



Santa Fé Statement *of the Council of Associated Parishes*

The Council of the Associated Parishes for Liturgy and Mission, meeting in Santa Fé, New Mexico, in April 2001, calls upon the Church to rethink completely its practice and understanding of mission.

Our hearts burned within us as our Canadian members shared the story of how the Anglican Church of Canada embraced and implemented the government's policy of assimilation of indigenous peoples as an opportunity to further its mission. Children were taken out of their homes and removed to distant residential schools, run by the churches. Grave injustices were committed by the Anglican and other churches, with dire consequences to the peoples and ultimately to the churches themselves.

As a Council dedicated to the renewal of liturgy and mission, we asked ourselves how the Church could have come to be an agent of the kind of "mission" revealed in this story. It prompts us to acknowledge our own inherent racism, past collusion, and present complicity in such policies. Evangelism predicated upon the conversion of individual hearts to a relationship with Jesus is insufficient to prevent such evils as the deprivation of culture, and may serve as little more than a means for achieving assimilation. The Gospel is not a possession of the Church; nor a one-way gift; nor an instrument of the power of state or culture.

Accordingly, we urge the Episcopal Church to approach with caution the proposals of the U.S. Government for "faith-based initiatives," to avoid the future occurrence of tragedies similar to those in Canada about which we heard. We further urge both churches to engage in the formation of faithful communities as signs of healing and reconciliation.

We therefore call upon the Episcopal Church in the U.S.A., the Anglican Church of Canada, and our brothers and sisters in other denominations, to reconsider their foundational understanding of mission, always beginning with God's purpose for creation and the reign of justice on earth.

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Associated Parishes Council asks complete rethinking of mission

The Council of the Associated Parishes for Liturgy and Mission assembled in Santa Fé from April 25-30, 2001, where we received a report from our Canadian members on the present crisis of the Anglican Church of Canada. Though most of us were aware of the situation, listening to the story and reflecting on it stirred our hearts and minds in a new way.

During the 1860s, the Canadian government and historic mission churches entered into a partnership to assimilate indigenous peoples. They removed children from their homes and put them in residential schools hundreds of miles away. This deprived them of their culture, their families and communities, and placed them in situations where they were vulnerable. The loss and suffering was universal. In some instances, children were subject to physical and sexual abuse. Yet the churches embraced the government's policy of assimilation that led to these conditions as an opportunity to further their mission.

We heard from our Canadian members about the harm done to aboriginal peoples and communities, about the Anglican Church of Canada's pain and struggle to come to terms with its role in operating such schools, and the uncertainty about the way forward. Thirty years ago, the church withdrew from its participation in residential schools and from the policy of assimilation. Over the next twenty years steps were taken to build a new relationship with aboriginal peoples. The journey toward a new relationship has been one of self-determination and finding new voice for indigenous Anglicans, and one of repentance and new behavior for non-indigenous Anglicans. In 1993, at a national native convocation, the primate, Archbishop Michael Peers, apologized for the church's involvement in residential schools:

I accept and confess before God and you, our failures in the residential schools. We failed you. We failed ourselves. We failed God. I am sorry, more than I can say, that we were part of a system which took you and your children from home and family. I am sorry, more than I can say, that we tried to remake you in our image,

taking from you your language and the signs of your identity. I am sorry, more than I can say, that in our schools so many were abused physically, sexually, culturally and emotionally. On behalf of the Anglican Church of Canada, I present our apology. [For the full text of the Archbishop's apology, see p. 11 of this issue of *OPEN*.]

However, the church's good but incomplete work, and the developing consciousness and initiatives of the native peoples, led to lawsuits against the church. The costs of litigation and the potential bankruptcy of General Synod have placed the Anglican Church of Canada in crisis, and caused it to rethink its legacy of mission.

Members of the AP Council heard other stories of peoples dominated by the powers of empire in South Africa and Australia, stories of loss and devastation, but also of dignity and hope. We read from a statement, delivered in January 2001, by Rodney Bobiwash, Director of the Forum for Global Exchange, to the World Social Forum in Porto Alegre, Brazil. Speaking with the voice of indigenous peoples, Bobiwash challenged the people of the Americas to examine anew their history, a history premised not only on the devastation of native populations through violence and disease, but also on the enslavement of black people:

Black people in America share with Indigenous people staggering rates of incarceration, illiteracy, infant mortality, ill health, and lack of opportunity. Dwelling in inner-city ghettos they are further victimized by economic and environmental racism and a social system that holds out the hand of plenty while striking with the other.

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*Rather, genuine conversion involves turning to Christ,
becoming members of living communities
within the Body of Christ, and discerning
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We therefore urge the Church to engage
in the formation of Christian communities
that live their liturgy,
becoming true signs of healing and reconciliation
among peoples.*

Bobiwash restated a plea from Aboriginal people, made in December 1999 in Belem, Brazil, that the non-Native people there might go into their cities:

... and standing there in the wilderness of those urban deserts, water the parched streets of humanity with their tears. That they would weep for the tens of millions of our ancestors buried beneath that pavement and concrete; that they weep for the earth despoiled by daily living; that they weep for their brothers and sisters going without bread; and finally, that they weep for themselves. And then, having those tears wash away the scales of willful ignorance from their eyes, that they could then join us in the redemption of the Earth, in the salvation of humankind, and in the reclamation of history. (see [http://www.ceji_iocj.org/English/articles/FourthWorldBobiwash\(Ja01\).htm](http://www.ceji_iocj.org/English/articles/FourthWorldBobiwash(Ja01).htm))

As a Council, we felt called to stand with our brothers and sisters in the Anglican Church of Canada, both indigenous and non-indigenous, learning from their experience as they seek to find their way forward into a new, fuller understanding of their life together in Christ. Hearing of the crisis in the Canadian churches, together with the experience of indigenous peoples in other parts of the world and indigenous Christians in other provinces of the Anglican Communion, heightened

awareness among the U.S. members of the AP Council of our own situation, convicting us of our own racism, our own collusion with the forces of domination, our own need to repent and begin anew.

Listening to these stories of mission history also convinced us that participation in the agenda of government, industry, or other "principalities and powers," as part of the church's mission strategy, demands our caution and prophetic discernment. In particular, we believe that the proposed "faith-based initiatives" of the current U.S. administration puts the church seriously at risk of repeating tragedies similar to those in Canada about which we heard.

All of us on the Council recognized the imperative to confront the implications and results of the cultural domination in which we have participated and in many instances continue to participate, and to examine honestly and carefully our theology and patterns of mission. We reflected that the good news of the Gospel is news because it tells of an offer of abundant life. What is "good" about it is discovered in the meaning which that news has for the life and experience of those who hear it. Mission is therefore as much about listening to the Gospel as it is discovered by local experience, illuminated by the presence of the Spirit in indigenous cultures and traditions, as it is about heralding the Gospel in Jesus' name.

We believe that mission and evangelism predicated upon the conversion of

individual hearts to a relationship with Jesus Christ is not adequate to address such evils as the deprivation of culture and the breakup of families. Rather, genuine conversion involves turning to Christ, becoming members of living communities within the Body of Christ, and discerning through the Spirit what is being redeemed in one's life and culture and what must be renounced.

We therefore urge the Church to engage in the formation of Christian communities that live their liturgy, becoming true signs of healing and reconciliation among peoples. And we earnestly call upon the Episcopal Church of the U.S.A. and the Anglican Church of Canada, and our brothers and sisters in other denominations, to reconsider their foundational understanding of mission, always beginning with God's purpose for creation and for the reign of love, justice, and peace on earth.

Editor's note

This issue is a special issue of *OPEN*, providing background and updated news relating to the Santa Fé statement of the Associated Parishes Council. Members of the Council were deeply moved by the reports of our Canadian members regarding the efforts toward reconciliation with Aboriginal members of the Anglican Church of Canada.

Several articles in this issue are reprinted with permission from *Legacy and Hope*, a special edition of *MinistryMatters*, which is published three times a year by the Anglican Church of Canada for clergy and lay leaders. Other articles are reprinted from "Residential Schools: Legacy and Response," a website of the Anglican Church of Canada (<http://www.anglican.ca/ministry/rs>), and others have been taken from church news services.

Where we have been

DOUG TINDAL

Before Confederation and up through the first half of the twentieth century, the policy of the government of Canada towards the First Nations was assimilation. It was thought that the quickest route to “civilizing” and “converting” the indigenous population was to forcibly remove indigenous children from their homes and communities and to place them in residential schools.

There was considerable variation in how the schools operated, but in many cases the children were forbidden to speak their mother tongues, their cultures were condemned as barbaric and their spirituality as heathen. By the end of the nineteenth century, a relationship had developed between the government and churches, with the government establishing policy and providing most of the funds for these schools.

Between 1820 and 1969, the Anglican Church of Canada was involved in administering twenty-six Indian Residential Schools. By 1969 the church had withdrawn from the residential schools project and committed itself to building more just relationships with its Indigenous members, as well as to advocacy on behalf of Indigenous people.

To study these residential schools is to enter into an area of Canadian history in which stark issues of good and evil intermingle with complexity, paradox and ambiguity.

First and foremost there is an overwhelmingly negative assessment. There are specific incidents of physical and sexual abuse which can neither be excused nor justified by any standard of civilized behavior.

In a book entitled *Shingwauk's Vision*, the first comprehensive study of residential schools, historian J. R. Miller described the inhuman situations they engendered thus:

Many former school workers attempt to answer complaints of harsh discipline with the argument that “we had to have rules” because there were a large number of students relative to the few staff. This is true as far as it goes. But such a legitimate observation does not extend far enough to explain and extenuate discipline with “five belts,” punishment by a heated cigarette lighter, or forcing students who became ill from eating bad food to consume their vomit. These actions were abuse, pure and brutally simple. If it be answered that such evils were perpetrated by an aberrant minority, that observation does not refute the obligation that both churches and government had to protect and cherish a population for which they were doubly responsible. The Inuit and status Indian children who attended residential schools were the legal responsibility of the government because in law they were wards of the crown. The missionary staff operated *in loco parentis* [“in place of the parents”], incurring thereby a moral, if not a legal, obligation to do better . . .

If there are explanations for poor food, heavy workloads, and harsh discipline, there can be no justification of the subjection of young boys and girls to the sexual appetites of the male staff members. The failure of church organizations to take action to weed out sexual exploiters leaves the missionaries open to severe censure.

There is also compelling evidence of pervasive emotional abuse, which many believe was even more damaging than the physical abuse.

A 1994 study of residential schools entitled *Breaking the Silence*, which was sponsored by the Assembly of First Nations, noted: “Being separated from their world and thrown into a strange and for-

eign place called residential school disoriented First Nations children. They felt lost, confused and fearful. Residential school deepened this wounding by silencing the children in ways which shamed and violated both the children’s native world as well as the children themselves.”

On the same topic, Miller wrote: “There is a consensus in the testimony of former residential school students that the worst aspects of these institutions were the loneliness and emotional deprivation, the inadequate food and clothing, and the excessive work and punishment.”

Undergirding it all was a system of law and culture which scorned Native identity and values.

“By the time the modern residential school system was established, the prevailing missionary belief was that, to Christianize Natives, it was essential also to remake them culturally,” Miller has written.

Acknowledging all this, there remain layers of complexity in the history of residential schools. One of these is the number of former students who report good experiences. “Too many ex-pupils have spoken positively of the experience as a whole, or of particular school workers who befriended them, or even of the balance for positive consequences that they struck after weighing both sides, to justify ignoring or downplaying such memories,” Miller writes.

To an extent, residential schools represent one piece of a much larger pattern of relationships between Aboriginal peoples and European colonizers:

[T]here are many factors other than residential school, for example, the Indian Act, as well as racism and poverty, which have impacted and which continue to impact on the lives of First Nations people. The life of an individual, family or community is the outcome of a complex web of

historical and contemporary events which cannot be reduced to one factor. (*Breaking the Silence*)

For a number of individual students, residential schools may have presented a positive alternative to the other available choices. In many cases, the food that was criticized as poor and inadequate was still superior to and more plentiful than what was available at home. Similarly, while reporting on the trauma suffered by children at residential schools, *Breaking the Silence* notes: "At the same time, however, it also became evident that residential school may have been a place which limited trauma for some First Nations children who came from very difficult family situations."

None of the foregoing is intended to minimize the extent of the harm that was done in the schools. None of it justifies so much as a single act of abuse. Nonetheless, it is part of the record, and necessary to an understanding of context. There were as many as eighty residential schools operating during the period from the late 1800s to the 1960s. Estimates of the number of First Nations children in residential schools vary. Miller estimates about a third of six- to fifteen-year-old Aboriginal children, or about seven thousand students, were in residential schools at any one time.

The federal government, Miller says, "looked to its Native educational policy to bring about Aboriginal economic self-sufficiency, principally through cultural assimilation and vocational instruction. An important underlying generalization about Ottawa's approach was that it always sought to accomplish this goal as inexpensively as possible."

By 1883 the government had introduced a per capita grant system by which it hoped to control the cost of schooling for Aboriginal students. A feature of this financing system included the use of students as unpaid labor.

Church and government relationships come to the fore in determining questions of legal liability. In a larger sense, though, focusing on the churches and the government misses an essential point—the moral

and ethical responsibility shared by all Canadians. Church and state were both in accord with the thinking of mainstream (European) Canadians. The legacy of residential schools, and the treatment of First Nations people beyond the schools, belongs to all of us.

Miller writes:

It is fitting that a royal commission operating in the name of the people of Canada has looked into the issue because in a fundamental sense the party that bears most responsibility for the residential school story is the people of Canada. Churches and federal bureaucracy no doubt were the instruments that carried out specific acts or neglected to do what needed to be done in particular cases. But behind both the churches and the government stood the populace, who in a democracy such as Canada ultimately are responsible. In the late 1880s and since, it was, in fact, the enlightened and the progressive few in that society who stirred themselves to volunteer to serve in the residential schools. It was the idealists who became involved in missions and residential schools; the mass of the population was indifferent or hostile to the interests of Native people. Those who today self-

righteously condemn missionaries totally for the damage done in residential schools might well remember that a century ago it was people like them—the people who cared about the Native communities—who staffed these schools.

While broadening the circle of responsibility to include the Canadian public, Miller says bluntly, "Christian churches have not done enough to atone for their share of responsibility for the harm residential schools did."

The Anglican Church of Canada has acknowledged this harm and is continuing to address its responsibility. Stressing the broader responsibility of Canadians does not limit the church's responsibility. It does recognize, however, that action on the part of the churches will not be sufficient. Even the resources of the federal government will not be adequate to bring healing to Aboriginal peoples, unless those resources are matched by a change of heart on the part of Canadians.

Doug Tindal is Director of Information Resources for the Anglican Church of Canada. This article is reprinted from Legacy and Hope, a special edition of MinistryMatters, a publication of the Anglican Church of Canada.

We'd hate to see you go!

We regret that for a number of members this will be their last copy of *OPEN*. Please take a minute to check the address block on the back cover. The top line gives the month and year of your membership expiration. For a number of readers it says "LAST COPY".

Given the part-time nature of the Coordinator position and the press of other business, renewal notices are mailed in the anniversary month, and there is no other follow-up. Please don't lose your membership by inadvertence or mail error. Please check the address with each issue and renew in a timely fashion.

There are important issues facing the Church on which you will find *OPEN* of use and interest.

My hope is that we will journey together

GORDON BEARDY

I would like to begin by telling you about my personal history.

I was raised in the small northwestern Ontario community of Bearskin Lake. This OjiCree community is approximately 240 miles north of Sioux Lookout. My parents spoke only their native language. It is here that my dad carried out his traditional livelihood of hunting, trapping and fishing, and the only race of people I was exposed to were native people, the OjiCree people. My early childhood was spent playing with friends, running with them, laughing, hunting and talking about life, as we knew it and what we could envision it would be at that age.

My father and mother told me about my grandfather who had signed a treaty with the white people, the government, which was an agreement about the use of the land we lived on, and that its intentions were to share the land and its resources and live in peace with other people. They also told me about my grandfather's dream, that one of his grandchildren would become a leader for the community.

Their Christian and traditional teachings and values were passed on to me. To respect myself, others of different color, race or language, and the Creator's creation. I also heard about other children being taken from the community to attend school somewhere, even though we had a day school in the community during the summer months.

When I was five years old I had a dream about angels coming to me and they took me to a church. My mother also had a dream, at the time I was born, that someday I would become a leader in the church.

When I was about ten, I too was sent away to school in Kenora, Ontario, where I attended the Celia Jeffrey Residential School. I remember vividly looking back

*I also remember one day turning the water tap on
and as it was running*

*I poked my finger up into the faucet
and wondered where all the water comes from.*

*I was called into the office
and told that I was not to do that.*

*When I was caught speaking my language
I was again called into the office
and taught that my language was forbidden there.*

toward home mile after mile, not knowing where I was going.

Of my time at Celia Jeffrey School I clearly remember many nights I went to bed crying—lonely, afraid and feeling no sense of security anymore because my parents, my friends were not there.

I also remember one day turning the water tap on and as it was running I poked my finger up into the faucet and wondered where all the water comes from. I was called into the office and told that I was not to do that. When I was caught speaking my language I was again called into the office and taught that my language was forbidden there. In my young mind I could not comprehend the rationale behind this. Why could I not be me, the person my parents had taught me to be? Why was being an Indian not important?

I remember a lot of shameful things that happened there to my friends. I became angry, and my resentment built up to a point where I vowed that every white person would pay for this.

My self-esteem (spirit) became weak to a point of brokenness and I had to get away. I rebelled and ran away from that school with three other friends. We walked for two nights to Redditt without food. I remember walking by night and hiding by day, being very hungry, and the lack of

sleep overcame me. I remember falling down asleep and losing my friends.

When I awoke I felt I had no other alternative and went to the train station and hid in the dark. I sat there waiting, not caring where I would go or if I would die. This was the lowest point in my life. Imagine a boy of eleven wanting to die.

As I sat at the station in the dark a little dog came barking up to me and a white lady came upon me and said, "Can I help you?" I gave her a look that said, "Leave me alone." She pointed out to me where she lived and said I was welcome to come to her house. Later, my hunger got the best of me and I knocked on her door. She invited me in.

I entered her home reluctantly, ate a sandwich and went to bed. For two days I stayed with her, watching her knit and waiting for her son to come home from school to play. I couldn't figure out why she hadn't called the cops to take me back to the school. Finally, I asked her if she knew that I had run away from the Celia Jeffrey School. She said she knew that, but wanted to know why I had run away from the school.

Her "why" was the key word that has stayed with me to this day. It meant that another person (a white person) cared enough about me to ask. I said, "Your people are all mean," and she said, "No,

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I extend my hand to you who are here
so that we might journey together.*

not all of them.” She said she would accompany me back to the school. And she did, she intervened for me, and she spoke with the principal. I wasn’t punished for running away.

She had instilled in me some sense of trust. From that day I tried to please within the system and hung in there to the end of the school year.

I returned home that summer and I asked: “Please Dad, don’t send me back.” My older brother, who had been to residential school, knew why I didn’t want to go back and he spoke up for me, and I was able to stay home and not return.

To this day I have not returned to school. I have always felt a lack of trust in these institutions. That year I returned to the land with my dad and lived my traditional way of life. I didn’t speak English again until I was twenty-five years old. I became a leader in the community as a Councillor and as Chief. I have always strived to help young people, and to instill good values for a better life.

My calling to enter into the ministry came when I was thirty-eight years old, and it was at mother’s urging, because of her dream. I studied and was ordained three years later, believing in my heart that I would be serving my native people.

My bishop came one day and asked me to speak in the churches in the southern part of the diocese. It was then that I discovered that I still carried resentment in my heart toward white people. I then

had a dream and I heard, “God loves your people and he loves the others just as much.”

I realized that I needed to deal with my anger and my resentment. I had to purge the seeds of anger that were planted in me at the residential school. I remember grieving, asking God to set aside my thoughts of revenge, to lead me, to guide me, to be the Lord of my life.

Two things that came to mind:

first, the woman in Redditt who cared for me and who had planted a good seed in my life, who showed me there is hope despite abuses and that we can respond to victims of residential schools with a compassionate and kind heart;

and secondly, the understanding that God loves each of us and that he wants us to come together to address past mistakes, right the wrongs. We cannot repeat these attitudes, and that it is a lesson to guide us to a brighter future.

I have had very mixed emotions coming here. One side of me was telling me to run. This is the first time I have met the people who ran the residential school of Celia Jeffrey School.

The other side of me said, it is time to come to meet you, to speak about hope, walking together, grieving and healing together, and journeying together toward wholeness.

I have come to say yes—forgiveness leads us to peace within ourselves.

Forgiveness also teaches us to become

peaceful. Forgiveness instills in us new hope a new sense of direction, a new sense of journeying together.

I have come, though it is hard, and often difficult. I want to forgive and continue to work with you in ways that will bring healing for both our nations.

I extend my hand to those who meant well and grieve today. Both of our people need healing. I extend my hand to you who are here so that we might journey together.

My hope is that we will journey together. Sometimes we struggle. By the grace of God and his Son, we will overcome.

Gordon Beardy is Bishop of Keewatin. This article is adapted from an address by Bishop Beardy to the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church. It is reprinted from Legacy and Hope, a special edition of MinistryMatters, a publication of the Anglican Church of Canada.

The system was wrong

David Ashdown was nineteen years old, an undergraduate student at the University of Saskatchewan, when the study *Beyond Traplines* was published in 1969.

“It talked about a whole new approach to the church’s relationship with Native people,” he recalls. “I read it and was quite excited by it. People were just beginning to talk about advocacy work and self-determination, and I felt called to be part of all that.”

So when he heard, a little while later, that there was a vacancy for the position of Senior Boys Supervisor at Stringer Hall in Inuvik, it seemed natural to interrupt his studies and head north. Stringer Hall, the Anglican residence, and Grolier Hall, the mirror image Roman Catholic residence, sat side by side, and the students who lived in the two residences attended what by 1970 had become a public school named after Sir Alexander Mackenzie—“Sam’s school,” after the initials, for short.

“I’d say I was well-intentioned but naive,” said Ashdown in a recent interview. “I wanted to be involved in establishing this new relationship, and working in a residential school was probably the worst possible way of doing that.”

Ashdown remembers his introduction to the school vividly. “My plane landed about noon. The first boys were due to arrive about 4. I was given three keys, told to record each boy’s disc number [the federal government identification number], issue them each a set of clothes and assign them a bed. That was the extent of my training.

“By midnight, with the boys still arriving, if I’d had any money I think I would have quit and gone home.” Instead, he stayed four years. “The students were very good, very bright. I was proud to be part of it. I had a sense that these young people would be the future leadership of the Northwest Territories.”

And they were. One became premier;

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another, a deputy minister; several became chiefs, mayors, or business leaders. Ashdown stays in touch with some of them still.

After four years it was time to resume his studies, then continue on to theology and ordination. He has served as a parish priest and diocesan staff member in Qu’Appelle and Athabasca. Last February he became executive archdeacon of the diocese of Keewatin.

Along the way, the work that he had been proud to be part of has become instead an object of revulsion. Ashdown has spent a lot of hours thinking, talking and praying in order to gain some perspective. One turning point came when a close friend, an OjiCree survivor of a residential school, found out that Ashdown had been a dorm supervisor.

“It was a major struggle for us over a period of weeks,” Ashdown says. “Ultimately, we were able to pray together, accept each other, and come to see that in different ways, both of us were survivors.”

Another turning point came when another OjiCree talked about a conversation he’d had with a former school administrator. In response to complaints about the school, the administrator said, “But look at all the good that came out of it. Look at yourself, for example.” Ashdown’s friend commented: “Yeah, I learned to survive there. But why is it that when one of us succeeds, you assume it’s because of you; and when we fail, it’s in spite of you.”

The comment rocked Ashdown. “It shook me because I recognized myself in it. I recognized that that had unconsciously been part of my thinking.

“There are a lot of former residential school staff out there who are really hurting now—not the ones who deliberately perpetrated abuse, but the caring ones who were caught up in that system, and who now feel that everything they did, everything they stood for, has all come to naught.

“Some of them are simply denying that part of their lives and trying to pretend it never happened. Some are saying, ‘Oh, but there were so many good people involved’—which is true, as far as it goes, but it doesn’t change the fact that the system was wrong.

“What I’ve come to understand is that it wasn’t a good system, but it had a few bad people in it; it was a bad system, but it had some good people. There was systemic evil present in the residential schools.”

Ashdown accepts that each person will have to find his or her own path to healing. “For me, the shift over the last few years has been made possible by being able to sit down with survivors of the schools and struggle together; people talking to each other, not trying to make what happened worse than what it was on the one hand, or denying the evil on the other, just talking honestly about what happened.”

Wherever the path of healing leads, he says, the church must be ready to play its part.

This article was written by Doug Tindal, Director of Information Resources for the Anglican Church of Canada. It is reprinted from Legacy and Hope, a special edition of MinistryMatters, a publication of the Anglican Church of Canada.

Steps on a healing path

CATHERINE MORRISON

Our hope as church, society and Aboriginal peoples rests in establishing new relationships of trust and promise and working together for a better future.

Jubilee with its three themes—release from bondage, redistribution of wealth and renewal of the earth—is a vision that speaks with potential and hope to Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people alike. It is a vision that we have been living in the church for some time.

We began to live the first theme in the mid sixties, when we realized that policies and attitudes in our own church formed a kind of bondage for Aboriginal people. We realized that residential school policies had been a mistake and that we had to determine what else in church and society did not stand up to Christian principles.

In 1967, General Synod commissioned a study, which took two years to complete. The report, entitled *Beyond Trailines*, was startling.

It was also a turning point for our church, resulting in reform of how the church relates to Aboriginal peoples and how ministry is conducted in Aboriginal communities. As a church we have made a commitment to no longer do things for Aboriginal peoples, but rather to do things with them, sometimes at their direction.

The first steps to self-determination for Aboriginal Anglicans was in 1970 when we hired an Aboriginal staff person to oversee the church's Native ministry programs, and we saw the beginnings of our National Aboriginal Council. Now, almost three decades later, the church has an Indigenous Ministries Coordinator, who works with 225 Indigenous congregations to help them find new ways to worship and to help them find a voice in the church. Since the 1992 General Synod, we have also had an Indigenous Justice Coordinator. In this capacity, it was

my job to work on advocacy with Aboriginal peoples regardless of religious affiliation. A major part of my work was to educate non-Indigenous peoples in the church about social realities for Aboriginal peoples and to foster the understanding that is essential to a healthy society.

To ensure that the voice of the people is heard, the church has the gifts, experience and wisdom of the Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples, which is made up of representatives from all parts of Canada. The council meets to envision what the church could be for our families, our communities and our communion.

The Jubilee theme of redistribution of wealth is also evident in our church. The church's true wealth is the gifts, wisdom and efforts of people in community. For many years, our church lacked a way for Native people to gather and discern their voice and find their vision.

Then in 1985 the church agreed to support a National Native Convocation. When it was finally held, the convocation turned out to be an affirming and surprising experience for many participants.

Out of the first convocation came a recognition that future such gatherings are vital to the life of Indigenous ministries in the church. It was decided to hold a convocation every three to four years.

At the second convocation in 1993 many people spoke of their experiences at residential school and of abuse they often suffered there. The Primate, Archbishop Michael Peers, apologized on behalf of the church. Then, for a day, the elders reflected and prayed about what they had heard and then returned to the gathering. Our elder, Vi Smith, acknowledged and accepted the apology.

The call to gather again came in 1997 when delegates met in Lethbridge, Alberta. This third national gathering brought together Aboriginal Anglicans and non-Aboriginal partners to discern and raise up God's sacred call to covenant together. The theme was "Our Journey of Spir-

itual Renewal."

I believe that part of the theme of redistribution of wealth lies not just in asking those who are rich to give to the poor but also in recognizing that we all have gifts, that we must value the gifts of others and learn to accept them graciously. The ministry, theology and love of Native peoples in our church is a wealth that we are learning to recognize.

It has been said that the Old Testament Jubilee year was to be a time of new beginnings, of redressing social wrongs, of renewed spirituality through a return to right relationships with our brothers and sisters. This is also the spirit of a covenant between our church and Aboriginal peoples, which is now five years old.

The road towards covenant began in 1992, when the General Synod launched a discussion aimed at picturing what the face of ministry would look like in the Anglican Church for the next one hundred years. Although there was Indigenous representation in this process, in some parts of Canada, there was little or no interaction with Indigenous peoples.

The Council of Native Ministries reacted to this concern and decided to invite all Indigenous national committee members to join it to discuss these issues. Indigenous representatives decided that the package was not appropriate for Indigenous Anglicans because it did not take into account the way Indigenous peoples consult, discuss or envision. The consultation package was rejected.

The council knew, however, that Indigenous peoples within the Anglican Church were also being called to envision a new church, so they began the process of preparing a document which outlined their plan for the future. It was realized that a plan for the next hundred years could not be envisioned until Indigenous peoples had fully expressed the feelings and experiences of being in the church during the past hundred years. The stories, feelings and experiences were shared,

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tears were shed and hopes were expressed.

A small working group of six people from across the country and from different committees was formed and began to work at writing down the hopes, fears and memories into a document that could be presented to the wider church. This Covenant, as it came to be known, was accepted unanimously by the members and ultimately by the church.

The Covenant expresses the need of Indigenous Anglicans to have part of who they are reflected in church structure and policy, in the Christian education of adults and children and during the liturgy and use of the sacraments.

This journey continues to be a priority of the Anglican Church. Teachings and experiences about Covenant were at the heart of the Lethbridge gathering where the Covenant was signed and affirmed.

The theme of Jubilee, of people coming together for a new beginning, is also the spirit behind the Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. This report, when it was published in 1996, did much to bring attention to ongoing social,

environmental and economic problems.

The theme of renewal of the earth was evident in the Royal Commission's examination of issues such as land rights, mining, and disposal of industrial and nuclear waste. Although theological language was not used, certainly the idea of Native peoples being the traditional stewards of the land was examined.

The report produced some 440 recommendations for a new, positive relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples and provided a new reporting of the history of Canada, in which Aboriginal peoples were significant architects in the formation of our modern nation.

Many of the groups who made special submissions to the Royal Commission have continued to work on education on Aboriginal issues and to pressure the government to implement the recommendations. One of those groups is the Aboriginal Rights Coalition (ARC), which includes the Anglican Church as one of thirteen member churches and about a dozen Aboriginal groups. With the sup-

port of the Anglican Church, ARC has produced an education and resource kit on the Royal Commission, entitled *So Long as the Sun Rises and the River Flows*.

Since the 1969 Hendry Report entitled *Beyond Traplines*, the Anglican Church has strived to be an example in how it deals with Aboriginal issues and has urged the federal government to embody principles of social justice in its own policies. We radically changed the structure of the national office and our church committees to respond more appropriately to Indigenous ministry and issues. We have made a very painful apology in response to the residential school problem and lived out that apology by continuing to make changes by going in directions that seem frightening but are where we hear the call of God.

In the Hendry Report, we stated many of the things that the Royal Commission turned to twenty-five years later. In our church's Covenant with Indigenous Peoples we expressed the spirit regarding the hope for a new relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples that was presented in the RCAP three years later. Since the late 1950s we, as a national church, have been passing resolutions that have changed church structure and expressed our commitment to education and advocacy. Since we accept the fact that the Anglican Church of Canada is a church that is “in the world,” we must also accept responsibility to be a positive influence on the world.

At the time this article was written, Catherine Morrison was Indigenous Justice Coordinator of the Anglican Church of Canada. This article is adapted from a presentation Ms Morrison made to the synod of the diocese of Cariboo. It is reprinted from Legacy and Hope, a special edition of MinistryMatters, a publication of the Anglican Church of Canada.

A message from the Primate, Archbishop Michael Peers, to the National Native Convocation

*Minaki, Ontario
Friday, August 6, 1993*

My Brothers and Sisters:

Together here with you I have listened as you have told your stories of the residential schools.

I have heard the voices that have spoken of pain and hurt experienced in the schools, and of the scars which endure to this day.

I have felt shame and humiliation as I have heard of suffering inflicted by my people, and as I think of the part our church played in that suffering.

I am deeply conscious of the sacredness of the stories that you have told, and I hold in the highest honor those who have told them.

I have heard with admiration the stories of people and communities who have worked at healing, and I am aware of how much healing is needed.

I also know that I am in need of healing, and my own people are in need of healing, and our church is in need of healing. Without that healing, we will continue the same attitudes that have done such damage in the past.

I also know that healing takes a long time, both for people and for communities. I also know that it is God who heals, and that God can begin to heal when we open ourselves, our wounds, our failures and our shame to God. I want to take one step along that path here and now.

I accept and I confess before God and you, our failures in the residential schools. We failed you. We failed ourselves. We failed God.

I am sorry, more than I can say, that we were part of a system which took you and your children from home and family.

I am sorry, more than I can say, that we tried to remake you in our image, taking from you your language and the signs of your identity.

I am sorry, more than I can say, that in our schools so many were abused physi-

cally, sexually, culturally and emotionally.

On behalf of the Anglican Church of Canada, I present our apology.

I do this at the desire of those in the church like the National Executive Council, who know some of your stories and have asked me to apologize.

I do this in the name of many who do not know these stories.

And I do this even though there are those in the church who cannot accept the fact that these things were done in our name.

As soon as I am home, I shall tell all the bishops what I have said, and ask them to cooperate with me and with the National Executive Council in helping this healing at the local level. Some bishops have already begun this work.

I know how often you have heard words which have been empty because they have not been accompanied by actions. I pledge to you my best efforts, and the efforts of our church at the national level, to walk with you along the path of God's healing.

The work of the Residential Schools Working Group, the video, the commitment and the effort of the Special Assistants to the Primate for this work, the grants available for healing conferences, are some signs of that pledge, and we shall work for others.

This is Friday, the day of Jesus' suffering and death. It is the anniversary of the first atomic bomb at Hiroshima, one of the most terrible injuries ever inflicted by one people on another.

But even atomic bombs and Good Friday are not the last word. God raised Jesus from the dead as a sign that life and wholeness are the everlasting and unquenchable purpose of God.

Thank you for listening to me.

+Michael
Archbishop and Primate

Reprinted from "Residential Schools: Legacy and Response," a website of the Anglican Church of Canada.

Response to the Primate

Delivered at the National Native Convocation by Vi Smith on behalf of the elders and participants.

*Minaki, Ontario,
Saturday, August 7, 1993*

On behalf of this gathering, we acknowledge and accept the apology that the Primate has offered on behalf of the Anglican Church of Canada.

It was offered from his heart with sincerity, sensitivity, compassion and humility. We receive it in the same manner. We offer praise and thanks to our Creator for his courage.

We know it wasn't easy. Let us keep him in our hearts and prayers, that God will continue to give him the strength and courage to continue with his tasks.

Reprinted from "Residential Schools: Legacy and Response," a website of the Anglican Church of Canada.

A Covenant

Under the guidance of God's spirit, we agree to do all 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 new vision and give us grace to accomplish it.

INDIGENOUS ANGLICAN LEADERS
Winnipeg, April, 1994

Reprinted from the website of the Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples (<http://www.anglican.ca/acip/covenant.html>).

The way forward

MICHAEL PEERS

Dear friends:

There are moments in history which are significant turning points. Often, their arrival appears sudden and unforeseen, although in hindsight we might wonder why we hadn't anticipated them. Such times usually bring bewilderment and distress, but always hold the possibility of renewal and hope. The litigation over residential schools in which we are now engaged as a church has brought us to such a moment in the Anglican Church of Canada. But what appears an unsettling time, is a remarkable opportunity in which we can deepen our faith and know the sure presence of God in our life together.

In an address to the national conference on Jubilee last summer, Bishop Mark McDonald of Alaska noted two distinct ways in which we can live as human beings. Each is based on a pattern of a meal, and each is found in scripture. The first is found in Genesis, and relates to the story of the fruit taken by the man and woman. The pattern in this story is of taking, using, abusing and hiding. The two take what is not theirs to take, and so use and abuse creation and Creator. Then they try to hide their action and themselves. It is interesting how blame and the disintegration of community quickly follow. The other model is given us in the gospels: receiving (taking what is given), blessing, breaking and sharing. It is taught us by Jesus, and it not only forms the basis of our worship, it is meant as a pattern for our life. And it is interesting that what follows is a putting together, the growth of respect and regard in community with one another.

The litigation we find ourselves facing today results from the first pattern. There was a taking of what was not ours to take—children taken from their homes, language and culture taken from peoples. There was abuse and there was hiding. We are in a time when what was hidden is

coming to light, and we are confronted with its reality. What does this mean for us as a church, as followers of Jesus?

In the early fall, after the Lytton decision gave us a clearer picture of what confronts us, the Management Team in Church House met for two days to consider our future as church. That meeting produced three convictions which I want to share with you.

The first is our determination to be part of the healing and reconciliation needed within Aboriginal communities, in the church and in Canadian society. This is absolutely our first priority, and little else matters if we do not keep this at the center of our hearts. We believe we have a part to play in healing, and that in fact, this is what God is calling us to be about at this point in our history. This can happen as we continue to accept our responsibility, and seek to live life in the pattern given us by our Lord.

The second conviction is that our survival as church is an appropriate goal. This does not mean simply holding on to what we have. Rather, it means that if we are to follow our Lord in a way that proclaims the gospel with potency and vitality, then we believe God wants us to be present, visible and strong as a community of faith. We understand that, in the future, we may come to look quite different as a church than we do today. We are not afraid of that and we trust God to lead us.

The third conviction is that we need to continue our discussion with the federal government. In every instance, the government is our co-defendant, and dialogue is crucial if we are to find alternatives to endless litigation. Our discussions need to include a realistic assessment of our capacity to provide restitution. We must not seek to avoid restitution; it is a significant part of the healing process. At the same time it is clear that there is an inequality of resources between government and church. The government has already gone on record as

being in support of the viability of the churches. Considering our limited assets, we need to come to a clearer understanding of what this means.

These are our convictions. Underlying them is a deep faith that, in and through this, God is making all things new. That may not always be clear. In John's gospel, Jesus said to Peter, "...when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will fasten a belt around you and take you where you do not wish to go" (John 21:18). In the process of moving towards a resolution, we find ourselves in a place not of our choosing. We do not wish to be in the courts, but this is where we are.

One of the dangers of this is that we can start blaming, denying rather than accepting responsibility. That so easily moves us into the old pattern of taking, using, abusing and hiding. The risen Lord is telling us that in whatever place we find ourselves, God is present and God provides. God provides, and if we are conscious that our role is to receive the gifts, the word, the ministry God gives, and that our mission is to bless and let our lives be broken for the world, and to share the gospel of new life, then we will be found faithful in living a life patterned in Christ. That pattern leads us into healing and respect.

When you read this, I will be on a sabbatical leave. My commitment is to use this time to take the experience I have of the life of the church in Canada and the connections I have in the church beyond Canada, to reflect on how we might combine the best of our history with the circumstances of our present to help discern God's will for us in the future. I encourage you to talk with one another, to find opportunities to think about what ways there might be for you as a leader in the church, for your own parish or faith community and for your diocese to become engaged in this journey of reconciliation. This is a significant moment in our life.

Michael Peers is Primate of the Anglican Church of Canada. Reprinted from Legacy and Hope, a special edition of MinistryMatters.

Excerpts from the presidential address

*The thirty-sixth session of the General
Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada*

ARCHBISHOP MICHAEL PEERS

Anglican Communion News Service

I greet you in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Greetings first of all to you who have come from every part of this wonderful land—chosen by your diocese as delegates to this Synod.... Through the length of this meeting, I invite you to remember that you are here for the well-being and mission of the whole church. I encourage you to speak your mind and heart. We need to hear your voice—whether in plenary debate, in your home group, or in other settings within Synod. At least as much, I ask you to listen with your mind and heart. . . .

Finally, I greet those who are here as “indigenous partners.” You are more than partners; you are “us.” It is good that you are here, for you bring with you crucial insights for us to consider. We need your voice, your wisdom and your spirit. Your presence is precious indeed as together we seek the gifts of healing, reconciliation and new life that God has to give. And for those members of Synod who come from places in which there has not been opportunity ever to connect with aboriginal persons, I offer this word from one of our indigenous members: “Well, for someone who says they’ve never met an Indian, here I am!” It is time to get together....

Friendship between indigenous and non-indigenous peoples

The theme of this Synod is one that recognizes that the relationship between indigenous and non-indigenous peoples has been one characterized by a history of colonialism, racism and broken trust. Treaties were made and then often ignored by the dominant society. Land was confiscated, people dislocated, rights abused. Within Canada, events in Oka ten years ago and, more recently, in Burnt Church, make visible the deep pain that continues

to plague our society. It is now five years since the release of the Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, and for the most part, its recommendations remain ignored. The Government of Canada has demonstrated little enthusiasm for dealing with the Report. Healing and reconciliation cannot be forward-ed by a refusal to deal with our history.

Within our own Anglican community, it is in the history of the residential schools that we most clearly see the wounds. The history of the schools is well known to us. But think back: what did you know of this story ten years ago, or even five years ago? Those who had been students in the schools, and their children and grandchildren knew what they experienced. It was written in their souls, in their hearts. And sometimes it was simply too difficult, confusing and painful to voice. It is only as people have found courage to share their stories, to speak of hurt and anger that the history has begun to seep into the souls and consciousness of the rest of us. And as it has, we have responded in a variety of ways: sometimes disbelief and denial, sometimes with a word that says “But it was meant well . . .,” sometimes with our own anger, sometimes with deep sorrow and shame.

The Primate of Wales, Archbishop Rowan Williams, in a recent book, *Lost Icons*, contends that in modern European/North American culture, we seem no longer able to think of ourselves in concepts that were once potent. He reasons that there are areas “in which some kinds of discourse seem to be getting more and more labored, more and more inaccessible to our culture...” (p. 4). One of the areas he includes is remorse. We are finding it increasingly difficult to be remorseful, to mourn when we have done wrong. Archbishop Williams points to a kind of contemporary leadership that simply wouldn’t imagine saying sorry. Rather, it might own “errors in judgment” or “inappropriate” actions. Sometimes it simply shifts blame. So failure becomes “fail-

ure to sustain a visible style” rather than actual moral failure. Loss of image is held dearer than loss of trust. “Remorse,” says Archbishop Williams, “has to do with an uncomfortable powerlessness. . . . To acknowledge the past, the past in which I am enmeshed with countless others and which I cannot alter by my own will, is entirely and unavoidably a risk, an exposure of vulnerability.” (p.109)

I agree with him: concern for image is concern to remain in control, and that distances us from one another. Remorse holds the potential for recovering intimacy and friendship.

To acknowledge and mourn together the deep wounds of the past means listening when we would rather not hear, voicing apology when we would rather be silent, naming an offense we would rather conceal. But friendship demands openness. How can we in the dominant society learn to be a friend, if we cannot mourn our history of cultural imperialism? Friendship depends on transparency, and transparency is the furthest thing from damage control. In a few days, a service of healing will take place to which we are all invited. Our purpose is to come before God seeking healing for ourselves and for our church, for all relationships that have been broken by sin. We will listen to stories, there will be opportunity to speak our apology, to seek the laying on of hands, to ask God’s blessing and reconciling love to reach into the depths of our life together. This service is not an end; it is a moment when we move towards one another knowing that our Lord is in our midst. It is a step towards life.

The work of healing has hardly begun, but it has begun. It will be the work of generations to come. It is our privilege to lay foundations, so let us pray that we lay them well. Some of the stones are in place: the Sacred Circles, the Covenant, the working document “A New Agape,” the Healing and Reconciliation Fund, the commitments we have made to stand in solidarity with aboriginal peoples in Can-

ada in their struggle for land rights. But the cornerstone is found in Christ Jesus who calls us friends, who leads us into a new life with each other and who calls us to be at home with one another....

Friendship under strain

Our Church in Canada plays a unique role within the Anglican Communion. At the Primates' Meeting in Kanuga in March, I showed the video (produced for the Diocesan Consultations) on residential schools litigation and our commitment to healing. The response ran from near disbelief that so much of our legal expense resulted from government action against us, to amazement about our willingness to be so open. I have used the word "transparency" a number of times. Let me do it again. The former Primate of Central Africa has said of us that "you are the most transparent church" in the Communion. I suppose that is a boast. But I think it reveals, too, our commitment to foster genuine sharing and solidarity with Anglican sisters and brothers.

We know the discord that has developed recently in the Communion—more of which has been apparent in the last few weeks. I have said my piece before, so I will restrain myself now. Most of the controversy is rooted in a discussion of what place gay and lesbian persons will have in the church. We know this to be a major concern in our own church. In this regard, I want to commend the Bishop and people of the Diocese of New Westminster. Although Bishop Ingham comes in for his share of demonization, I want in the strongest way possible to commend his openness to listen and his willingness to stand in the difficult place. As well, the members of the diocesan synod have shown an ability to speak and listen to one another as friends even when it has been the toughest of tasks.

A warden in one of the diocese's parishes who was present at Synod, wrote this reflection for his parish newsletter:

The atmosphere was tense at the beginning and remained so throughout... The tension... came not from the subject itself... [but] from deeply felt concern that

*I do not minimize the pain,
or the potential of our circumstances to undo what
has been built over more than a century.
But nor will I minimize the strength
and power of God to raise up life from the depths.*

somehow we risked alienating one another . . .

That is precisely the point. It is exciting to hear this person's testimony:

What we can all take from Synod... is that we as a church can talk to each other respectfully about anything and that differing even substantially on major issues, need not imply division.

I cannot tell you how significant that is. "I call you friends. No love is greater than to lay down one's life for the sake of one's friends." [John 15:13, 15]

Perhaps the gift we best can share in the Communion is that of a style of dealing with difficult and divisive issues. Within our church are views and theologies in which we often find ourselves at great distance from one another—experiencing real strain and tension. We are not immune from conflict. But, at least to this point, we have found it possible to hold together, to talk to one another. Friendship costs at least as much as separation. But it is surely worth the price.

Friendship and the future

These thoughts bring me back to the matter I mentioned earlier and to which I promised to return: the challenge of litigation, bankruptcy and the future of the national church. Never before have we contemplated a possibility such as the one we are now facing. We have come to a moment in history in which we may be facing the winding up of the General Synod. There are some things I want to say about this.

The first thing is to invite you to share what you are hearing in dioceses and

parishes. At the outset of this address, I asked you to speak and to listen with your mind and heart, as a member of Synod, and with a sense of loyalty to those who sent you here. I emphasize that again. Many of you will have been involved in consultations between General Synod and dioceses that took place last year. They have helped enormously in opening up issues identified throughout the church. However, here we are a gathering in which every diocese is present together, and together we need to hear what is being said across the whole church. I invite you to some deep sharing. What are you hearing? What stories do you bring? What are you seeing? What word needs to be spoken and reflected upon in this gathering? We need to think and talk through all this together as friends in Christ.

The second thing has to do with principles. For two years, the Diocese of New Westminster worked together at finding a way to enter a hard discussion together. It is difficult enough to enter into dialogue with brothers and sisters on an issue that presses people apart. It is even more difficult to do that in the public eye. The nature of the issue was such that it could not help but be in the public gaze. Everyone—conservative, liberal, parish, individual—becomes a target, and the temptation is to be distracted, to let others determine your response. I invite you to take the high ground: to be focused on friendship rather than on division, to be focused on prayer and listening to God, rather than on the prurient interests of the media. Being in the public gaze is both taxing and alluring. We must put up with the stress, but we must also resist the allure that distorts and sidetracks. Pay attention to the Lord who calls you friend and to the

friends who gather here with you.

The third thing I want to say has to do with being clear about the issue. What is under threat nationally is the General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada, not the Anglican Church of Canada. We will remain the church. Whether it is the General Synod, or some dioceses, it is the structures that are at risk, not the essence of our life. Because the structures have served us well, and continue to do so, we sense the possibility of real loss. We have been negotiating with the government because we believe that the program and the systems that deliver it are of great value, and we do not want to see that disappear. Structures are important—whether they are physical buildings, or the ways in which we organize our life and mission. I am under no illusion that if these things vanish, it will be a blow that we would grieve for years to come. Nevertheless, we are a community held together first and foremost not by structures, but by relationship. Relationship endures and it will prosper. And we can dare to face the future with hope, with heart and confidence because we are people of faith in God who has called us into relationship. Our God heals, our God reconciles, our God offers new life in Christ Jesus. God has been Friend and Savior in both past and present, and we believe that the future is equally God's home.

I do not minimize the pain, or the potential of our circumstances to undo what has been built over more than a century. But nor will I minimize the strength and power of God to raise up life from the depths. So I invite you to be friends to one another, and to a ministry of friendship in the world. I invite you to explore together the future, to be what you are in this week—the General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada, discerning the presence and call of God for us in our time and context. We are held and set free by God who loves us in Christ, and who, through us, desires to make known his love for the world.

University of Waterloo
Waterloo, Ontario
5 July 2001

Episcopal Church encourages compromise on public funding of 'faith-based' social services

Episcopal News Service

The Episcopal Church has called upon Congress and the Bush administration to seek out compromise in the current debate over faith-based initiatives. According to a recent statement, the church supports the "long-standing practice of receiving public funding for faith-based social services so long as such programs do not discriminate or proselytize as part of receiving services." While concerned with the current "charitable choice" provisions of a bill before the House of Representatives, the statement said the church is "encouraged" by the administration's willingness to address constitutional and discrimination concerns raised by the faith community.

"Receiving public monies from local, state or federal governments is nothing new to the Episcopal Church or other faith-based groups for that matter," said Presiding Bishop Frank T. Griswold. "I am pleased the questions around this issue have brought serving the needs of others to our public discourse."

The Executive Council of the Episcopal Church, meeting in Salt Lake City, approved a resolution on June 11 which

called for establishing a balanced approach in accepting public funds in some cases, while maintaining important safeguards regarding discrimination, accounting and church-state separation. The resolution also called on the federal government to increase public funding for programs aimed at critical human needs, and requested that the government improve the delivery of assistance to faith-based organizations by simplifying paperwork requirements and providing timely payment for services, as well as appropriate technical assistance.

"This position balances the increasing need for social services with fairness and accountability in the use of public dollars. The church recognizes that discrimination has no place in the delivery of social services," said Thomas H. Hart of the Episcopal Church's Office of Government Relations in Washington, D.C. "The government should and certainly can expand the opportunity parishes and faith organizations have to help those in need with public funds, but should clearly put new money behind those proposals and critical existing programs."

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Native bishop forgives church and Primate

LEANNE LARMONDIN

Anglican Communion News Service

*For it is in forgiving that we can find peace
and it is in rebuilding
that we will become strong again as nations.*

Bishop Gordon Beardy of Keewatin formally forgave the church for its past dealings with indigenous peoples at a native healing ceremony during the recent meeting of the General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada. The forgiveness comes eight years after the Primate, Archbishop Michael Peers, apologized on behalf of the church for its part in the residential school system. That apology was accepted at the time by the elders at the national native convocation held in Minaki, Ontario in 1993. As the Primate stood quietly beside him, head bowed, Bishop Beardy—who Synod members only expected to deliver a dismissal—made clear that he spoke not as a bishop, but as a native person who had attended residential school.

“From my heart,” said Bishop Beardy, “I would like to say that I forgive you and I want to forgive your church which has become my church. I forgive your people who have become my people. I accept your apology because you have worked so hard to break down the barriers. Where things that were condemned before, today you receive them with joy. Where once we were outsiders, today we are with you, as a friend, as a leader, as a brother. So, I extend my hand.

“My children will hear what I said. My grandchildren will hear. For it is in forgiving that we can find peace and it is in rebuilding that we will become strong again as nations.”

Following his statement, the bishop and primate clasped hands and embraced for a half minute, both of them near tears.

Bishop Beardy is one of four indigenous bishops in the Anglican Church of Canada, but is the only native bishop who is responsible for an entire diocese. Elected as a suffragan bishop in 1993, he

became head of the Diocese of Keewatin in 1996. After he attended the Presbyterian Church-run Cecilia Jeffrey Residential School in Kenora, Ontario, for just one year at the age of 11, he never returned to school and did not even complete primary school.

His forgiveness is significant because it is one step beyond accepting the church’s apology for its role in the residential schools system, said the Rev. Canon Sue Moxley, a non-native observer at several national gatherings of indigenous people and a partner of the Anglican Council of Indigenous People. “Someone can say ‘I’m sorry,’ and I can say I accept your apology, but I have to do my piece of work to actually forgive,” said Moxley, a priest from the diocese of Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island.

Bishop Beardy said later in an interview he thought the church was deserving of forgiveness. “Sometimes an apology can be empty but this church is developing, progressing. We have communities healing, we are responding to, we are hearing native people, and I am proud,” said Bishop Beardy. “This is not a white church anymore; I feel it is our church.” He said he felt it was the right time on his “healing journey” and that of many other native people to forgive their church. Many of the roughly forty indigenous partners present at Synod have supported him since he made his statement, he said.

Donna Bomberry, the national church’s coordinator of indigenous ministries, said the fuller inclusion of indigenous people at this meeting of General Synod likely helped the bishop forgive his church. “This is the first time we’ve had so many people who were able to tell their stories [at a national gathering],” said Ms. Bomberry. Many native people

spoke publicly of their residential schools experiences earlier in the synod.

Archbishop Peers said the forgiveness caught him a bit by surprise. “I was told that the Bishop of Keewatin wanted to include an absolution,” said the Primate. “I thought, maybe, it would be a liturgical text, but not that way of personalizing the response.”

That personal response, said Archbishop Peers, was an ideal response to his own personal apology, delivered in 1993. “It has been said that (my) apology changed it from an institutional response to a personal one. I was thinking just now that if you personalize an apology, then the best response is a personal one.”

The 1993 apology is considered by many to be a watershed moment in the church’s relationship with native people. It has recently been cited as the cause of much of the litigation by former residential school students, but the Primate responded earlier in the Synod that the church’s legal advisers are unanimous in their belief that the apology was not only the “right thing to do,” but did not open the church up to lawsuits. He told the Synod members that the federal government also apologized to native people for the residential schools system, and with all their legal advisers, they would never have apologized if there had been any chance that an apology would result in lawsuits.

The article on the back page is written by Doug Tindal, Director of Information Resources for the Anglican Church of Canada. It is reprinted from Legacy and Hope, a special edition of MinistryMatters, a publication of the Anglican Church of Canada.

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A renewed mission?

MARK MACDONALD

The Santa Fé Statement on mission is very significant in its own right. Placed alongside recent events at the Anglican Church of Canada's General Synod meeting, it is part of a fundamental shift in the church's self-understanding and, further, its mission. Hopeful, we may ask whether these are true signposts on the way to a renewed and faithful apostolicity in the church.

On July 9, the Anglican Church of Canada, meeting in its General Synod, gave a day to the Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples (ACIP). The plan was to outline the end to the colonial mission of the past and move to the acceptance of a "new agape"—a plan for the self-development of a church of the Indigenous Peoples. The first part of the day was devoted to the repudiation of the "doctrine of discovery."

Some of the General Synod participants seemed surprised when, in the midst of some dramatic portrayals and testimonials, Fr. Michael Stogre, S.J., stood to deliver a lecture on the term *terra nullius*. It seemed, at first glance, to be out of step with the content and tone of the serious and urgent concerns of the day. On the contrary, it soon became clear that here was the heart.

Terra nullius is a legal term used to describe an "unoccupied land." It was first used concerning Iceland. If a place was determined to be *terra nullius*, it gave the right of ownership, governance, occupation and exploitation to the one who "discovered" the land. Later, the meaning of the term expanded to include lands inhabited by people who showed no sign of "civilization." A land, they said, is *terra nullius* if it has no western style industry, government or churches. We find one especially glaring example of the term's use in Australia: *terra nullius* was the basis for the occupation of the land without benefit of treaties or compensation to the Aboriginal People.

We should begin by celebrating the Santa Fé Statement and the events of the Canadian General Synod. However, we cannot be faithful to God without living their full and larger meaning. This calls, at a bare minimum, for a full and robust recognition of the sovereignty and authority of the First Nations, among the nations and within the church.

The term "discovery" implies *terra nullius*. It is also implicit in the continuing pattern of settlement and exploitation in areas belonging to Indigenous Peoples in the so-called First, Second and Third Worlds. This ongoing process has been called World War III—it is as far-reaching, ubiquitous and deadly as the First and Second World Wars.

The church and many national and international government agencies have condemned *terra nullius*, implicitly or explicitly, for centuries (beginning with a statement by the Pope in 1537). In practical terms, however, the same bodies happily accept the results. European settlements, economic exploitation and wholesale destruction of peoples are "facts on the ground" to the modern colonial nation-states and their churches. The process and results of *terra nullius* shape the politics of today and, sadly, the mission of the western churches. Further, *terra nullius* clearly defines the basic boundaries of our relationship with the environment: we own the land; we exploit the land.

The churches have a laudable and consistent record of support for the treaties and the sovereignty they grant to First

Nations. Many Anglican bishops and clergy around the world were signatories to the treaties. It is, therefore, amazing that they have ignored the implications of the treaties for their own life, governance and mission. We must admit and confess that we are still an institution shaped by colonialism. Our continuing refusal to allow inculturation to happen in our liturgies and institutions indicates that *terra nullius* is still alive among us.

The problems we have with the continuing effects of colonial mission are not contained in the Canadian residential school crisis alone, as the Santa Fé statement makes clear. *Terra nullius* has an ongoing life in the church that extends beyond our relationship with the First Nations. We have only begun to face our challenge and opportunity in this matter.

The first non-Roman Catholic missionaries in North America received their training in the military occupation of the highlands. They served as the model for those that came later, even though their methods were both cruel and ineffective. In the same way, the colonial mission became the paradigm for our view of those whom we "discover" on the mar-

gins of our institutional life. The culture, life and hearts of those outside or on the margins of Christendom—including those who are marginal due to race, ethnicity, poverty, gender or class—are a kind of *terra nullius* in our strategies for mission and evangelism. The wounds inflicted by such a view are painfully obvious.

Facing this, what shall we do?

We should begin by celebrating the Santa Fé Statement and the events of the Canadian General Synod. However, we cannot be faithful to God without living their full and larger meaning. This calls, at a bare minimum, for a full and robust recognition of the sovereignty and authority of the First Nations, among the nations and within the church. This includes proactive support for the treaties and rights of the people of the land.

We must go further towards a repentant and renewed understanding of our Gospel mission in the world. The “modern age” of mission, begun in the occupation of the Americas, must give way to a church reshaped in its mission and its inner life; reshaped, as well, in its attitude and understanding of those who are marginal to its institutional existence: the poor, the outcast, the despised and the stranger.

My hope for this future is in the Gospel. Its power is evident even in the devastating recognition of our complicity with evil. We have sinned. However, the message is clearly greater than the messenger. This is the Good News found in all of the above. Use the Gospel to oppress, and you plant the seeds of freedom for the oppressed. Use the Gospel to control the natives, and you end up with Nelson Mandela.

It is commonplace to consider that the barriers to evangelism and church involvement are in the hearts of those outside our institutions. The matters at hand show the reality: the barriers are on our side of the Gospel. The barriers are in our hearts. This is true to the presentation of the Gospels themselves. Consider Jesus and the woman at the well, Phillip and the eunuch, and the Samaritan and the man robbed on the road to Jericho. Consider virtually any of the stories in the Gospel.

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The most troublesome barriers are on the side of the would-be evangelists. They still are today.

The Santa Fé Statement and the events of Canada's Synod are signposts on the way to a renewal of our true apostolic mission. We will find its first real moment

in our own engagement with the Gospel. Though we may be saddened by the occasion of these matters, let us rejoice in the opportunity it offers—true repentance, true life.

Mark MacDonald is Bishop of Alaska.

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I am the church

Gladys Cook of Portage La Prairie, elder of the Dakota Sioux people, holder of the Manitoba Premier's Award and of a Canada 125 medal, member of the Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples, remembers as a young woman being called a peacemaker, even though she felt herself filled with hate and anger.

"It shows how much I had learned to function without showing my true feelings," she says.

In 1934, before her fifth birthday, Gladys Cook was taken from her home, as so many other children were, and sent to the residential school at Elkhorn, Manitoba, where she was to spend twelve years, lose much of her culture, and be raped several times, the first time when she was nine years old.

Eight years ago, at an Elkhorn school reunion, she came face-to-face with one of the men who had raped her—and she forgave him.

Between the little girl sobbing on the bloodstained sheets, and the mature woman courageously extending a hand of forgiveness, lies a truly remarkable journey: marriage to an abusive, alcoholic man; a parting from him and work at menial jobs to support her children; confronting and struggling with alcohol; reconciliation, after almost two decades, with her husband (by then sober); and ultimately establishing, without formal training, a ground-breaking agency that would eventually become known as the National Native Alcohol and Drug Abuse Program.

While counseling Native people about alcohol and drug abuse, Gladys Cook became aware that many of them had been sexually abused as children. But she wasn't ready to deal with her own abuse, and so she turned many of them away.

It wasn't until 1988—forty years after she was first raped—that Cook sought therapy and began a process of healing. "It was like

I'd been living in a deep dark hole," she recalls. "I went to hell and back so many times—but every time I surfaced, I saw beauty.

"Through therapy, I began to see myself as a person. It made such a difference to me. And especially, it meant so much to my children. Before, I'd seen myself like a sergeant-major, raising them in the same kind of military style that I'd experienced in the school. Very quickly after I started therapy, I realized I didn't want that for them."

Gladys Cook has maintained a paradoxical relationship with the Anglican Church throughout her life. "It's very hard to connect God with anything that happened to me in residential school," she says. "My parents gave me the meaning of the Great Spirit, and I knew the Spirit was a support and comfort to me. The residential school's god was a mean and angry god.

"People say, 'The Anglican Church was so mean to you. Why do you keep coming back?' I tell them, 'I am the church.' But I've had lots of hate and anger inside me, and I don't want those things in my church. I have to help get rid of them."

A deeper exploration of native spiritual traditions has helped Cook reconcile traditional ways with a Christian faith. "Honesty and forgiveness are the two keys to my healing," she says. "Sometimes people say, 'I wish I had your calmness.' They don't know how hard I've worked at it."

Even to the point of taking the hand of a man who had raped her as a defenseless child and offering forgiveness. How is such forgiveness possible? Is it even desirable? Cook does not gloss over the effort it took her to reach out that day—so much so, that afterward, she had to be helped to her car. But she has no doubts that, for her, this was the right course.

"Immediately, I felt a new sense of freedom. I knew then that the Creator and I were walking hand in hand. But not just my Creator: everybody's Creator."

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