

Primate’s Commission on Discovery, Reconciliation and Justice 2013-2019

Final Report to Council of General Synod, March 14, 2019

Final Report to General Synod, 2019 Vancouver

With particular heart-felt gratitude and appreciation to the Primate, Archbishop Fred Hiltz, and the National Indigenous Anglican Bishop, Bishop Mark MacDonald for their commitment in moving this work forward

* honouring the blessed memory of our co-Chair Archbishop Terry Finlay, 2013-2018, with respect for his wisdom, humility and courage, his wit and his gracious and steadfast presence

*with gratitude and appreciation for our members of this commission over the years especially our co-chair and Elder, the Rev Canon Andrew Wesley (Toronto)

and our faithful and committed Commission members:

Verna Firth (Inuvik)

Dixie Bird (Montreal Lake)

the Rev Canon Laverne Jacobs (Walpole Island)

John Bird (Peterborough)

Jennifer Henry (KAIROS, Toronto),

the Very Rev Jonas Alloo (Iqaluit)

the Rev Janaki Bandara (Evangelical Lutheran Church In Canada, ecumenical partner, Six Nations & Cambridge)

Bishop Lydia Mamakwa (Indigenous Spiritual Ministry of Mishamakweesh, Kingfisher Lake)

the Rev Amos Winter (Kingfisher Lake)

the Rev Stan McKay (United Church of Canada, ecumenical partner, Winnipeg)

Sol Sanderson (Prince Albert)

Bud Smith (British Columbia)

Bishop Sidney Black (Siksika, Alberta)

Ellie Johnson (Oakville)

Bishop Riscylla Shaw (co-chair, Whitby)

*with gratitude and appreciation for the members of Church House staff and Indigenous Ministries staff,

the Rev Canon Ginny Doctor

Teresa Mandricks

Melanie Delva

Looking at our accomplishments: **we put WORDS into ACTION!!**

- raised the profile and awareness of Indigenous ministries & reconciliation work across the Anglican Church of Canada, including promotion of
 - ✓ acknowledgement of territory
 - ✓ blanket exercises
 - ✓ litany of reconciliation “We are still here” for National Indigenous Day resources
 - ✓ increased devotion to and fluency with Gospel-Based Discipleship
 - ✓ strengthened connection with Indigenous communities in British Columbia, Six Nations, Walpole Island, Winnipeg, Pinawa etc.

- educational brochures:
 - ✓ an introductory look at Doctrine of Discovery
 - ✓ the 94 Calls to Action coming out of the Canadian Truth and Reconciliation Commission on Indian Residential Schools
 - ✓ United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, a global document
 - ✓ Royal Proclamation

- established the National Church job description & hired for the position of Reconciliation Animator (thank you Melanie Delva for your ministry in this, and for being a shining light in this role)
- established grounds for and working to animate the Jubilee Commission (with gratitude to Council of General Synod for your endorsement in moving this forward)
- supporting response to TRC-Call to Action 48 in work connected to reconciliation with the Vision Keepers (Council of Elders and Youth, as established at General Synod 2016)
- walking alongside the Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples (ACIP) and the National Indigenous Anglican Bishop, Bishop Mark Macdonald, to support and help work through different processes leading towards the self-determining Indigenous Church within the umbrella of the Anglican Church of Canada
- early in our formation, we wrote a Call to the Church to continue to engage in reconciliation and justice work

- several articles written by John Bird, submitted to Anglican Journal and on Facebook – “Spirited Reflection: From the Doctrine of Discovery to the killing of Colten Boushie”, “Acknowledging Territory: A step along the decolonization road”, and a book review on Unsettling the Word
- Primate’s Commission Facebook page and Web Page on the Anglican Church of Canada’s website <https://www.anglican.ca/primate/tfc/drj/>
- the Commission met twice a year for the past six years,(the General Synod mandate from 2013 was extended from General Synod 2016 to General Synod 2019), and took part in two Sacred Circles (2015 at Port Elgin and 2018 at Prince George)
- We put words into action, through seeing the growth of people in the members’ communities and beyond, across the church, and in calling the church to action over this period of six years together.
- there has been a deepening spirituality within the Commission as a result of our collective work – a strengthening together on the road to reconciliation and right relationships, a creation of sacred space within each and all of our meetings.
- The work on peeling back the layers of camouflage on the insidious and ongoing operations of the Doctrine of Discovery within our church and civil society has had an enormous impact –
 - opening non-indigenous eyes to see that First Nations, Inuit and Metis peoples are humans, have feelings, aspirations, are entitled to self-determination
 - opening indigenous eyes – for example, to the urgency of keeping language in communities and in church
- Doctrine of Discovery film – released! and study guide initiated, with anticipation of wide broadcast across the church and in ecumenical, interfaith and civil circles
 - work being done on several study guides from differing perspectives – i.e. indigenous, non-indigenous

Forward Looking:

- there is gradually more understanding and awareness, as a result of our work, for example in Indigenous experience and cultural practices.

However – we need to establish ever deeper and broader understanding, including Inuit and Metis experiences

- a key piece of work will be in Educating First Nations, Inuit and Metis communities on the Doctrine of Discovery - communities that, like non-indigenous, do not necessarily realize the ongoing influence of the Doctrine of Discovery in their daily lives
- a long-term piece of work, is in the creative journey of support and encouragement for individuals to get to know their own family culture, traditions and practices – recognizing that the Doctrine of Discovery has established a “dominant culture” – it has colonized all cultures in their practices, whether settler or indigenous, with the outcome being that many people are rootless in their own culture-of-origin
- recognizing our similarities in who we are as followers of Jesus and the Gospel, and realizing that our own good cultural heritage also contributes to healthy spirituality
(we are able to appreciate someone else’s culture if we know our own)

Things left undone & ongoing:

- languages to be learned
- understandings to be fostered between settler, Indigenous and newcomers – both history, and being the future together
- self-determination
- Bringing forward a Motion to General Synod, to establish a permanent working group on Reconciliation. The goal of the animation group/small working committee, would be a standing, supported Anglican country wide network of Indigenous and non-Indigenous folks working together, denominationally and ecumenically, for reconciliation.
(this is very different from the important monitoring role taken on by the Vision Keepers)

see wording below:

Background

Established in 2013, the Primate's Commission on Discovery, Reconciliation, and Justice contributed to the Anglican Church of Canada's ongoing response to the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*. Comprised of First Nations, Inuit, Métis and non-Indigenous Anglicans, and ecumenical partners, the Commission was tasked with reviewing church structures and policies to identify and seek ways to dismantle the Doctrine of Discovery; create a plan for reconciliation; and address injustices in and towards Indigenous communities. The Commission also supported the Anglican Church of Canada actions towards implementation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission 94 Calls to Action. The Commission's mandate comes to an end at General Synod 2019, however it is clear that the work of truth-telling, justice-seeking and reconciliation is ongoing and must continue to involve the whole church. National coordination and support is required for important diocesan/regional reconciliation efforts to enable cross church connections and help contribute Anglican presence in ecumenical initiatives.

Motion:

Be it resolved that the General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada establish a Committee to strategize and guide the ongoing work of truth, justice, and reconciliation, including building and supporting a network of Ambassadors for Reconciliation from Dioceses and Regions.

Mover: the Rev Canon Norm Wesley

Seconder: the Right Rev Bruce Myers

respectfully submitted by the Right Rev Riscylla Shaw