

## **1<sup>st</sup> Diocesan Indigenous Justice Circle held Wed. January 13, 2016**

During the first Diocesan Indigenous Justice Circle at the Synod conference hall in Shaughnessy, we addressed the **Truth & Reconciliation Commission's "94 Calls to Action"**, listened to First Nations' elders, brainstormed, learned much, networked, and started to "build relations" with our aboriginal sisters and brothers. Fifty people of varying ages, including elders and members of the Tsleil-Waututh, Musqueam, and Squamish First Nations, Bishop Melissa Skelton and several clergy came together from 10:00 am to 3:00 pm.

We were invited to choose two issues from the 33 listed below we would like to personally get involved in. Those interested in coming on-board, or attending the 2<sup>nd</sup> Diocesan Indigenous Justice Circle on Wed. May 25, can contact Monica Gibson-Pugsley at [mgp2000@shaw.ca](mailto:mgp2000@shaw.ca)

### **INDIGENOUS JUSTICE ISSUES (in random order):**

1. TRUTH & RECONCILIATION (TRC)
2. TRC SUMMARY REPORT & CALLS TO ACTION
3. MISSING AND MURDERED INDIGENOUS WOMEN
4. INDIGENOUS EDUCATION
5. INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE
6. INDIGENOUS WORLDVIEW SPIRITUALITY & CULTURE PRACTICES
7. ROYAL COMMISSION ON INDIGENOUS PEOPLES IN CANADA
8. FORMATION ANGLICAN INDIGENOUS ADVISORY COUNCIL
9. INDIGENOUS INCARCERATION ISSUES
10. ANTI-RACISM ADVOCACY/TRAINING
11. ABORIGINAL CHILD & FAMILY
12. INDIGENOUS YOUTH
13. ABORIGINAL RIGHTS & TITLE/ SOVEREIGNTY
14. DOWNTOWN EASTSIDE
15. INDIGENOUS POVERTY
16. ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE/RESOURCE EXTRACTION
17. LGBTQ/TWO-SPIRITED ADVOCACY
18. HOUSING/CLEAN & SAFE DRINKING WATER
19. ANGLICAN COUNCIL OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES (ACIP)
20. SACRED CIRCLE (ACIP)
21. FIRST NATIONS/PARISH COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
22. MISSIONS & MISSIONAL PRAXIS ISSUES
23. SALAL & CEDAR (ECO-JUSTICE FAITH COMMUNITY)
24. URBAN NATIVE MINISTRIES (St Georges, Vancouver)
25. INTER-FAITH DIALOGUE
26. DOCTRINE OF DISCOVERY – ongoing Anglican repudiation 2010

27. U.N. DECLARATION ON THE RIGHTS AND TITLE OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES
28. MISSING/DECEASED INDIAN RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL CHILDREN
29. INDIGENOUS HEALTH & PREVENTION STRATEGIES
30. EDUCATION OF CHURCHES re: Indigenous issues/world
31. COMMEMORATION (plaque, garden, foundation, on Diocesan property)
32. 50-60's SCOOP OF INDIGENOUS CHILDREN BY SOCIAL SERVICES INTO FOSTER/ADOPTION
33. INTER-DENOMINATIONAL TRUTH & RECONCILIATION WALKING

**'Indigenous Justice Circle' Notes (how do we respond or implement the 'Calls to Action').**

**Here is a synopsis:**

- Invite Indigenous elders/other speakers to come speak in parishes. Pass on information using social media. A need to educate non-indigenous people.
- theme of education is huge in the summary report
- education for every part of our society
- it is almost overwhelming
- not achievable in one or two sessions
- not something we achieve quickly or easily
- has to become part of our daily life
- who will tell the story?
- inviting teachers to the longhouse to learn
- people are hungry to help
- come through the doors that are open
- a will to survive, rise above painful experiences and thrive
- education for churches
- we all have a responsibility
- how can Indigenous spirituality become part of our life as a church?
- "Healing Circle", "We were children" video resources
- go to healing gatherings
- gift offering protocols
- spiritual violence in residential schools
- experiencing Indigenous practices/spirituality
- not "other" but "we" in our approach and word usage
- wide variety of emotions
- not be overwhelmed by them but bring our curiosity as how to respond
- children are valuable for their childhood not just as future adults
- generational trauma
- visits to Indigenous communities
- build monument or plaque to commemorate survivors
- Where are we inter-generationally?
- who will lead this (TRC) **should be at the foundation of every church - total commitment?**
- finding the people who will and can do this work is challenging on many levels
- issues of recognizing allies- do we have allies and can we recognize who they are?

- what can we do now?
- multi-generational intergenerational problem means we must have a gentle approach
- overwhelming need to listen/ focus attention on TRC 'Calls to Action'
- **what are we going to do as individuals ourselves – what is our role, commitment & ability?**
- encouraged by the inclusion of the church and other institutions
- need for accountability
- how do we get information about residential schools survivors who did not live, eg; cemetery Records for them not always available?
- how do we deal with resistance –hard issues and possible confrontation?
- what are our priorities/ the big picture?
- criminalizing health issues such as FAS\_(Fetal Alcohol Syndrome) in our justice system
- this is a bureaucratic document – it is a good effort but not clear about what it means
- where does our focus lie and where do we start?
- **this is a step in the right direction but we still need 'restitution'**
- major restructuring at the governmental level is needed
- lots of measureable outcomes that can seem cold. Need to assess needs of communities and work from the heart
- mental / physical sides are addressed in the document but **how do we not forget the spiritual and emotional side?**
- how do we mesh together modern medicine with traditional medicine/healing practices? Could we not all benefit from traditional Indigenous healing practices?
- **How to come together without reactivating trauma associated with colonization? Without appropriation? Is the dominant culture going to do more harm?**
- How do two world views come together without butting heads?
- **It is about respect, listening without imposing, but being in a posture of learning.**
- **Importance of the 'United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples'. Make it part of our "mission statement"**
- Importance of cultural aspects in the Child Welfare system. Is there a "good" way for a non-Native family to adopt an Indigenous child? Is there a way to do it in an empowering way that comes from a place of love?
- How do we make the transition to cultural appropriate child placement?
- many 'Calls' for the government to implement but we need to remember we are the government as people, and need to continue pressure and support
- **every Canadian can participate**
- A 'National Council of Reconciliation' to be set up to guide how this happens
- **Education is something everyone can commit to**
- choices we make affects the process regarding what we give in \$, time, talent
- we now have a new government with new opportunities
- **we must keep moving forward – this is not just a one-time event**
- begin with relationships
- go beyond knowledge and information towards relationship, **getting to know and building trust**
- **we cannot do everything but we can do something .**
- realize we will not do it perfectly

- truth telling is ongoing. **The stories still need to be told, they are also evolving, alive, and a part of all of us**
- what does redress, reparations look like? Re: un-ceded and stolen Indigenous lands and their rights and title?
- It is about LAND. Where is that addressed in the 'Calls to Action'? **What about the repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery** for example?
- The need to be thinking and acting through Indigenous laws, protocols, and traditions.
- Life time of healing for next generation, family, church family and culture to address feelings of anger – so as not to shut down or hide our feelings as survivors; to break the cycle
- these are deep issues with survivors of personal reconciliation
- what are our legal responsibilities?
- Indian Residential School survivors and the church are both wounded and need healing
- survivors are still asking personal questions of identity and healing - “where do I come from?”
- there is a big need to save and reclaim native languages as part of healing and identity loss

**What can we do to help?**