



ANGLICAN INDIGENOUS SACRED CIRCLE 2005: AUG 8

HONORING OUR RELATIONS: KEEPING THE SPIRIT ALIVE

We have come from great distances to the Wilderness Edge conference centre in Pinawa to honor our relations and keep the Spirit alive. A total of 132 people registered from 19 different dioceses across the Canadian

Anglican Church are gathered here for the Fifth Anglican Indigenous Sacred Circle. There are seven international guests, one member of the Indigenous Covenant Implementation Commission (ICIC) and one member of the Council of General Synod (CoGS).

Members started arriving Sunday evening and gathered under the main tent for a time of singing songs and sharing stories of hope.

Early Monday morning, Bill Cochrane, who is attending with his family from Peguis area, lit the sacred fire that will be kept lit until the gathering ends. Bob Smoker, elder from Kahkewistahaw First Nation in Saskatchewan, shared his vision of hope that came to him on the way to Pinawa.

In his vision, the elder saw in the East the hand of God, holding the seeds of new life. In the West he saw a bird with the branches of peace in its beak.

At the opening ceremonies, members of the Sacred Circle were welcomed by the Ven. Sidney Black and the Rev. Gloria Moses, co-chairs of the Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples (ACIP). The Rev. Ron Evans brought greetings from the people of the Saugeen First Nation, the territory on which the Sacred Circle is being held and the Diocese of Keewatin. The members of the Sacred Circle gave Rev. Evans a congratulatory applause for his election to the position

of Grand Chief of the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs (AMC).

In his message, the new AMC chief shared his story when he first experienced God's call as a young man. Instead, he became a truck driver for a time, not wanting ordination to interfere with his work and other opportunities. However, after sometime, he was ordained. It was an inspiring story of hope and responding to God's call.

The opening Eucharist was celebrated by the Most Rev. Andrew Hutchinson, who is attending his first Sacred Circle as Primate. In his message, the Primate honored the ministry of two former Primates, the Most Rev. Ted Scott and the Most Rev. Michael Peers for their commitment to indigenous Anglicans, Scott for his social justice ministry and land claims work and Peers for his apology to the indigenous Anglicans and support of the national native covenant. "I honor these two great leaders and their actions, and I will be faithful to their actions throughout this Primacy," he said.

The Primate noted that on his last trip to the Nass Valley, he was honored by the four tribes of the Nisgaa as an honorary chief. He was presented with the blanket and mitre that was originally presented to Archbishop Scott. Archbishop Hutchinson committed himself to the vision of the covenant. He also appointed Archbishop Terry Finlay as special envoy for indigenous affairs in this country.

"I commit myself to the vision of that covenant, which is self-determination for indigenous Anglicans. I want you to know that I will walk that journey with you."

After lunch, members of the Sacred Circle gathered in small discussion groups that went into the afternoon. Members from Ontario led evening prayers and the day concluded with a Gospel Music jamboree in the main tent.

DISCUSSION GROUPS

"I've come full circle now, I accept who I am. I have an identity."

-Blackfoot elder

"I believe in God and prayer 100 percent."

-member from Huron

"One thing hurts, that we don't have our language, I hope that one of these days I can learn."

-member from Rupert's Land.

WEATHER

Pleasant and sunny

ANIMAL SIGHTINGS

Bears, geese, skunk, deer, pigmy buffaloes (on the highway sign!!)

BIRTHDAYS

Congratulations to Darrylee Anderson, celebrating a birthday

YOUNGEST MEMBER

Marsha Nashaoraitook, born in Yellowknife June 13.

MEMORY KEEPERS

Alice Tooktoo

Erwin Oliver

Robert Pike

WHO'S HERE?

Not all who registered were able to attend. For example one person from the Central Interior broke her ankle the day of departure and a woman from Calgary broke her leg.

There are over a dozen youth from various dioceses, mainly from the west. The youngest participant, Marsha Nashaoraitook from Gjoa Haven, Nunavut, was born in Yellowknife 7 weeks ago on June 13. We've also seen several men in purple: our Primate Archbishop Andrew Hutchison, his special envoy, retired Archbishop Terry Finlay, Toronto; Rupert's Land Bishop Don Phillips, five bishops from the Council of the North, Arctic Bishop Andrew Atagotaaluk, Saskatchewan Bishop Tony Burton, Moosonee Archbishop Caleb Lawrence, Central Interior Bishop Gordon Light, Quebec Bishop Bruce Stavert, and visiting Alaska Bishop Mark MacDonald who is here with his family.

The participant who traveled the furthest is the Venerable Doctor Hone Kaa from Aotearoa, New Zealand.

YOUTH REPORT

The youth discussed their expectations of what they hoped to achieve here. They learned that the Bible was structured in different sections like a newspaper: law, history, poetry, prophecy, the gospels, early church history, letters and the book of Revelation written in code during a period of persecution. They talked of the importance of the Bible, how it affected them spiritually and how it guides their life.