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THE COVENANT  
AND  
OUR WAY OF LIFE

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# OUR WAY OF LIFE

## AN OVERVIEW

*Our Way of Life* is a document outlining the fundamentals of the Indigenous Anglican church. We have always been spiritual, living under a Creator, and we continue to live into how we walk with Christ through expression in this document, *Our Way of Life*. It summarizes our holy journey to re-experience Christ as our ancestors did in the early days of Christianity in North America when our traditional beliefs, culture and spirituality and economic systems were strong and many of our ancestors initially welcomed Christ into their lives in that context. This document is a manifestation of our own journey to decolonize euro-centric Anglicanism so that we can live out our beliefs on our own cultural and linguistic terms and move forward more confidently on our journey of healing, reconciliation and justice.

*Our Way of Life* outlines how we as Indigenous Anglicans choose to encounter the living Christ today. It outlines our relationships with each other and with the Creator, combining the real and symbolic ways of our ancestors – through the circle of life where all creation is related and living a ‘good life’ means keeping human existence and all of Creation in balance with the natural and spiritual world – and combining the traditional teachings of our Ancestors with earlier, more accessible principles of Anglicanism.

While we have encountered challenges in the drafting of this document due differences in our own cultures and meaning of words in our own languages, we have strived for a level of consensus and commonality applicable to all Indigenous Anglicans. It must be understood that we initially experienced God through our own languages, cultures and worldview. For example, in Cree, God the Creator means ‘*The One Who Made Everything*’; there is no word for ‘reconciliation’ in Inuktitut as behaviours/relationships dwelt only in the realms of partnership, friendship and inclusion; important ceremony included traditional regalia; kinship meant all of Our Relatives including animals, birds, creatures of the waters and spirits; in Cree the concept of ‘authority’ does not imply hierarchy but rather means only that it is conferred by others, often just for a period of time.

*Our Way of Life* is not about going back to an idealized time in our history. Rather, we are reclaiming what was dispossessed from us and what the Creator called us to be. We are coming home. We have tried to

identify what we as Indigenous Peoples remember and recall through our Elders and stories. We all agree that, by and large, there is a strong correspondence between our traditional spiritualities and biblical theology, with our Creator being the God and Living Christ of the Bible. The Christian teachings and values resonated strongly with us. While we have different cultural ways and languages across the Lands and Waters, we all share a traditional belief that we must live in harmony. Living together in harmony means living out the Sacred Teachings that we have in common:

- Trusting, respectful relationships that recognize that conflict is a natural, normal fact of life as we strive to rebalance harmony (we used such ways as talking circles; loving shaming; 'giveaways' of gifts to others; Elder listening to both sides and offering wisdom to make peace; processes of making 'treaties' either as individuals or nations; adoption of Relatives, etc.). But ultimately forgiveness was necessary for harmony to prevail within communities. The making of Relatives with each other was essential despite our conflicts.
- The wisdom of leadership that is vested in our wise Elders.
- Taking responsibility for each other.
- Living out our Indigenous humanity.
- Using honourably the gifts that were conveyed to each of us by the Creator.
- Walking in each other's shoes instead of judging.
- Consensus in decision-making.
- Living in balance with the *whole* of creation.
- And finally, placing the Gospel is the centre of our Circle.

We are blessed that the concept of the circle of life has survived and continues to resonate strongly for us as a way of coming together in full relationship and Communion with each other. It is both symbolic and real for us. We believe fully that the power of our faith is expressed when we gather, as two or three with Christ, in Sacred Circle.

Ultimately, colonization was a painful, destructive experience for us. The Christian God initially welcomed by some, rejected by others or imposed through indoctrination as wards of the Crown, seemed to turn against us. We witnessed and endured abuse and were confused that the actions of God's people did not correspond to our reading and the teachings of the Gospel. But the light of Christ ultimately shone through for us, and we are living proof today of our adherence to a faith that has sustained us throughout the process of colonization. That is why we always place the Gospel at the centre of our circle to begin our gatherings within the Sacred Circle. It is about our commitment, responsibility and hope that we can

help each other and other Indigenous Peoples to encounter the Living Christ in the spirit of Grace that we were denied for so long.

*Our Way of Life* is a living document. We recognize that it represents only the journey of decolonization of those of us gathered in Circle in recent years. While we have tried to garner the stories and insights of our Elders in producing this document, we recognize that it represents only the personal journeys of today's Sacred Circle members – our children and subsequent generations will continue the healing and reconciliation journey that we have begun, and this document will evolve through them.

We welcome the Anglican Church of Canada's support for our journey to help us to heal and to reconcile by embracing our traditional practices and spirituality as an integral part of Canadian Anglicanism. This document represents our determination to move forward with the blessing of and solidarity with the broader Anglican church. But self-determination is a journey, a process, and we seek patience and understanding from our non-Indigenous Relatives that this will take time. It is vitally important to understand that we as Indigenous Anglicans are still seeking to reveal our own spirituality and relationships in governing ourselves first before considering welcoming non-Indigenous people into Sacred Circle or our ceremonial gatherings.

We do welcome the opportunity to share many of our Indigenous traditions with the broader church and believe that we can advance reconciliation by sharing our philosophy of life, spiritual practices and stories with the rest of the church. We intend to develop tools to do that in due course. But we are fewer and look forward to welcoming non-Indigenous bridge-builders and all our Anglican 'Relatives' to help and support our journey in Indigenous ministry.





# THE COVENANT

## GATHERING PRAYER

*Creator, we give you thanks for all you are and all you bring to us for our visit within your creation. In Jesus, you place the Gospel in the Centre of this Sacred Circle through all of which all creation is related. You show us the way to live a generous and compassionate life. Give us your strength to live together with respect and commitment as we grow in your spirit, for you are God, now and forever. Amen.*

## THE VISION

We, the Indigenous Anglicans of Canada, proclaim our self-determination and seek to improve the quality of the spiritual, emotional, physical and mental life for all Indigenous Anglicans. We especially promote healing from our historical trauma that stems from Canadian colonization and oppression. We strive to live this out in community where we seek God's healing for our lives and of God's reconciling love for us, our community and within Creation. We want to walk together as a fully Indigenous expression and self-determining Christian community which respects the teachings (which are anchored and connected to Scripture) and practices of our local Elders.

To work toward healing, reconciliation, decolonization, individual and systemic racism, we strive to be followers of Jesus through Gospel Based Discipleship. At the centre of our vision of ministry is the good news found and proclaimed in Christ. Jesus is the cornerstone and centre of our personal and collective life. Through Jesus we receive, proclaim, and live the Word made flesh in Indigenous communities, families, and lifeways so that the circle of wholeness and just, equitable and right relationships can be restored.

# OUR FOUNDATION – THE COVENANT OF 1994

## A Covenant and our Journey of Spiritual Renewal

We, the indigenous partners in Canada of the Anglican communion respectfully affirm our place in God's Creation and in God's Love, manifest through the Grace of Jesus Christ. In specific, we address the Anglican Canadians with whom we are in direct communion.

We have shared a journey of close to three centuries in which we have been:

- I. denied our place in God's Creation
- II. denied our rights as Children of God
- III. treated as less than equal, and
- IV. subjected to abuse, culturally, physically, emotionally, sexually and spiritually.

The result, in our communities, homes and daily lives, has been and continues to be:

- broken homes and lives;
- sexual and family violence;
- high recidivism and incarceration rates;
- high chemical abuse;
- loss of spiritual fulfillment;
- loss of cultures, languages and traditions; and
- poor stewardship of Mother Earth.

Because the National church's canons, structure and policies have not always responded to our needs nor heard our voice, we now claim our place and responsibility as equal partners in a new shared journey of healing, moving towards wholeness and justice.

We acknowledge that God is calling us to a prayerful dialogue towards self-determination for us, the Indigenous People, within the Anglican Communion in Canada. Through this new relationship we can better respond to the challenges facing us in a relevant and meaningful way.

As faithful people of God, guided by the Holy Spirit, we invite you, the Anglican Communion of Canada to covenant with us, the Indigenous Anglicans of Canada, in our vision of a new and enriched journey.



## A COVENANT

We, representatives of the Indigenous people of the Anglican Church of Canada, meeting in Winnipeg from the 23 to 26 of April, 1994, pledge ourselves to this covenant for the sake of our people and in trust of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ:

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.  
Amen.

*Donna Bomberg*  
*Wesley Waples*  
*Oliver Egan*  
*Rev. Lily Bell*  
*Quekay McKay Misgaxi*  
*Vi Samaha*  
*Samuel Ayala*  
*Joe Nteta*  
*Murray Murt*  
*Hina Durrant*  
*John T. Quekay*  
*Mark Royal*  
*Etienne Wesel*

*Laura Jans*  
*Barbara Harmon*  
*Ed. Price*  
*Wilfred S. Brown*  
*Morris Fiddler*  
*Rev. Margaret Waterbury*  
*Arthur Robinson*  
*Gladya Cook*

[see original signature page, Appendix 1]

## OUR RULE OF LIFE

Creator God we acknowledge and give thanks that:

In Jesus we know we belong to a Sacred Circle with the Gospel and Baptismal Covenant in the Center

In this Sacred Circle:

- We are all related.
- We live a compassionate and generous life.
- We respect all life, traditions, and resources.
- We commit ourselves to spiritual growth, discipleship, and consensus

## OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES

1. To regularly engage the Gospel
2. To take seriously our own spiritual formation
3. To nurture and foster the spiritual formation of others.
4. To live the Baptismal Covenant
5. To live as a community of disciples
6. To foster reconciliation, healing, and vision
7. To pray and worship regularly
8. To respect the spiritual traditions, values, and customs of our many peoples.
9. To take full responsibility for our local ministries

## OTHER ELEMENTS OF OUR FOUNDATION

### I. Our Foundation of Faith

- A. The foundation of our faith is Jesus Christ, who we confess is the Messiah and the Son of the Living God.
- B. Our faith is built upon our living experience of Jesus, both as the personal Saviour of each of us, individually, and the Saviour of our People, communally. Jesus is saving us from those who would annihilate us, promising us restoration, freedom, and peace. It is our joyful task to follow Jesus as disciples and see his death and resurrection give our various peoples humanity, life, and hope, renewing the face of the Land towards the return of Jesus, bringing with him a New Heaven and a New Earth.

- C. We hold dear and believe the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. We believe and declare that they are the Word of God and that they contain all things necessary to salvation.
- D. We believe, teach, and proclaim the creed of our baptism, The Apostles' Creed, and we believe, teach, and proclaim the Nicene Creed as the standard of our faith. We urge every community to translate these into their own languages.
- E. We adopt the doctrine, discipline, and worship that is shared in the values, principles, ideals, and practices of the Anglican Communion as exemplified in the Book of Common Prayer of 1962, the Book of Alternative Services of 1983, and the various forms of the Book of Common Prayer that have been developed among our Peoples through local authority. Our life as Sacred Circle is dedicated to this practice and teaching, and we see it as an essential part of the making of disciples.

We encourage our various Peoples to develop their own liturgies and prayer books in their local languages, each as may be best for their ministry. We are committed to the Book of Common Prayer and the Book of Alternative Services, as they preserve so much of the ancient pattern of the Early Church and are, at the same time, so agreeable to our ancient Indigenous patterns of prayer, offering, and worship. The various versions of the Book of Common Prayer that have guided our people in the past, along with the Book of Alternative Services, provide a beginning point and a model as we shape the liturgies and life of the Peoples of the Sacred Circle.

- F. We do not claim sovereignty or authority over the foundation of our faith. It is a gift that we receive with humility, gratitude, and reverence. We believe that it is our Sacred duty to interpret this foundation of faith and live it faithfully in the languages and ways of our Peoples from now until Christ returns. We do, however, claim sovereignty and authority over any changes, deletions, or additions to this foundation. Under the judgement and mercy of God, we declare that this is our task, and ours alone, to oversee and guard this foundation for the Sacred Circle.
- G. Our faith is revealed and understood only through loving practice. This foundation is something we live through our Baptismal Covenant. Traditional teachings of our Indigenous Elders are a dear part of the life and culture in which the Word becomes flesh. The traditional teachings and values of our various peoples help us to see the depths

of God's Word. The wisdom of the past is something that we must have to proclaim God's Word to our families, to all Nations and Peoples, and to all of Creation.

## **II. Our Relation to the Land and Each Other in Christ**

Our individual Nations are built on relationships where everyone within the nation and all things throughout the Land and Waters are treated as relatives. We now become a Sacred Circle, through Christ, where our relationship to the Land and Waters and our way of being Nations is a guide and pattern for our discipleship, fellowship, and unity.

## **III. Where Two or Three are Gathered**

In the past, we were told that spiritual authority came from somewhere else, from across the waters. We were told that we must become like someone else to have that authority. Today, we know that authority comes from the presence of the Risen Christ (Matthew 18:20), wherever two or three are gathered in his Name. Upon this power and authority, the Sacred Circle is founded. Wherever two or three are gathered in the name of Jesus, he is there, the Sacred Circle is there and all that is needed to provide hope and healing is there.

## **IV. Gospel Based Discipleship**

Gospel Based Discipleship (GBD), as it is found in a basic way in the Disciple's Prayer Book, has been a foundational and on-going guide to the Sacred Circle. We commend it to the generations to follow, not as a lifeless ritual, but as a constantly renewed, locally rediscovered, and sacred revealing practice of those who follow the good walk.

## **V. Worship**

Those who live in a Sacred Circle of Gospel Based Discipleship, will find themselves, as Jesus himself said, drawn to worship the Great Mystery in Spirit and in Truth. First, like the ancestors they offer prayers in Morning and Evening. As Jesus is lifted-up by them, he draws others and they flower into a community that give thanks to God in the ceremony Jesus asked us to offer until he comes again: The Lord's Supper, the Holy Communion, the Holy Eucharist, the Marriage Supper of the Lamb, the Sacred Feast.

## VI. Ministry

The Creator calls each one of us to use gifts and talents to walk a good path with a good mind; to fulfill our baptismal covenant. There are some that the hand of the Creator is on, and we recognize them as leaders. There are also those that are chosen to lead, through the Holy Spirit, by the community. Every baptized person has a ministry. Jesus raised and equipped followers to be disciples. Discipleship is the root of our ministry as Indigenous Christians.

## VII. Of our Duty to God and Each Other

We seek to understand each other, to build relationships and a community of faith — a community that lives into the baptismal covenant “*to strive for justice and peace among all people and respect the dignity of every human being*”. We seek to celebrate our ministries and to honor the struggles that we need to reconcile.

We seek to learn from each other, to value our cultures and our traditions, to feel what has been hurt through losses in our history together and continue to promote healing and reconciliation for all. (From Road to Warm Springs document, September 2018)<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.anglican.ca/wp-content/uploads/The-Road-to-Warm-Springs.pdf>



# **OUR WAY OF LIFE**

## I. THE SACRED CIRCLE

1. The Sacred Circle was always and continues to be a reality among the Indigenous Peoples of the Land and Waters — First Nations, Inuit, and Metis, wherever they reside, whether it be in their communities, on the Lands, or in urban areas. It was known in the dreams and visions of the Elders, in the care and compassion of families and communities, and in the hope of the World to Come. It is manifest among us, as the seeds of the Word come to fruition in the Gospel's call to a new life. We believe that, in Jesus, God has placed the Gospel in the Centre of the Sacred Circle.

We believe and proclaim that this Sacred Circle is the manifestation through which all of Creation is related. From the beginning of our encounter with the Anglican Church, Indigenous priests, catechists, lay readers and Elders dreamed of and worked for a truly Indigenous expression of Christian faith. In the middle of the twentieth century, as the pain of colonization became more and more revealed and acknowledged, Elders across the Land, in different places, languages, cultures and times (without any coordination or mutual knowledge) began to dream of, announce and advocate for the coming of a truly Indigenous Church, focused on justice, fairness and equality. This, we believe and proclaim, was a work of God and it continues to be manifest among us. It is in their vision and work that the first gathering of what came to be known as the Sacred Circle appeared in 1988.

At the base of this spiritual movement was the full acknowledgement, celebration, and honouring of the sovereignty of the Indigenous Peoples of the Land and Waters, and their God-given spiritual authority for care of this Land and these Waters. The Sacred Circle is a light, a dream, a prophetic calling to the life of the Kingdom of God, God's presence in Creation, here present and leading to a New Heaven and a New Earth. This is true and present in our hearts, our families, and our communities. It announces a New Day for all the peoples of this Land.

2. The Sacred Circle is the spiritual reality, unity, and work of God among the Indigenous Peoples, the Peoples of the Land and Waters, related to the Anglican Church of Canada. It is both a community and a communion. It is both an ever-present spiritual reality and an in-person meeting of people who represent the Peoples of the Land and Waters. This spiritual joining has been made through the Word of God becoming flesh.

The Sacred Circle is the presence, healing, and freedom of God discovered and revealed in the discipleship, daily prayers, and celebration of the Eucharist among the Peoples of the Land and Waters. It is daily renewed in the placing of the Gospel in the centre of Indigenous Life. It is renewed across the Land whenever Sacred Circle convenes.

The foundation of Sacred Circle and its highest point is our Sacred Feast, the celebration of the Holy Communion (also known as the Holy Sacrament, Holy Eucharist, or the Lord's Supper), where it thankfully offers up Creation within the eternal offering of Jesus, where it finds its unity with all its members and all of Creation, and where it tastes and receives the first fruits of a New Heaven and a New Earth.

3. The Sacred Circle is an honoured central gathering of the community of Indigenous Peoples in the Anglican Church of Canada. It meets every three years, as it seems good, and also for special purposes as decided by the Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples (ACIP) and the Presiding Elder (the National Indigenous Anglican Archbishop). It is the holistic, consensus-building governing body of the fellowship of Indigenous Peoples of this Land and these Waters who are related to the Anglican Communion.
4. The Sacred Circle is committed to following the *Good Way of Life*<sup>2</sup> of the Peoples of the Land and Waters. Jesus places the Gospel in the Centre of this Sacred Circle. It will be guided by Indigenous values, accords/rules, customs or procedures, found in the circle of gathering, smudging, or greeting as well as the oral traditions handed down in our stories, art, ceremonies, and the music of the Peoples. This is where Indigenous law is found, and it is our spiritual governance.<sup>3</sup> We include here a respect and honour of the various treaties that Indigenous Peoples have made among ourselves and with non-Indigenous nations.
5. Sacred Circle uses a consensus model of unanimous decision-making derived from our experience through story, requiring great patience and respect, always placing the Gospel at its Centre as our guide. The

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<sup>2</sup> An Indigenous concept where the central goal in life which is to try to live life in balance with all of Creation in sustainable ways.

<sup>3</sup> Governance is situated within our GBD tradition, as well as prayer, dance, information-sharing, storytelling, fellowship, art, oral tradition, healing, and celebrating the Good Way of Life in all of Creation.



style of gathering is to provide a place for the people to come together in respect and unity. Its governance is not to impose a way on local communities. It is to help them discover their own way to be disciples with the Gospel in the Centre of their own circles and with respect for our own local ways of gathering and governing.

6. At the community and communion of the Indigenous Peoples of the Anglican Church of Canada, the Sacred Circle gathering guides the ministry and work of the Indigenous Peoples of the Anglican Church of Canada.
7. When the Sacred Circle is not gathering, the Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples (ACIP), with the Presiding Elder of Sacred Circle — the National Indigenous Anglican Archbishop — assisted by ACIP co-chairs will carry out the work of Sacred Circle between its sessions according to our *Way of Life*.
8. Living networks or working groups within the Indigenous church, whether linguistic/cultural, regional, demographic (e.g., youth, women, Elders), urban/non-urban, issue-based (e.g., suicide), diocesan, clergy/lay, educators, etc. will continue to evolve within the Indigenous church, for the purpose of enriching dialogue and promoting understanding at Sacred Circle and assisting ACIP's work, as appropriate.
9. Respectful non-Indigenous participation, where determined to be allies/companions/guests or partners, are welcomed as part of worship at Sacred Circle, as well as in talking circles, as endorsed by Sacred Circle.
10. The Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples (ACIP), with support from the Office of the Presiding Elder, organizes the gatherings of Sacred Circle.

## II. OF OUR WAYS OF PRAYER

11. The life of Sacred Circle is experienced and renewed every day in the life of prayer. All of us, through our Baptism, join our Creator in placing the Gospel in the Centre of the Sacred Circle through which all of Creation is related. Our individual daily prayer is a part of the Sacred Circle, and this is true in a special and powerful way whenever two or three are gathered in the Name of Jesus.
12. Prayer is our way of life. This is seen in the translations our Elders made of the hymn books, the Book of Common Prayer, and the Holy Scriptures. We look to the Book of Common Prayer as a guide to the making of disciples. We have many different forms and languages of the Book of Common Prayer among us, including the Book of Alternative Services of the Anglican Church of Canada.

Our Elders used the Book of Common Prayer within the traditional languages and patterns of their life. It is a partner and a guide to every moment of our lives, including and especially our life on the Land and Waters. Together with the hymnals in their many languages, the Book of Common Prayer was part of their shield, their companion, and an aid to resist the darkest forces and moments of colonization. It is the same kind of guide to us today.

13. We also use *The Disciple's Prayer Book* as a guide to our individual discipleship and our gathering together.
14. Guided by the Gospel and the practice of Jesus and his followers over the ages, we continue the practice of our ancestors of daily prayer, honouring the morning and evening with our prayers and praying throughout the day, as individuals and communities. We encourage our various communities to continue to develop their own forms of discipleship, guided by the principles, values, and patterns of the Book of Common Prayer.
15. As has been the practice of the Church since the beginning, we are committed to reading the Scriptures as a part of our daily discipleship. Sacred Circle is renewed and guided by the reading of Scripture. The practice of reading and listening to the Scriptures is a part of each of our lives, especially those who are ministers, ordained or not.

16. The daily prayer of the Sacred Circle honours the sovereignty of God and the sovereignty of the People of the Land and Waters. Each of us prays, on our own and in our gatherings, for Indigenous leaders across the Land and Waters.
17. Our prayer, especially wherever two or three are gathered in the Name of Jesus, is the place where the life-giving ceremony Jesus gave us is born. The Holy Eucharist, also known as The Sacred Feast, The Lord's Supper, or The Holy Communion, is the fruit of our discipleship together. We believe and expect that all our communities will develop a life in which God is present and worshiped in the Holy Communion/Holy Eucharist.

### **III. OF THE ANGLICAN COUNCIL OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES (ACIP)**

18. Sacred Circle sets the mandate for the Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples (ACIP).
19. The Presiding Elder of Sacred Circle is supported by the Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples which acts as a secretariat for Sacred Circle's work and carries out the work as mandated by Sacred Circle. ACIP receives direction only from Sacred Circle as it is elected by and accountable to Sacred Circle. ACIP may act as a liaison with the Council of General Synod between meetings of Sacred Circle.
20. As the ministry of the Sacred Circle became clear and pressing in the spiritual, physical, political, and pastoral needs of the Peoples of the Land and Waters, the necessity for the Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples also became clear. It was realized from its beginning that, like Sacred Circle, it must meet in the manner of the Indigenous Peoples of this Land, always acknowledging the Sacred Circle of life and acknowledging the Gospel that Jesus has placed in the Centre of that Circle. We continue their practice to meet and work by consensus, with respect for the Elders, and always maintaining the unity of Indigenous Peoples by respecting the diversity of each other and the responsibility of local communities.
21. The Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples advocates for the Indigenous Peoples of the Land and Waters on behalf of Sacred

Circle, in their relationship to the Crown, to Canada, to the provinces of Canada, to the various commercial interests that wish to operate in their areas, and to the Anglican Church of Canada.

22. The Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples also supports Sacred Circle by making known the various needs of the Indigenous Peoples of the Land and Waters and works to provide ministry and help to all, especially those who are poor, abused, and afflicted by sickness, addiction or suicide, and those in prisons.
23. The Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples may be assisted in its work through the creation of working groups and networks, as directed or recommended by Sacred Circle.
24. The Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples will create a plan for selecting participants for each Sacred Circle gathering.

## IV. OF ELDERS

25. Elders are respected and trusted as wisdom keepers, language and tradition keepers, cultural guides, knowledge carriers, teachers, advisors and spiritual leaders in our communities. They connect us with the living traditions of our Peoples, where the Living Word of God has become flesh. *“You who are younger must accept the authority of the elders. And all of you must clothe yourselves with humility in your dealings with one another.”* (1 Peter 5:5)
26. Elders are recognized in our various communities according to their local traditions, protocols, and wisdom.
27. Elders are to be an example to all people, in their way of life and in their prayers. They are asked to intercede for all the Peoples, spiritual leaders, and the youth.
28. Elders are to prayerfully advise, teach, and support the ministers, lay or ordained, bishops or archbishops.
29. We ask the Elders to exercise their leadership as a circle, always remembering the promise of Jesus to be especially present where two or three are gathered in His name.



30. In matters of spiritual importance to the Sacred Circle, a circle of Elders should be consulted. They may, at times, choose to intervene in matters regarding the life of the people. Elders are an essential part of our Vision, Covenant, and *Our Way of Life*.
31. Elders are identified by their local communities.<sup>4</sup> At Sacred Circle, Elders may be identified to represent Sacred Circle, speak for the Elders, and work with the Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples, the Presiding Elder, and other communities across the Land and Waters, both at Sacred Circle and when Sacred Circle is not in session. They will be identified by the gathering of Sacred Circle under the direction of the Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples and the guidance of the Presiding Elder of Sacred Circle, recognizing that:
- a) The Elders of Sacred Circle are recognized members of a larger Indigenous Community.
  - b) The Elders of Sacred Circle represent, in their life, teaching, and advice, the wisdom of age, their community, and their relationship with God.
  - c) The Elders of Sacred Circle work with the Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples and the Presiding Elder, advising them and consulting with them for the good of the Peoples and the Land and Waters.
  - d) The number of the Elders of Sacred Circle will be established by the Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples and the Presiding Elder. When Sacred Circle is not in session, an Elder may be represented by the Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples and the Presiding Elder.

## V. OF THE BISHOPS

32. The Indigenous Bishops of Sacred Circle are members of an Indigenous Community.
33. The Indigenous Bishops of Sacred Circle, proclaim in their teaching and preaching, the Gospel and the sovereignty of Jesus Christ. As Indigenous Bishops of Sacred Circle:

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<sup>4</sup> Numbers 11:16 – The Lord said unto Moses, Gather unto me seventy men of the Elders of Israel, whom thou knowest to be the elders of the people.



- a) They will regularly visit communities and establish a presence among the People of their area, proclaim the Gospel and teach the Scriptures. Following the heritage of the Apostles, visitations to each of their communities, congregations, and regions is vital to growth and edification. This is to be exercised at a minimum of once every three years.
- b) They provide leadership and lead in the making of disciples, people who follow the Way of Jesus, by presiding at and providing for the full celebration of the Sacrament of New Life, i.e., Holy Baptism among the people.
- c) They provide for, oversee, and participate in the formation of those who are called to serve the People of God as Lay Ministers and Ordained Ministers.
- d) They provide leadership in the areas of their charge and beyond in the establishment of circles of two or three, gathered in the Name of Jesus, engaging the Gospel daily as disciples.

34. The Indigenous Bishops of Sacred Circle are shepherds of the People and stewards of the Land and Waters, caring for all people and every aspect of life in their territories. When presiding at their celebration of the Sacred Feast<sup>5</sup>, of necessity, the Gospel is always in the Centre of the Sacred Circle:

- a) They provide for the Sacraments to be a living reality among their communities, congregations, and regions.
- b) They develop and oversee the pastoral ministries of prayer, healing, spiritual direction in their communities, congregations, and regions.
- c) They encourage a life of communal prayer by following a daily spiritual discipline of prayer in the Daily Offices of Morning Prayer, Evening Prayer and Compline.
- d) They provide oversight, guidance, counselling and accountability for, and admonish as necessary within the traditional bonds of affection<sup>6</sup>, the lay and ordained ministers, in their communities, thereby providing for the safety and well-being of all the People of God.

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<sup>5</sup> Sacred Feast, Holy Communion, the Lord's Supper and Holy Eucharist are used interchangeably

<sup>6</sup> Romans 15:14, And I also am persuaded of you, my brethern, that ye also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another.

35. The Indigenous Bishops Sacred Circle, through the unity of their connection to Jesus, to all the People, and to the bishops of the whole Church make sure that the Gospel is always in the Centre of the Sacred Circle. The fundamental role of an Indigenous Bishop is the raising up of disciples:

- a) As members of the House of Bishops of the Anglican Church of Canada, the Indigenous Bishops of Sacred Circle represent the One, Holy, Catholic<sup>7</sup>, and Apostolic Church to their communities, congregations, and regions. They represent the unity of the Body of Christ to their areas, and uphold and guard the faith, unity, and discipline of the Church.
- b) Indigenous Bishops of the Sacred Circle represent each of the communities, congregations, regions, and the whole of the Land and Waters that is within their charge and leadership, to the whole church, including the Anglican Church of Canada. They represent Indigenous unity in the Body of Christ to the whole Church.
- c) In the ministry of Indigenous Bishops, Sacred Circle adopts and receives the mandate provided in the Historic Episcopate<sup>8</sup> to locally adopt the methods of its administration to the varying needs of the nations and peoples called of God into the Unity of his Church. As an integral part of the Anglican Communion, *Resolution 11*<sup>9</sup> provides a mandate for Indigenous Bishops to adapt and evolve in the episcopacy for their communities, congregations, and regions.
- d) Indigenous Bishops of the Sacred Circle will uphold and strive for the justice, peace, and reconciliation of Jesus among all peoples and all Creation. They will especially seek and preserve unity among each other and the whole of Sacred Circle.

36. The Indigenous Bishops of Sacred Circle, as those who proclaim, live, and hasten the World to Come, ensure that the Gospel is always in the centre of the Sacred Circle. Waiting and watching for Jesus, they look for a New Heaven and a New Earth:

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<sup>7</sup> Catholic means 'universal'

<sup>8</sup> "The episcopate is a single whole, in which each bishop's share gives him a right to, and a responsibility for, the whole. So is the Church a single whole, though she spreads far and wide into a multitude of Churches..."[1] "The Church is the people united...to its shepherd. From this you should know that the bishop is in the Church and the Church is in the bishop." – *Episcopal Ministry, the Report of the Archbishops' Group on The Episcopate 1990*, Church House Publishing [UK], 1990

<sup>9</sup> See the *Lambeth Conference of 1888, Resolution 11*

- a) As bishops of the Peoples and of the Land and Waters, they are responsible for the making of disciples.
  - b) As bishops of the poor, the outcast, the prisoner, and the sick, they are responsible for pastoral and spiritual care for the marginalized in their areas of charge.
  - c) As bishops, first and foremost, professing the sovereignty of God over Creation and history, they advocate for the just, true, and fair recognition of the self-determination and sovereignty of the Peoples of the Land and Waters.
  - d) As bishops of Resurrection and hope, they strive to pursue a reconciliation of the Peoples of this Land and its Waters, that will only be achieved on the foundation of justice and equality, and, in this way, will point towards God's reconciliation of all things in Christ.
37. The Presiding Elder has an episcopal and pastoral relationship with Indigenous Peoples across the Land and Waters.
38. Sacred Circle and Elders define the style and role of the Presiding Elder and spiritual ministry, recognizing both the equality of participation in the Circle and leadership roles inherent in this role.
39. The Presiding Elder welcomes and cares for the unity of Indigenous Peoples within the Sacred Circle.
40. The Office of the Presiding Elder oversees the ways that Peoples and ministries will be remembered and honoured in the Sacred Circle, among all the churches and ministries of the Sacred Circle, and with among all the leaders, churches, and ministries of the Anglican Church of Canada.
41. The Presiding Elder, having an episcopal and pastoral relationship, may share jurisdiction, oversight, and leadership of people, churches, and ministries with local bishops, archbishops and clergy to serve the mutual benefit of communities and Peoples.

## VI. OF BOUNDARIES

42. The Sacred Circle transcends the boundaries designated by the church within its institutional structures and practices. We uphold our traditional relationship with the Land and Waters, our knowledge of our territories and our relationships with each other where Sacred Circle will live out our hopes, dreams and visions for a Gospel-centred

way of life. Sacred Circle has the prerogative, ability and duty to declare how we will honour, worship and give obedience to the Creator and Ruler of all who continuously blesses the Land and Waters and all the relationships that nurture and sustain life. Sacred Circle will follow its path of worship within our way of life and cultural context in upholding the Anglican tradition.

Sacred Circle respects the relationships that God creates and blesses, i.e., with the Land, the Waters and all of Creation, showing us the Divine will and a guide to the way of life for all creatures. The Rule of God and the pattern of these relationships are the basis of our understanding of boundaries. In the pattern of these relationships on the Land and Waters, God creates the nations, allotting *“the times of their existence and the boundaries of the places where they would live. From one man, God made all the nations, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he marked out their appointed times in history and the boundaries of their lands. God did this so that they would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from any one of us. For in him we live and move and have our being.”*<sup>10</sup>

The recognition and honouring of these boundaries is part of a process of recovery and restoration that will involve consultation and agreement between Indigenous authority, the Anglican Church of Canada, the law of Canada and of its provinces and territories.

43. Indigenous geographical areas may be organized and governed by groups recognized by Sacred Circle and the Office of the Presiding Elder. Sacred Circle, acting through the Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples and the Presiding Elder, may assist in this process and pursue consultation and agreement, in good faith, respectful of existing legal frameworks within the Anglican Church of Canada, and within the law of Canada and its Provinces and Territories. Our work of establishing Indigenous areas will respect Indigenous traditional teaching, traditional ways and cultures, and law, traditional territories and treaties, and places where Indigenous people gather; it will also accord with Scripture and the traditions and pre-colonial teachings of the Early Church, e.g., the Apostles and Nicene Creeds. This will always proceed in Sacred Circle with the Gospel in its centre.

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<sup>10</sup> Acts 17, V 26-28 (a), NIV

## VII. OF THE JOINING OF PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES IN THE SACRED CIRCLE

44. The Sacred Circle is a community and communion of The Peoples of the Land and Waters including Indigenous Peoples, churches, congregations, ministries, fellowships and communities — whether they be communities of interest (e.g., youth), of geography on the Land and Waters, treaty territories, cultural or linguistic affiliation, or set in urban areas.
45. All members of Sacred Circle are one in Christ and are equal members without hierarchy.
46. The Sacred Circle meets every three years. It also gathers for special purposes, as Sacred Circle deems necessary. When Sacred Circle is not in a meeting, it is together in a living fellowship and communion through prayer and the Gospel, praying daily for each other and, with special dedication, joining across space and time in the Sacred Feast. The Elders of our communities and The Elders of Sacred Circle, the Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples, the networks of Indigenous ministries across the Land, the Indigenous House of Bishops Leadership Circle, and the Presiding Elder, along with Indigenous archbishops, bishops, priests, deacons, lay readers and Catechists across the Land and Waters will nurture and bless the community and communion of the Sacred Circle through pastoral care, spiritual leadership, fellowship and prayer.
47. Every Indigenous church, congregation, fellowship, ministry, and person in the Anglican Church of Canada is a part of the Sacred Circle and, through guidance from the Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples', will receive representation in the regular and special meetings of the Sacred Circle.
48. Local communities, through their Elders, Clergy, and other leaders, will identify, receive, and welcome, in consultation and agreement with the Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples and the Presiding Elder, the people, ministries, fellowships, churches, parishes, congregations, and regional gatherings that are a part of the Indigenous Sacred Circle.
49. All Indigenous people, churches, parishes, congregations, fellowships, or Indigenous ministries under the jurisdiction, oversight, and leadership of their local bishops, Indigenous or non-Indigenous, are a part of the Sacred Circle.



50. As a part of the Sacred Circle, Indigenous circles, families of two or three, Indigenous churches, groups of congregations, churches or parishes, regional Indigenous ministries, communities and individual ministers, lay or ordained, may have a special identified relationship with the Presiding Elder or other Indigenous archbishops or bishops (see section VIII below for further elaboration).

This relationship may be based on region, common work of ministry, ties of nation or peoplehood, culture, linguistic or treaty affiliations, interest groups or some other identified connection that serves the good of the Peoples of the Land and Waters, strengthens the work of God, and glorifies and honours God's Name. The Presiding Elder will enter these relationships with the agreement of local Elders, Indigenous church leaders, archbishops, and bishops. The nature of these relationships will be in accord with ***Our Way of Life*** and with the accommodation of the values and principles of Anglican teaching and tradition.

51. All members of Sacred Circle may be members of the Anglican Indigenous Network (AIN).
52. A non-Indigenous church, ministry, congregation, parish, fellowship or community may ask to be identified, received, and welcomed as part of the Sacred Circle. Sacred Circle, at its gathering or through the Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples, may agree formally to receive and welcome those identified by Sacred Circle as partners, allies, companions or guests of the Indigenous Sacred Circle.<sup>11</sup>

## VIII. OF COMMUNITIES, CONGREGATIONS, AND REGIONS

53. The fullness of the 'universal church' is found where two or three are gathered in the Name of Jesus. The fullness of the church universal is there, because of the promised special presence of Jesus. If two

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<sup>11</sup> When Sacred Circle is more fully established, processes may be developed for welcoming non-Indigenous Relatives into relationship within Sacred Circle, recognizing the need for Indigenous People to self-govern and to firstly recover from centuries of colonial domination.

or three people, who are a part of a larger Indigenous community, commit to a life of discipleship and guidance from *The New Covenant* and *Our Way of Life*, they may become an acknowledged part of Sacred Circle and may join the pastoral episcopal leadership of the Presiding Elder.

54. A congregation of more than two or three may also be acknowledged and recognized as part of the unity of the Sacred Circle and may join the pastoral and episcopal leadership of the Presiding Elder without giving up their individual identity.
- a) A congregation may join the pastoral and episcopal leadership of the Presiding Elder and continue under the oversight and pastoral and episcopal leadership of a bishop under the rules and boundaries of the Anglican Church of Canada.
  - b) A congregation may join the oversight and pastoral and episcopal leadership of the local bishop of the Anglican Church of Canada and the Presiding Elder, working together by the mutual agreement of the congregation, the local bishop, and the Presiding Elder.
  - c) A group of Indigenous congregations or communities in close association with each other and wishing to remain together may join together in discipleship, worship, and mission. They may become an acknowledged part of Sacred Circle and, through agreement, may join the pastoral and episcopal leadership of the Presiding Elder. They may also come under the leadership of another Indigenous bishop at the same time, or under their own.
    - i. These arrangements will be made according to the culture, tradition, and law of the local communities. This may be according to what has been called a diocese, an area mission, a territory, or some other designation.
    - ii. Congregations may have joint oversight, either individually or together, with a local diocesan bishop and with the Presiding Elder or another Indigenous bishop.
  - d) A group of congregations, related by language, culture, tradition or nationhood, may join together in discipleship, worship, and mission. They may become an acknowledged part of Sacred Circle and may join the pastoral episcopal leadership of the Presiding Elder. They may also come under the leadership of another Indigenous bishop or non-Indigenous bishop at the same time or have their own.



- i. These arrangements will be made according to the language, culture, tradition or law of the local communities. This may be according to what the ACC has called a diocese, an area mission, a territory, or some other designation.
- ii. Congregations may have joint oversight, either individually or together, with a local diocesan bishop and with the Presiding Elder or another Indigenous bishop.

## IX. OF INDIGENOUS SPIRITUAL MINISTRIES

55. A specific person or group of persons, who is/are a part of a larger Indigenous community and is/are committed to a life of discipleship and guidance from *The New Covenant: Our Foundation*, may be recognized as an Indigenous Spiritual ministry and come under the pastoral episcopal leadership of the Presiding Elder.
56. An Indigenous Spiritual ministry may be placed within the oversight and pastoral and episcopal leadership of the Presiding Elder. An Indigenous Spiritual ministry within the oversight and pastoral and episcopal leadership of the Presiding Elder, living and operating within an area under the authority of a non-Indigenous or Indigenous bishop, will practice their ministry with respect and consultation with the bishop of that area, supported by prior consultation and partnership arrangements with that bishop and the Presiding Elder.
57. Urban Indigenous ministries often bring together people from many different Indigenous communities. Their mission is to establish new, lifegiving Anglican communities and networks for urban Indigenous people. Many of these individuals are transient, escaping trauma and poverty, only to find themselves isolated, alone and discriminated against in the city. Urban ministries will seek to maintain to the extent possible and when needed, spiritual and partnership connections with Elders, clergy and bishops from home communities.

Urban ministry, by necessity, means working with non-Indigenous Anglican parishes, ecumenical partners and social service providers. Urban ministry is often involved in delivering support services arising from poverty and food insecurity, mental and physical health, addictions, homelessness, risky behaviour or family violence. Advocating for change is an integral part of urban Indigenous ministry.



58. The autonomy of urban Indigenous ministry is necessary to improve responsiveness and address self-determination in urban settings. Where numbers warrant and where desirable, an urban Indigenous archdeacon or an Indigenous bishop may be designated with full accountability to Sacred Circle, the Presiding Elder, the urban Indigenous collective as well as to the overlapping non-Indigenous diocese where mutual partnership arrangements are in place.
59. While reconciliation is a shared Indigenous and non-Indigenous endeavour, urban Indigenous ministry requires partnership with the broader diocesan church and coordination with congregations wishing to support or engage in Indigenous ministry. Non-Indigenous Anglicans are always fully welcomed to worship with urban Indigenous ministry.
60. Urban Indigenous ministry benefits from sharing experiences and practices with other urban Indigenous ministries across the Land and Waters where clergy and lay individuals engaged in difficult urban Indigenous ministry can learn from and support each other through an urban ministry collective.

## X. OF CONFLICT, HURT OR VIOLATION OF OUR WAY OF LIFE

61. In *Our Way of Life*, peace, harmony, consensus, and living in right relationships are recognized as basic and essential qualities of living for the advancement of stable and peaceful order in our societies. The essential character of these qualities of living have been enjoyed and possessed by the Peoples of the Lands and Waters throughout our existence. They form the foundational base of our nations. They honour the creative potential of individuals and the members of society for sustaining the spiritual, economic, and cultural well-being of our nations, thus providing assurance for the long-lasting prosperity of our nations.

Peace and harmony with the earth, the heavens, society, and nature and care of all Creation are recognized as the ideal path in our way of life. Striving for peace, harmony, consensus, and living in right relationships with all Our Relations includes not only living a healthy, sustainable lifestyle but also recognizing that disputes, hurts, or violations of our way of life are natural and inevitable.

Resolving conflict fairly and properly through the principles of *Our Way of Life*, always with the Gospel at the centre, utilizing local customs according to their traditions as an option, furthers and advances the welfare of the individual as well as the wellbeing of the members of our nations and communities.

The central practice is to *prevent* conflict, hurt or violation through promoting understanding and respectful interactions with each other and always striving for good relationships. We understand this to be at the heart of a life that puts the Gospel at the centre of our interactions with each other.

62. When a conflict, hurt or violation of *Our Way of Life* arises between two people or more members of a community, between communities, or within our Sacred Circle, they are asked to follow the teachings of Jesus (see Matthew 5:23-24 and Matthew 18:15-22 in the Glossary), trusting in the presence of Jesus, seeking the reconciliation which is the sign of the Gospel, and forgiving each other as God has forgiven us in Jesus.
63. When people set out to resolve conflict, hurt or violation of *Our Way of Life*, they should bring their conflict or hurt to the Gospel together. Sitting in their own sacred circle of two or three gathered in the Name of Jesus, with the Gospel in the centre, they should seek God and the reconciliation of the Holy Spirit.
64. If they cannot resolve their concerns, recognized local Elders, clergy, and spiritual leaders should then be consulted, again, bringing the conflict, hurt or violation to the Gospel.
65. When a conflict, hurt or violation of *Our Way of Life* grows or reconciliation does not happen, people should bring their concerns to an area council of Elders, clergy, and spiritual leaders. The bishop or a representative of the bishop may act as a presiding Elder.
66. Those who are ordained, or anyone who has responsibility and obligation to care for another person in ministry or those in the service of ministry, are always to act to protect the safety and wellbeing of those they serve and those who serve the people within their leadership. Scripture tells us that the neglect of the Great Commandment to “love as I have loved you” is the greatest of responsibilities and that we must always be on guard to make sure this does not happen. Those who are ordained are especially required to serve according to the way of life that is compelled by Scripture, by core values of Indigenous teachings and by their Ordination vows.

67. When an ordained person or anyone who has responsibility and obligation to care for another person in ministry or in the service of ministry, hurts or acts towards someone in a way that does not make them feel safe or threatens their well-being or is not in accord with the pattern or way of life taught in Sacred Teachings, Scripture or Ordination vows, this will be brought to the attention of the bishop and the Presiding Elder who will work together to determine what has transpired.

When something has happened, it must be brought to a circle of Elders which may also include members of the clergy, to seek reconciliation, healing and restorative justice.<sup>12</sup>

68. Sacred Circle is asked to develop ‘safe church’ policy with guidance based on Scripture to help healing in these matters as well as clear courses of action when children or illegal actions are involved.

## XI. OF CHANGES TO OUR WAY OF LIFE

69. *Our Way of Life* is a living document supporting our spiritual governance. It binds us together in the past, present and future. However, it is recognized that changes might be necessary from time to time. Today’s leaders are tomorrow’s Elders and Ancestors, and successive generations might see the wisdom of adapting these sacred texts.

70. Proposed changes to *Our Way of Life* should arise from our own principles of self-governance, whether from our local communities, Indigenous Anglican communion, Indigenous House of Bishops Leadership Circle, spiritual ministry, Indigenous Network, ACIP or Sacred Circle gatherings, subject to Sacred Circle consensus.

71. Changes under consideration will proceed from the deepest deliberation in prayer, the Gospel, discernment, and respect for past, present and future generations. Changes will be consistent with Our Rule of Life and Guiding Principles as articulated in *The Covenant*.

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<sup>12</sup> Restorative justice is a central tenet of the longstanding “ministry of reconciliation” (See II Corinthians 5: 18-20 in the Appendix) and to concepts of friendship, partnership and inclusion among our Relatives in traditional teachings. In addition, there are diverse Indigenous cultural practices involving healing.

72. Changes to wording, spiritual context or interpretation of *Our Way of Life* may be considered and discerned together or through a process, led by ACIP with the Presiding Elder of Sacred Circle, prior to proceeding to Sacred Circle for advice, consideration and/or consensus. ACIP will consult widely with Indigenous jurisdictions, Elders and bishops prior to recommending change(s) to Sacred Circle.
73. Community spiritual ministries, congregations and regions already have considerable latitude and are encouraged to make changes within their own jurisdictions to adapt *Our Way of Life* to their ways, based on their own respectful consultation with their local Elders, clergy and spiritual leaders and with the guidance of the local Indigenous Bishop.

In such deliberations, the Gospel will be placed at the centre of their deliberations to guide their local spiritual realities so that unity with all of Creation will prevail and the work of God manifested.

74. *Our Way of Life* is the expression of inherent Indigenous self-governance of Indigenous ministry. Changes will be communicated for information to the Primate of the Anglican Church of Canada and General Synod or Council of General Synod.

## **XII. OF OUR RELATIONS WITH THE ANGLICAN CHURCH OF CANADA AND ITS JURISDICTIONS**

75. As Anglicans, the Indigenous church seeks collegial and collaborative partnership relations with the Anglican Church of Canada (ACC), both in walking alongside of and working together with Canadian Anglicans.
76. In walking alongside the Anglican Church of Canada (ACC), the Indigenous church is a full, equal but separate, self-governing partner.
77. No participation in the ACC is a hindrance to the full and complete self-determination of the Indigenous church in walking together within the life of the Anglican Church of Canada.

The Indigenous church recognizes the benefit of participation in the Anglican Church of Canada, ensuring also that the church benefits from Indigenous insight and voice. Participation is through the voices

of the Presiding Elder, the Anglican Council of Indigenous People, the Sacred Circle and elected Indigenous members of General Synod and the Council of General Synod and Indigenous members appointed to General Synod's governing and coordinating bodies, boards, committees and commissions.

- a. Indigenous church participation in the Anglican Church of Canada seeks to share Indigenous people's gifts of expression, traditional ways, stories, dress and insights to community life and our spirituality that powerfully echoes an Indigenous biblical worldview; cooperation in the building of bridges helps all to live out and celebrate the love of Jesus.
- b. In participation in the Anglican Church of Canada, none of the language of partnership impinges on the independence of the Indigenous church.
- c. Sacred Circle wishes to continue the journey with the ACC to address reconciliation, healing and spiritual harm and support for the Indigenous church.

78. Our unity or communion with the Anglican Church of Canada does not hinder the freedom and sovereignty of self-determination of the Indigenous church. In this spirit, the Indigenous church and the Presiding Elder respect the Primate's role as the first among equals in:

- discerning the mission of the Anglican Church of Canada;
- maintaining pastoral relationships across the church;
- keeping watch over the unity of the entire Anglican Church of Canada;
- providing leadership in celebrating the gifts that diversity brings to the church;
- speaking on behalf of a united church;
- co-working with the entire Anglican Church of Canada; and
- connecting with the Anglican Communion on behalf of all Canadian Anglicans.

## XIII - EQUIPPING THE PEOPLE FOR GOD'S FUTURE

See **Appendix 2** on p. 40.



# APPENDIX 1

## SIGNATORIES TO THE COVENANT OF 1994

### APPENDIX 1

#### SIGNATORIES TO THE COVENANT OF 1994

We, representatives of the indigenous people of the Anglican Church of Canada, meeting in Winnipeg from the 23 to 26 of April, 1994, pledge ourselves to this covenant for the sake of our people and in trust of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ:

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. Amen.

Donna Bomberg	Laura Jarron
Mervin Wasylyuk	Barbara Hornick
Oliver Egan	Ed. Bruce
Rev. Lily Bell	Wilfred Anderson
Quekley McKay Misgaxa	Morris Fiddler
Vi Samaha	Rev. Margaret Waterchief
Samuel Agule	Arthur M. Fiddler
Jojo Nteta	Gladya Cook
Murray Murt	
Hina Durrant	
John T. Buecker	
Mark Fogalt	
Etienne Wesel	



## APPENDIX 2

### WAY OF LIFE FOR MINISTRY Equipping People for God's Ministry

#### Ordination for Holy Orders

##### A. Introduction

There are not enough clergy to serve our many Indigenous communities. Communities go without the sacraments for months, some without regular Sunday worship services. For many years Indigenous people in Canada have been “missionized” by various denominations. But little thought was given to sustainability and in being self-determined Indigenous Christians. Many systems and structures were set in place that were not culturally appropriate. Such is the case with the process of ordination.

As “dual citizens” within the Anglican Church of Canada, Indigenous Anglicans have the right to choose their path to ordination. This, however, should be done in consultation with others, with prayer and engagement of the Gospel. It is important to have a process that is relevant and life giving, one that is not full of obstacles. Experience has shown that Indigenous people tend to be more scrutinized by those in control of the system. For example, one of the questions often asked is “are they ready to be ordained for the whole church?” A better question is, “who is?” It is not realized that the “whole church” for that person may be a remote village on James’ Bay and that even a seminary trained priest will need more training on the Land in order to be effective and sensitive to the unique needs and ways of living in our remote communities.

We need a process that will be relevant, responsive to community ways and will offer the best training to aspiring calls to ordination. We are proposing that this process be under the auspices of the Presiding Elder (the National Indigenous Anglican Archbishop (NIAAB)). To begin the process there will be negotiation with the diocesan bishop, the Presiding Elder and the person who is being called for ordination. This negotiation is to share information on why this path to ordination is in the best interest of the aspirant (person being called for ordination), the community and church. The Presiding Elder may



accept the person for continued discernment. This discernment will be conducted using an Indigenous, Gospel based approach. The Presiding Elder may also propose people for further ministry discernment

## **B. Discernment**

1. The discernment will be done in a Community Sacred Circle (CSC) using Gospel Based Discipleship. Members of the Circle may include the priest in charge or lay leader, at least one elder and one youth and others who are familiar with the ministry of the aspirant (the one who has a call to be an ordained minister). The three questions will be:
  - What stands out for you?
  - What is Jesus saying about the call to ordained ministry?
  - What is the call to live into ordained ministry?
2. The CSC should meet at least six times and then make a report to the Presiding Elder. The Presiding Elder may attend these Community Sacred Circles if time allows. Each circle will select a facilitator and he/she will explain the process used in Gospel Based Discipleship.
3. Once the Community Sacred Circle completes its discernment, the aspirant will make arrangements for his/her community to take part in Indigenous Catechist Training. This can be done over several weeks for one to two hours per week or a concentrated training over a long weekend. Trainers will be provided, if needed. The aspirant will assist in the training. An evaluation will be completed and sent to the Presiding Elder.
4. If the community feels the aspirant is called to ordained ministry, they will put their recommendation in writing to the Presiding Elder and state if the call is to be a permanent deacon or priest. Even if the call is to the priesthood, they must first be ordained to be a transitional deacon. The above process may not be necessary if the community feels that the aspirant has already been discerned according to their traditions. Some Indigenous communities watch young people for several years to discern their leadership skills and spirituality. If this is the case, the community will provide a written statement to the Presiding Elder listing reasons to admit the aspirant to postulancy (person accepted for ordination and period of study).



5. The Bishop or the Presiding Elder may recommend a person for discernment using the CSC.
6. Qualifications to be considered during the discernment process.

**C. According to the *National Canons of the Anglican Church of Canada* the qualities of a person seeking ordination are:**

“A priest is one who has a personal faith and spiritual life that is adequate to lead others. He or she:

1. **Displays a mature understanding of a call to ministry, service and study.** This can be assessed by the Community Sacred Circle (CSC) and learning stories of early missionaries and then seeing how they fit into the call. Discuss with CSC the call and what it will mean to the community.
2. **Demonstrates a commitment to loving service in the church rooted in a sustained and growing love of God in Christ.** How is the person being called involved with the church? What are the needs of the community and where can the called fit in? What scriptures talk about God’s love?
3. **Cultivates a disciplined life of prayer, rooted in the Anglican tradition of common prayer, which responds well to the demands of personal formation and the expectations of public ministry.** Gospel Based Discipleship may also be used as it is based on the American Book of Common Prayer and very similar to the Canadian Book of Common Prayer. Morning and Evening Prayer should be said every day, alone or with others if possible.
4. **Shows evidence of personal and spiritual growth and healthy self-awareness.** The CSC and the person called should experience Indigenous Healthy Pathways (IHP), a spiritual training that draws upon history to show the losses that Indigenous People have experienced. These losses and the resulting grief can stifle spiritual growth and healthy self-awareness.
5. **Exercises appropriate care of self, accountability to others, and has an awareness of sources of support available when needed.** Again, using the IHP, each person can create a plan for a Healthy Pathway to bring balance to their lives and lives of others.

6. **Shows a commitment to live his or her Christian faith within the Anglican Church of Canada.** This commitment may also include our traditional teachings as they are not contrary to the Christian faith. One question that may arise is whether or not the person called can live without being paid as an ordained leader.
7. **Demonstrates a healthy relationship to her or his bishop, diocese, province and the national church.** Relationship is the key word here and this relationship should start with the Indigenous community.
8. **Reflects with insight on her or his personal strengths and weaknesses, gifts and vulnerabilities.** Since we are taught not to brag about our gifts it may be good to let the CSC discuss gifts and talents, and those things that need to be improved to be a better leader.
9. **Discerns God's presence and activity in her or his own life and in the lives of others.** Again, a discussion with the CSC should start with how God is working in the community, then in the lives of others and lastly in the person being called.
10. **Bears witness to his or her own experience of God's love and grace in acts of evangelism.** We should listen to the experiences of others, then talk about God's love in the person being called. How does God favor Indigenous people? How can these favors be used to call others to Jesus?
11. **Demonstrates a capacity to deal maturely in personal relationships with family and friends.** This can be dealt with through IHP, especially the section that deals with oppression and passive aggressive behavior that is prevalent in many Indigenous communities. Passive-aggressive behavior is like the old crab bucket. We encourage our people to climb to the top but once they get close, we pull them down.
12. **Models stewardship as a spiritual discipline in response to God's gifts.** What does stewardship look like in Indigenous communities? (See page 37 below on Peel's teaching on stewardship)
13. Has read and continues to read the whole Bible in a systematic way. Gospel Based Discipleship may be used to read the Gospels



and the Daily lectionary may be used to read the Old Testament and the New Testament. It would be helpful to reflect on the readings with at least one other person, “For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.”

**Each one of the above are in concert with the relevant traditional Sacred Teachings.**

#### **D. Postulancy**

1. Once the Presiding Elder reviews the discernment materials he/she will make a determination to accept the aspirant for postulancy. Postulancy is a time of formation and further discernment.
2. The person seeking ordination must have a background check using appropriate means in that community. The results will be shared with the Bishop and Archbishop.
3. A “formation” plan will be developed with the postulant, his/her community of faith and the Presiding Elder or his/her designee. In keeping with the Canons of the Anglican Church of Canada, it is important that such a plan include study in the following areas:

*In the midst of the breadth of material covered in this document it is important to note that it contains only five basic competencies. A priest must:*

- *have a personal faith and spiritual life that is adequate to lead others; especially Indigenous communities and can effectively meld Christian and Traditional Values where appropriate.*
- *understand who we are as the people of God, our stories, especially those of the residential schools, our histories and what it means to be an Anglican within the wider Christian family;*
- *be able to translate that rich tradition into the real life of the actual communities and contexts where we minister;*
- *have the capacities to provide effective leadership in the communities we are called to serve;*
- *be able to teach, mentor and support the development of the ministry of the whole people of God, particularly in Indigenous communities.*

## **E. Formation**

During the time of postulancy, formation in consideration of the above will be undertaken. The following is a guide for developing a formation plan. This plan will be approved by the Presiding Elder and the Indigenous House of Bishops Leadership Circle.

### **The National Indigenous Ministry**

#### ***1. Formation Plan for Ordination***

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone #: \_\_\_\_\_

email: \_\_\_\_\_

Postulants shall pursue the program of preparation for ordination developed by the Office of the Presiding Elder. The program shall include theological training, practical experience, emotional development, healing from intergenerational post-traumatic stress disorder (if needed) and spiritual formation. Prior education and learning from life experience may be considered as part of the formation process. Each postulant will have accomplished training in sexual misconduct prevention, and anti-racism training.

There are eight recommended areas of study. Please explain how you will become knowledgeable in these areas. What books will you read? Will you take courses at a theological school, college, on the internet? This training will be relevant and meaningful to the community you will serve. Your priest and/or your Community Sacred Circle must be consulted in the development of this plan and must also approve the plan.

1. *The Holy Scriptures:*

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Who will mentor you? \_\_\_\_\_

2. *Church History, including the Ecumenical Movement:*

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(Note: local church history is highly valued, how and why did the church come to your community?

What does it mean to be an Anglican?)

Who will mentor you? \_\_\_\_\_

3. *Christian Theology, including Missionary Theology and Missiology:*

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Who will mentor you? \_\_\_\_\_

4. *Studies in contemporary society, including racial and minority groups and the legacy of the residential school system:*

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Who will mentor you? \_\_\_\_\_

5. *Liturgics and Church Music; Christian Worship and Music according to the contents and use of the Book of Common Prayer, the Book of Alternative Services, the Hymnal, and authorized supplemental texts:*

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(Note: This will include instruction on doing the Holy Communion, baptism and other sacraments. It will also include appropriate hymns for the seasons of the church year.)

Who will mentor you? \_\_\_\_\_

6. *Theory and Practice of Ministry in Indigenous communities:*

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Who will mentor you? \_\_\_\_\_



7. *Providing pastoral care in our remote communities, at time of suicide and other traumatic events in the community*

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Who will mentor you? \_\_\_\_\_

8. *Preaching*

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Who will mentor you? \_\_\_\_\_

*Tell us how you will receive training in sexual misconduct and anti-racism training (this is usually connected to diocesan requirements for postulancy/ordination):*

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*The Bishop requests that you have a spiritual director. Who will be your spiritual director? Please give name/address/telephone number:*

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If the Presiding Elder wishes to consult with your spiritual advisor, he/she will first obtain your permission. The Presiding Elder or his/her designee will contact your mentor in each of these areas to assess what you have learned.

Approved by the Presiding Elder, CSC and the Indigenous House of Bishops Leadership Circle:

Signature of First Elder, CSC: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Elder IHOB: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Presiding Elder: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## F. Approval for ordination

1. Once approved the CSC will monitor the postulant's progress. When the CSC determines that at least three quarters of the formation plan has been completed, they will recommend in writing that the postulant apply for ordination to the diaconate, either the permanent or the transitional. This request will be in writing to the Presiding Elder.
2. Once received, the Presiding Elder may convene the IHOB to measure the postulant's progress. The Presiding Elder will then approve or disapprove the postulant for ordination and will issue a letter. If approved, the postulant will continue study until he/she is ordained. Before ordained, the Presiding Elder and CSC will meet with the postulant and talk about expectations for the ordained ministry and also initiate a support system for the newly ordained.
3. While not critical, it is important that the postulant receive training in financial management and record keeping. These two areas maybe more easily handled by a member of the congregation to be served, especially if the ordained will not be paid. It is expected that all members of the congregation will offer their gifts and talents to the newly ordained. The people are the Church!
4. Once approved for ordination, the postulant becomes a candidate for ordination. The candidate will consult with the Presiding Elder and diocesan bishop (if necessary) to set an ordination date. Before ordination, the CSC will assist in obtaining the proper robes and stoles for ordination, especially if the person to be ordained will not be paid.
5. Once ordained to the diaconate, and if the deacon seeks ordination to the Priesthood, all parties involved will meet to set forth timelines and further study for ordination to the Priesthood.



## ***Indigenous Lay Ministry and Formation***

### *A. Introduction*

The Creator calls each of one of us to use gifts and talents to walk a good path with a good mind; to fulfill our baptismal covenant. Everyone can be a minister. It is not necessary to be ordained to be a minister. We must remember that Jesus did not ordain anyone to be clergy. Jesus did raise and equip followers to be disciples. Discipleship is the root of our ministry as Indigenous Christians. Congregations should not expect their clergy to do everything, especially in those congregations served by non-paid clergy.

There are many lay ministries that can be undertaken. When we speak of lay or laity, we mean the people of the church. Everyone was a lay person at one time and that should not be forgotten. It is important to help people discern their call to lay ministry. This can be done in a sharing circle where people talk about their gifts and talents. Because we are taught to be humble, this may be difficult for some. In a sharing circle, all were asked to name something they were “good at” or to name their gifts. One person said, “I have no gifts.”

### *B. Categories of Lay Ministries*

There are a number of lay ministries, some need approval or licensing from the bishop and/or the Presiding Elder; and some need formal community and cultural appropriate training. These are:

1. Pastoral Leader
  - Pastoral care, person to provide spiritual support to community members
  - Administrative, person to do record keeping — attendance and financial and perhaps assist in communications to members
2. Worship Leader
  - leads Morning and Evening Prayer, Funerals and other services as permitted.
3. Lay Preacher
  - An Episcopal Church office that makes the “Word” come alive in both cultural and community context; needs to be licensed by their Bishop to preach.

4. A Lay Reader
  - Primarily officiates at Morning or Evening Prayer services. And depending on their ministerial abilities, an Incumbent might give them permission to other liturgical or pastoral duties in the parish.
5. Eucharistic Minister
  - assists priest in distribution of wine and bread at communion
6. Eucharistic Visitor
  - takes communion to the ill or shut ins in the community
7. Catechist
  - prepares people for baptism, confirmation, and reception, reaffirmation of Baptismal vows
8. Evangelist
  - presents the Good News in such a way that people are led to receive and follow Jesus

*C. These ministries require formal training.*

In ideal situations a priest should provide the training. However, since we have many nonstipendiary clergy, the Office of the Presiding Elder will develop appropriate training on a case-by-case basis. A license will be given by the Bishop and the Presiding Elder upon completion of the training. A bishop may grant a license if he/she feels the lay minister has already received adequate training to carry out these ministries.

*D. Other Lay Ministries*

There are other lay ministries but while they may require training, they do not require a license. These include but are not limited to: Altar Guild (proper care of the altar linens and vessels, setting up for communion), Sunday School teacher, Church building maintenance, fundraising, music leader, etc. Clergy should encourage people to take on these ministries and provide the training as needed.

## Background Insight

Bill Peel, in an essay entitled, "Leadership is Stewardship," suggests that there are four important principles about biblical stewardship we must understand:

### 1. The principle of ownership.

The psalmist begins the 24th Psalm with,

*The earth is the LORD's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it.*

In the beginning of Genesis, God creates everything and puts Adam in the Garden to work it and to take care of it. It is clear that man was created to work and that

*work is the stewardship of all of the creation that God has given him.*

This is the fundamental principle of biblical stewardship. God owns everything, we are simply managers or administrators acting on his behalf.

Therefore, stewardship expresses our obedience regarding the administration of everything God has placed under our control, which is all encompassing. Stewardship is the commitment of oneself and possessions to God's service, recognizing that we do not have the right of control over our property or ourselves.

Echoing Deuteronomy 8:17, we might say:

*"My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me."*

But Deuteronomy 8:18 counsels us to think otherwise:

*Remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth.*

***We are visitors upon Mother Earth and we must walk gently with wisdom and love. We must think about what we will leave for the Seventh Generation not yet born.***

## 2. The principle of responsibility.

In explaining responsibility, Peel writes,

*Although God gives us “all things richly to enjoy,” nothing is ours. Nothing really belongs to us. God owns everything; we’re responsible for how we treat it and what we do with it. While we complain about our rights here on earth, the Bible constantly asks, What about your responsibilities? Owners have rights; stewards have responsibilities.*

We are called as God’s stewards to manage that which belongs to God. While God has graciously entrusted us with the care, development, and enjoyment of everything he owns as his stewards, we are responsible to manage his holdings well and according to his desires and purposes.

***If we truly want to be a self-determined Church, we must accept responsibility for the care, development and enjoyment of all the Creator has given us.***

## 3. The principle of accountability.

A steward is one who manages the possessions of another. We are all stewards of the resources, abilities and opportunities that God has entrusted to our care, and one day each one of us will be called to give an account for how we have managed what the Master has given us.

This is the maxim taught by the Parable of the Talents. God has entrusted authority over the creation to us and we are not allowed to rule over it as we see fit. We are called to exercise our dominion under the watchful eye of the Creator managing his creation in accord with the principles he has established.

Like the servants in the Parable of the Talents, we will be called to give an account of how we have administered everything we have been given, including our time, money, abilities, information, wisdom, relationships, and authority.

We will all give account to the rightful owner as to how well we managed the things he has entrusted to us.

***We must remember that we are accountable to our Creator and to those not yet born. “We do not inherit Mother Earth, we borrow her from our children.”***

#### 4. The principle of reward.

In Colossians 3:23-24 Paul writes:

*Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.*

The Bible shows us in the parables of the Kingdom that faithful stewards who do the master's will with the master's resources can expect to be rewarded incompletely in this life, but fully in the next.

We all should long to hear the master say what he exclaims in Matthew 25:21:

*Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!*

As Christians in the 21st century, we need to embrace this larger biblical view of stewardship, which goes beyond church budgets or building projects, though important; it connects everything we do with what God is doing in the world.

We need to be faithful stewards of all God has given us within the opportunities presented through his providence to glorify him, serve the common good and further his Kingdom.

***As we are taught to walk humbly, we should not worry about rewards. In the words of Elders, "our reward is in heaven."***



# APPENDIX 3

## NOTES AND GLOSSARY OF TERMS

### Document Note

All articles throughout this document refer to relations among and between Indigenous Peoples of the Land and Waters, except where other parties are specifically identified, in recognition of the need for Indigenous Peoples to self-govern separately and recover together from centuries of colonial domination.

### Background on Abbreviations and Terminology

1. **ACC** – Abbreviation for the Anglican Church of Canada
2. **ACIP** – abbreviation for Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples
3. **Catholic** – means the universal church within the Christian tradition
4. **CSC** – Community Sacred Circle
5. **IHOB** – Indigenous House of Bishops
6. **Lay or laity** – the people of the church
7. **Presiding Elder** – Indigenous title conferred by Sacred Circle for the installation of the National Indigenous Anglican Archbishop (NIAAB) where traditional Indigenous symbols are used in ceremony to display unity across the Peoples of the Land and Waters
8. **Sacred Feast** – means the Holy Eucharist, Holy Communion Lord's Supper; these are used interchangeably

## Biblical References

### Section 62

#### **Matthew 5:22-24**

<sup>22</sup> But I say to you that if you are angry with a brother or sister, you will be liable for judgment; and if you insult a brother or sister, you will be liable to the council; and if you say 'You fool', you will be liable to the hell of fire.

<sup>23</sup> So when you are offering your gift at the altar, if you remember that your brother or sister has something against you,

<sup>24</sup> Leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother or sister, and then come and offer your gift.

#### **Matthew 18:15-22**

<sup>15</sup> If another member of the church sins against you, go and point out the fault when the two of you are alone. If the member listens to you, you have regained that one.

<sup>16</sup> But if you are not listened to, take one or two others along with you, so that every word may be confirmed by the evidence of two or three witnesses.

<sup>17</sup> If the member refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if the offender refuses to listen even to the church, let such a one be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.

<sup>18</sup> Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.

<sup>19</sup> Again, truly I tell you, if two of you agree on earth about anything you ask, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven.

<sup>20</sup> For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.

<sup>21</sup> Then Peter came and said to him, "Lord, if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?"

<sup>22</sup> Jesus said to him, "Not seven times but, I tell you, seventy-seven times.

### Section 67

#### **II Corinthians 5: 18-20**

<sup>18</sup> All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us to himself through Christ, and has given us to the ministry of reconciliation;

<sup>19</sup> that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us.

<sup>20</sup> So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.



