitated Anglicans in various centres across the country to attend the hearings and speak in opposition to the proposed Act which would have reduced the First Nations to the same level of governance as municipalities. This Act was eventually withdrawn.

- **Sisters in Spirit.** Launched in March 2004 by the Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC), this campaign raised public awareness of the disappearance and murder of 500 Aboriginal women in Canada. The Anglican Church of Canada was an active sponsor of this campaign. In November 2005, NWAC signed a five-year agreement with the government of Canada to address violence against Aboriginal women and human rights concerns.
- **Water forum.** In May 2004, the Anglican Church of Canada co-hosted a gathering of Aboriginal communities, organizations, and churches in Winnipeg, Manitoba. The purpose of the forum, *Our Waters, Our Responsibilities: Indigenous Water Rights*, was to build networks and develop strategies to address Indigenous water issues. An executive summary of the event was widely distributed, and a follow-up forum took place in 2006.
- **Self-determination.** The Anglican Church affirmed the principle of self-determination in the *New Agape* document of 2001. In 2006, the Church expressed solidarity and support for the creation of the office of a National Indigenous Anglican Bishop. This support has grown stronger since the appointment of Bishop Mark MacDonald as the first incumbent.
- **UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.** The Anglican Church joined with others in protesting Canada's refusal to sign this declaration, which was passed on September 13, 2007, with 143 member states in support, 11 abstaining, and 4 – Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United States – voting against.
- **Re-Commitment to A New Covenant towards Self Government.** On June 21, 2007, eleven denominations and religious organizations participated in a ceremony of re-commitment, hosted by the Anglican and Lutheran churches in Winnipeg, to advocate in solidarity with Indigenous Peoples in Canada in their struggles for self-determination and self-government. KAIROS: Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives took the initiative to mark the 20th anniversary of a similar commitment made 20 years earlier in 1987 by many of the same religious organizations.

Read more about the Indigenous Justice Working Group [here](#).

Anglican Healing Fund

In 1991 the Residential Schools Advisory Group was implemented to assist the Anglican Church of Canada in responding to residential school issues in an ongoing, sensitive and just manner, to the end that Christ's healing and reconciliation is realized. Grants from the

church's Anglican Healing Fund have been made and administered by the Healing Response Committee to encourage and initiate programs that help educate and heal.

To date the AHF has supported over 300 projects and spent over \$3 million funding these projects.

Here are some recent examples of current projects:

All Saints Survivors Inc., Prince Albert, Saskatchewan

This community-based healing project will be designed by residential school survivors for residential school survivors and family members. The project will address the residential school abuses including its intergenerational impacts. This healing project will create an opportunity and open doors for survivors and their families to heal by using traditional healing approaches: Medicine Wheel, Circle of life, Feasts, Fasts, Sweats, Sun Dance, Round Dance, Pow-wows, Naming Ceremonies, Talking and Healing Circles. (Diocese of Saskatchewan)

Vancouver Native Health Society in partnership with Wish Drop-In Centre Society, Vancouver, British Columbia

The central focus of this project is to engage Aboriginal women who work in the survival sex trade in culturally specific activities that will contribute to their healing, build self-esteem and provide skill-building opportunities. The program conducts two 6-month programs per year each with the capacity to enroll 6 participants. (Diocese of New Westminster)

Read about previous Anglican Healing Fund projects [here](#).

Read more about the Anglican Healing Fund [here](#).