

Some Initial Thoughts about the Concepts to be Developed
for the Structure of the National Indigenous Ministry
following the Sacred Circle 2015

Background

1. The Covenant was issued by representatives of the indigenous people in 1994 to call for "a new, self-determining community within the Anglican Church of Canada". (See Attachment A.)
2. General Synod 1995 responded by passing a resolution to affirm the Covenant, anticipating that in the "journey together new structures and forms will emerge" that "will enable and express our commonality in Christ". (See Attachment A.)
3. In 2005, Sacred Circle issued the Pinawa Declaration which called for 15 aboriginal bishops to be appointed within a year.
4. In 2007, General Synod appointed the first National Indigenous Anglican Bishop.
5. At the initiative of the Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples in consultation with the Governance Working Group, General Synod 2010 enacted Canon XXII entitled "The National Indigenous Ministry" and related amendments to the Constitution. General Synod 2013 enacted amendments to Canon XXII at the request of ACIP.
6. The Mississauga Declaration was issued in 2011. It referred to the continuing crisis in indigenous communities, and the need for action:

... to reaffirm our sovereign identity as the people of the Land and to revive, renew and reclaim the ministries in our communities. Empowered in faith, we will live and work to overcome the crisis that brings overwhelming death to the peoples of this land.
7. At the Council of General Synod meetings in November 2014 and May 2015, the Indigenous House of Bishops' Leadership Circle presented a document entitled "Where We Are Today: Twenty Years after the Covenant, and Indigenous Call to the Wider Church—2014". This document identified some next steps toward the development of the indigenous community's self-determination within the Anglican Church of Canada. These steps included:

- the development of a plan for the communities of the Anglican Indigenous Ministries and the Anglican Church of Canada to walk together.
 - a process of consultation to develop a plan for Indigenous ministry across the whole church
 - the development of new forms of governance and relationships that reflect Indigenous cultural understandings and practices in a Biblical and Christian framework
 - an evaluation of the ways that money is spent in the name of Indigenous ministry
 - the development of a plan for an effective, just and sustainable sharing of resources—giving Indigenous people the leadership over the planning, use, and accountability of their own resources.
8. The Officers of General Synod met with the Indigenous House of Bishops' Leadership Circle in May 2015, and has committed to meeting the day before each COGS meeting to discuss how to address these concerns.
9. At the Sacred Circle meeting in August 2015, there was a presentation by Sol Sanderson entitled "National Indigenous Ministry and the 5th Province of the Anglican Church of Canada". [Attachment B]

The organizing concept

10. Organizing concept: the development of a structure for the National Indigenous Ministry that is self-governing within the Anglican Church of Canada.

Sacred Circle 2015

11. I understand Sacred Circle 2015 to have called for:
- the ability of the National Indigenous Ministry to be self-governing without needing to go to General Synod to amend Canon XXII
 - to achieve this by the creation of a fifth province for the National Indigenous Ministry

- this would create the creation of an indigenous "Primate" with jurisdiction
- the "Primate" would be different from the National Indigenous Anglican Bishop, whose role would need to be re-thought
- the removal of the 9-year term limit for the National Indigenous Anglican Bishop.
- the extension of the term of some or all of the members of the Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples.
- the development of a "Constitution of the Anglican Indigenous Church and the Sacred Circle of the National Church of Canada".

Current structural features of Canon XXII

12. Current structural features of the National Indigenous Ministry include:

- Canon XXII of General Synod, which contains a bare-bones structure for the National Indigenous Ministry, and which can only be amended by General Synod
- The National Indigenous Anglican Bishop, who is a staff member of General Synod located at Church House, and who has a pastoral relationship with indigenous peoples throughout the Anglican Church of Canada, but does not have any "jurisdiction". Canon XXII provides how a future National Indigenous Anglican Bishop will be selected. Canon XXII also provides for a 9-year term for the National Indigenous Anglican Bishop holding office, though the incumbent may be selected for a further term.¹
- The Sacred Circle as the "synod" of the National Indigenous Ministry. Canon XXII provides how future members of Sacred Circle will be selected.

1. The term limit was included in Canon XXII at the request of ACIP. A term limit for bishops is unusual (but not without precedent: the Diocese of Kootenay has a similar provision). Removing the term limit could be accomplished by one session of General Synod amending Canon XXII to remove this provision.

- The Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples as the "executive committee" of the National Indigenous Ministry. Canon XXII provides how future members of ACIP will be selected.
13. Canon XXII does not speak to finances. Financing for indigenous ministry currently comes almost totally from the budget of General Synod, and a major portion of that comes through the Council of the North (which might not be perceived as being specifically or exclusively for indigenous ministry). Other finances come through diocesan initiatives for ministry to indigenous peoples within their respective dioceses.
 14. Canon XXII does not define the extent of the national indigenous ministry. In particular, there may be concerns that certain areas or groups are not being included, and that urban indigenous ministry is a challenge.

The concept of an ecclesiastical province

15. By definition, an ecclesiastical province consists of a grouping of dioceses (traditionally at least four in number) which are geographically contiguous. 1 Membership of a diocese in one province is mutually exclusive to membership in another province.
16. This definition makes it difficult to conceive of the National Indigenous Ministry as a province because:
 - There is only one indigenous diocese: Mishamikoweesh. While other dioceses have a significant indigenous population (for example, the Arctic, Saskatchewan, ACIP, Moosonee), they also have significant non-indigenous populations.
 - The National Indigenous Ministry is not composed solely of dioceses—a significant aspect of it embraces ministry to indigenous people at the parish or congregational level, including urban indigenous ministry.
 - Further, when the former Governance Working Group was working with ACIP to create the two iterations of Canon XXII, it was clear that at least some members of the indigenous community did not wish to leave their existing diocese in order to have a relationship with the National Indigenous Bishop or the National Indigenous Ministry.

17. When the Indigenous Leadership Circle met with the Officers in May 2015, they recognized this aspect of the indigenous ministry, and described their proposed structure as an "Association" or a "Confederacy".² It should be possible to create such a structure, make it self-governing, and give it constitutional status within the Anglican Church of Canada. It might also be possible to give it status equivalent to an ecclesiastical province, and to give the title "Archbishop" to the head of that structure and include that person with the Metropolitans of the four existing ecclesiastical provinces.

Aspects that would need to be addressed by the creation of a self-governing structure for the National Indigenous Ministry

18. The following aspects would need to be addressed:
- i) In order to achieve self-governance, Canon XXII would need to be amended to provide (for example) that Sacred Circle itself may amend the provisions for the election of the National Indigenous Anglican Bishop (or Archbishop—or both, if there are separate functions), the Sacred Circle, and the members of the Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples. A model is contained in Canon XVI which authorized the creation of the Provincial Synod of British Columbia, putting in place the draft constitution which they had developed which included provisions for future amendments by the Provincial Synod (instead of General Synod). Effectively, the General Synod canon is just a place holder that creates that self-governing Province within the national Church. Following this model, it would be helpful if the Sacred Circle could develop its own draft constitution which could be put in place by General Synod amending Canon XXII.
 - ii) There would need to be clarity that the head of a self-governing National Indigenous Ministry *within* the Anglican Church of Canada cannot be a "Primate". There is only one Primate in our polity, and that person is elected by General Synod which is comprised of delegates from all component units of the national church. The object is not to create a Church which is separate from the Anglican Church of Canada, but for there to be a self-governing entity *within* the Anglican Church of Canada.
 - 6 iii) There would need to be clarity about the role of the National Indigenous Anglican Bishop. Currently, the NIAB is a member of the staff of the national

2. Other terms to describe such a structure might be an "Ordinariate" or an "Eparchy".

church. If the National Indigenous Ministry is to become a self-governing part of the national church, it would not seem to make sense for the position of the NIAB to continue as a staff member of the national church, but rather to be contained within the self-governing structure of the National Indigenous Ministry

- iv) There also would need to be clarity about whether the National Indigenous Anglican Bishop and the "Archbishop" of the National Indigenous Ministry are to be the same person. If not, there would need to be clarity about the relationship between the two.
 - v) There would need to be clarity about finances. How is the new self-governing entity going to be financed? Self-governance implies self-finance. Is the National Indigenous Ministry able to raise sufficient funds to finance its operations? If not, how will financing occur, and who needs to be involved in those discussions?
 - vi) It seems likely that there will need to be discussions about the current financial arrangements for the Council of the North----in particular, about whether that portion of their grants which is for indigenous ministry should be redirected to the National Indigenous Ministry. Such discussions will have to include all of the stakeholders.
 - vii) There will need to be clarity around jurisdiction, authority and potential liability if the concept of "dual citizenship" or "dual membership" is developed further to allow congregations (or other sub-diocesan units) to have a relationship both with their current diocese and the National Indigenous Ministry.
 - viii) There will need to be clarity about the process by which particular groups decide whether they will become part of the National Indigenous Ministry structure.
19. There needs to be an inventory of the issues facing indigenous people, including identifying priorities, in order to cross-check how and whether the proposed structure and other parts of the Church can most effectively meet those needs and priorities.
20. Timing and process:
- Identify any items which can go to General Synod 2016 (example: deleting the provision in Canon XXII about the nine-year term limit for the National

Indigenous Anglican Bishop, and perhaps amending the three-year term limit for some or all of the members of ACIP). The resolution about these items will need to be dealt with by COGS at the March 2016 meeting. How are these items to be identified, and who will have carriage of getting them to COGS?

- Identify items which will need more time to develop and the process to be used for developing them.
 - Care must be taken to ensure that future steps are (a) "owned" by the indigenous community as a whole, (b) not imposed from outside, and (c) are being consistent with the structure of the Anglican Church of Canada as a whole.
 - Carry on with the conversations between the Indigenous House of Bishops' Leadership Circle and the Officers before each COGS meeting? Establish a smaller working group for this task, that could meet more frequently?
21. One further concern might arise at the General Synod level if additional indigenous bishoprics are created. Currently, all serving bishops are members of the Order of Bishops at General Synod. Along with the other two Orders, the consent of the Order of Bishops is required in order for any resolution to be passed at General Synod. Apart from additional expense, the expansion of membership in the Order of Bishops from a particular constituency might cause concern about changing the voting balance in General Synod. Such a concern might be addressed by changes to the constitution of General Synod to provide that not all serving bishops are voting members of General Synod (with some method to determine which are and which are not). This could generate a broader debate that might or might not be controversial.

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