

REPORT  
OF THE  
SEVENTH SUMMER INSTITUTE  
ON AMERINDIAN CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP

UNDER THE AUSPICES OF MOST REVEREND BERNARD HUBERT  
BISHOP OF ST-JEAN-LONGUEUIL

JULY 6 - 11, 1985

COLLÈGE ST-JEAN-VIANNEY  
MONTREAL, QUEBEC

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SATURDAY, JULY 6, 1985

The introduction was made by Theresa Hall, who welcomed the people from previous conferences as well as the newcomers. She added that she thinks, in the future, we should make an attempt to invite our youth at this Conference because they are the future leaders in the communities, not only spiritual but also in social life, in everyday life in the future. Considering also that it is the International Year for the Youth in 1985. Then, she introduced to the audience Bishop Bernard Hubert of St-Jean-Longueuil and Bishop Gilles Belisle of Ottawa.

Afterward, Ronald Boyer introduced Andrew Delisle to give a short talk.

Andrew Delisle began with this Indian greeting: "Welcome! Great Peace be with you!" He welcomed the participants to the Mohawk area and gave a brief historical account of the Mohawk life. He continued by saying that as Native, he had the same problems as other Natives. "One can be an Indian and a citizen at the same time. However, we have to work in harmony."

Soon after that, he introduced the Representative of Montreal Mayor Jean Drapeau, Mr. René Baril, who wished good luck to everyone and also said that nations should get together. He recalled these words of the Gospel: "Aimez-vous les uns les autres."

Father Carl Starklof followed, expressing his gratitude to be here for the first time. He explained the way he sees the position of the Native people in the Church as being the best of times and the worst of times (ref. Charles Dickens). The best of times, referring to the growing Native Church with people talking together and listening across cultures. He doesn't think, yet, that we have learned.

He also mentioned that the Church, since the Second Vatican Council is much more open to other people's cultures. He thinks it is a time too for Native people in America that social issues are being faced politically. One of the things that indicates that to him is the way Native people are moving into minister.

"At the conference named after Kateri Tekakwitha in 1976-1977, many people began to ask questions: 'Why don't we try to do something?'. And at the Kateri Tekakwitha Conference of 1984, some 3000 people attended. Most of the events being runned by Native people. Those are inspiring things.

There are also some problems. One's culture changes so fast today. With the media, television, etc., the world changes very fast. This can be a very confusing thing. That is very rough on older people but it is rough on young people too!

I remember when I first was assigned 25 years ago. The people were very poor. Now it is more prosperous, though, they still have the same problems...

We sometimes find ourselves using words in a wrong way. We are not communicating. For instance, when we use a word like religion. A man I know

used to say that he had two religions: the Catholic and his own. He has two ways of worshipping God! There is indeed much confusion in the language. What it means to be a Christian? What it means to be a Catholic?

I think that we have really here two full tasks:

1. To clarify, to make clear to ourselves what God is saying here. We have to find by asking ourselves what is the challenge that is given to us.
2. To clarify what we perhaps should communicate to the whole Church. Ways in which we can offer a wider(?) Church.

I will try to indicate to you different ways in which I have known too Indian people.

The first one that I have experienced I suppose is rather painful. Young people who have tradition and Church don't mean much to the youngsters. Gangs are no longer only in the cities. And the things that tribes used to give, now they have to turn to gangs to get it.

Here is another experience that I have. People who I knew years ago (1970) told me: 'Father, I am a Mission Catholic, and somehow what they have done was totally wrong. Now many people who have done this are angry at themselves, at their parents.'

Another experience is the people who call themselves the traditionalists. It is a complicated situation. They feel that they have to reject the Church. I was among the Pueblo people (Southwest of the States - South Dakota) about 10 years ago and had a conversation with an Elder. He said: 'Last night I did a Native ceremony for you. I am a medicine man. This is going to take care of you for this life. This morning I am receiving Communion, this is for the next life.'

More and more people are integrating their tradition to their religion life. And there are more and more Native priests in the States and in Canada.

Father John Asket, a World War II veteran, did a great deal of reflecting on his involvements with the Native Church. Once, he told me a story: 'In 1942, when I was a young man, I was asked to give a prayer. And I told them this: I said this prayer to you tonight because I want your people to know that it is a medicine that God has given us.'

We have an invitation to move forward and as a conclusion, I have two possible images for you. The young man and the old man. The young man considers himself to be traditionalist. 'Everytime we let the wall come down, we get the white man Church.' The old man had the opposite view. 'Communications and understanding one another.'



- PANEL -

The panel was formed with the following persons: - Dominic Eshkakogan  
- Andrew Delisle  
- Walter Linklater  
- Rita McComber  
- Fr. Carl Starklof

Fr. Carl Starklof: This is to comment on the things we have said this afternoon.

Participant: In Kahnawake, people are more open and aware of their Christianity. People started confusing longhouse with tradition. I was not aware of being Indian, seeing myself as a Christian. Through prayers I was able to reconcile myself; I can be Indian and Catholic. Who are you? Look at yourself! Jesus said: "Who do you say I am?". When I receive Communion, I am one with him. I must practice humility, love.

Walter Linklater: Where I am in North Western Ontario, in the last two years, I have been involved with my culture. I myself have personal problems. In 1974, I recovered from alcoholism. This is where I found God. I had to reconcile with life, with God. Today, I have no guilty feelings of the things I did. School system gave me the knowledge, qualified me to become a teacher. The Catholic Church teachings are one and same thing. We have Elders. We arrange our relation with God as we understand it. The Great Spirit is concerned with my behavior. This is why today I am at peace.

Andrew Delisle: I am impressed with what is happening with Indian people. I find in my tribe that there are many people talking and many people listening. This is in the spiritual Christian movement. I got so impatient to maintain the spiritual values! I am thinking of our young people who have been lost and who are still lost (Indians or not Indians). I saw the people choosing between Indian values when it suited them and not Indian when it did not. What can be done in the future for this movement? Money-making, land-owning, that is all people care for.

Dominic Eshkakogan: I consider our Elders far more wise than I can ever be. Wiser than I can ever get. Yet, they are starting to look to me as an Elder in the Church. I let them seek within themselves. Some of the Elders came to me and they said: "Now that you are going to be ordained in the Church, we look to you to use some of our values. We talk about a way of life." With that in mind, when I was asked to do the suite of the ceremony with the Pope, I used the traditional cedar and tobacco which is a very important part of our lives. The only thing I felt uncomfortable is that they call it the Sweetgrass ceremony. In the way my grandmother talked to me, I saw the purification ceremony (the same used by women 6 weeks after they have given birth). My grandmother was a very strong Catholic but she used the traditional methods. She taught me the spiritual values of our people,

such as caring and loving your brothers and sisters. She taught me how, if I had more than I needed, to share, to give to my brothers and sisters. She used to say with the Catholic Church: "You don't know if someone knocks at your door, if it could not be the representation of Jesus himself."

I was bitter, I was angry. I thought the Catholic Church does not have what I need. Until about eight years ago, I came back and realized I had lost all my traditional and spiritual values. I had turned to alcohol. I recovered from it in 1977. Then, I began to remember the beautiful purification ceremony. I felt uncomfortable with the Sweetgrass ceremony but asked to do the purification with the cedar. Over a year ago, we were able to enter the Sweetgrass ceremony in the Church. It was a marked point when the Catholic Church accepted for the first time through its Pope.

I caution all the Native people about the dangers that can exist in the use of traditional ceremonies. I have to be careful that it does not become a ceremony of superstition. We must separate the ceremony from the superstition. We have to be careful of who we accept. The methods that are used are similar between the good medicine man and the bad medicine man. So, that is why we have to be careful.

When the purification ceremony was brought into the Church, it made the whole Mass take a new meaning to me. I hope that you will feel the same thing that I feel when I will perform the purification ceremony in the coming days.

We must forgive the wrong things that have been done in the past. That was lack of understanding. But now the Church, through its Bishops and through the Holy Father, is ready to listen. There is a fulfillment of our own requests. We must ask the priests and the religious orders to let the people do the things their way.

Sr. Joan Baldwin to  
Dominic Eshkakogan:

You mentioned the necessity of separating, to make sure that you can separate prayers from superstition. How would you know what is prayers and what is superstition?

Dominic Eshkakogan:

That is very difficult to do. There are things that the Creator asked. We must take a good look at the difference between who is your master. Is your master love or is your master money? Some of the Native traditions can be very good. For example, the use of cedar instead of palm I agree with, because we can relate to cedar. Palm you can only find in foreign countries.

Sr. Louise Brosseau: Longhouse, what is it?

Andrew Delisle:

The Iroquois people had a way of life, a religion, a culture. It means a structure where you can have things done, and what have been interpreted as religion became called as longhouse.



## A TESTIMONY FROM WALTER LINKLATER

Walter Linklater gave a talk on where he sees himself today. This is a recollection of this talk, which will be followed by the report of the question period.

It started with the four ages of Walter Linklater, or his age in four stages. From his birth to six years old, Walter has spent his childhood near Fort Francis (Ontario) in an Indian Reserve. At around three or four years old, his mother started teaching him English. Then, a little later, he had to go to residential school in Saskatchewan. He spent 12 years in residential school where, he says, they taught him the Roman Catholic faith. He even fell in love with one of the sisters, Sister Deschambault. After school was over, he began teaching in Alberta, Ontario and Saskatchewan for 9 years and 2 months on Indian Reserves.

"But again, I realized I did not have my identity (synonymous of spiritualism). By a lack of self-esteem, I became an alcoholic in my early twenties. In 1973, that disease led me to Alcoholic Anonymous. Yet, I believe I had to go through that life. It was planned for me by the Creator. I recovered in 1974 and joined A.A. I thought I was smart because I had education but that was a mistake because I started drinking again within 5½ months. Only then I began to look at the 12 steps of A.A. I came to believe that a power greater than yourself could restore your identity.

The program at A.A. is continuous, daily. I only had to give myself more time and also I had to overcome dishonesty, closed-mindedness (sic) and unwillingness. I had to follow the 10 Commandments too. Nevertheless, these experiences have helped me grow and get closer to God.

Two years ago, I went to a conference in Banff, Alberta (1983). Then, I began to realize the spiritual teaching of the Elders. Because I had lost my grandfathers' ways, it has given me a spiritual identity. I used to wonder who I was. Between the four races of man, black, yellow, white and red, what was I? I was red! But again, I thought, how am I going to learn the Redman's knowledge? -Seek out the Elders. The good spiritual people that practice the traditions and spiritualism.

Before there was contact between our Ancestors and white men (around 1635), the Indians already had spiritualism. And the two keys to Indian spiritualism are honesty and kindness. The 10 directions (guidelines) the Elders have taught me are given by Mother Earth. Mother Earth is our teacher.

Honesty is represented to us by the trees and kindness by the grass. When we do a purification ceremony, we purify our mind with the smoke of the sweet-grass. Rocks represent four things. First, there is the power. We have to connect honesty and kindness to the power of the mind. Decision is another value. It is the power to make decisions for ourselves, for our community, for our brothers and sisters, for our nation. The third symbol is the power to command. An honest command, a kind command. The fourth one is control, which also has to be honest and kind. Our minds control our actions. Moreover,

Theresa Hall to  
Rita McComber:

You said you were struggling with the fact that you were Indian. Did you raised your children as Indians?

Rita McComber:

I was raised in New York, but I came to the Reserve every year. When I came back to stay, there was a struggle with the Elders, though I never put away the fact that I am Indian. My oldest son went through the same thing as I did when I came back. We went through a few years of resenting the Church. The struggle was to reconcile being Indian and Catholic.

Fr. George Leach to  
Walter Linklater:

Is there a point where can a Catholic faith belief be expressed in a traditional ritual? Will it always be parallel?

Walter Linklater:

This is a difficult question. For a long time, I struggled with the same question Father Leach has raised. I don't know the answer. What I learned from the Elders in the past few years, is that sometime in the future, we will all be as one as we were one time in the past. When the Creator made men, he made men as one.

Dominic Eshkakogan:

When we look at the old traditional religions from across the sea, there are things in the religion of Moses I think we can use as a parallel. There are parallel things in the belief that we have in Christianity. Jesus did not come to abolish the Law of Moses but he came to fulfill it.

Connie Eyolsson:

How do we incorporate the traditional ways? It seems to me that in my heart, in my spirit, I was told to look forwards. I was invited to attend a special celebration. I have seen a unity of the people. The Indian people can give a unity to the Catholic Church.

Dolly Roach to  
Andrew Delisle:

What did you mean by false prophets?

Andrew Delisle:

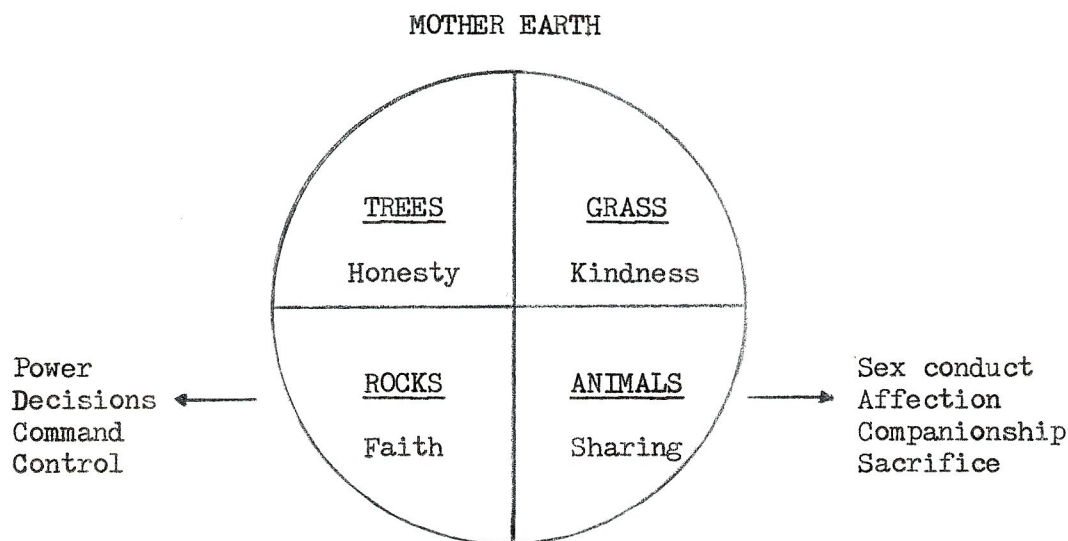
I was referring to the fact that because a new religion is being established within the Indian community, there is a movement that, I believe, is there to exploit the people. Their objective is to control the people. I could be pretty specific. We better act fast to put the truth. That is why I said that I was impatient.

Dominic Eshkakogan: I share those views with Andrew Delisle.



rocks represent faith. I have no reason to doubt because I have faith. Animals do represent sharing. Our Ancestors shared everything like animals do. They were not concerned about tomorrow. They were concerned about today. They shared everything: food, clothes, etc. Our sexual conduct has to be linked to having children, to honesty and kindness (affection, hugging, touching). Animals teach us companionship. When you do a Sacred Circle, that is what you do, you hug. Animals also make the sacrifice of their lives, for us to live.

Here is a diagram from Walter:



How do I go about accomplishing this task? Because I have a mind that sometimes wants to do dishonest things, to disobey... Everyday I pray and I meditate. Even when I was drunk I prayed. Prayers and meditation improve our conscious contact with God. You have to pray in order to follow those 10 directions. The Elders are teaching me not to hate, not to resent but rather to be open-minded. We call each other brothers and sisters because we are truly one.

The ceremony that I do (the Sacred Circle), I would never do without the permission of the Elders. I must say it has given me a spiritual identity.

What is an Indian? The most important part is the soul, the conscious, the heart. This is where it begins. Not in the buckskin clothes...

I believe that God wants me to do good things!"

Walter ended his talk with a closing prayer that you will find on the next page.



## PRAYER FOR BROTHERHOOD

Said by Walter Linklater.

O Great Spirit Kisimanitou,  
We thank you for the beautiful gift you have given us through Mother Earth.  
For the light and Grandfather Sun,  
Light to enlight our minds, bodies and spirits,  
So that we may better do thy will.

For the water and Grandfather Thunder Spirit,  
Water to cleanse our minds, bodies and spirits,  
So that we may better do thy will.

For the food from Grandfather Animal Spirit,  
Food to nourish our minds, bodies and spirits,  
So that we may better do thy will.

For the wind and Grandfather Wind,  
Wind to move our minds, bodies and spirits,  
So that we may better do thy will.

We also thank you, O Great Spirit Kisimanitou,  
For the trees that teaches us honesty,  
The rocks that teaches us faith,  
The grass that teaches us kindness,  
The animals that teaches us share.

We thank you for all the spiritual and material gifts you have given us.  
Some we do not deserve, but we must accept those,  
Knowing that it is a part of your will for us.

We ask respectfully and with kindness and honesty  
Your continued blessing and guidance for us, your children,  
Especially the youth who need your help this day.

We ask for love, as mothers love their children,  
For strength as powerful as the mountains,  
For humbleness as feathers in the wind,  
For vision as the eagle surveys his domain,  
For wisdom as practical as that of our Elders,  
For harmony as day blends into night,  
For courage as animals die so others may live.

These we need, O Great Spirit Kisimanitou,  
And if it be your will,  
Grant us these requests,  
So that we may serve thou better,  
And that we may live in peace and brotherhood,  
With all other brothers and sisters,  
Black, yellow, white, red on Mother Earth.

- QUESTION PERIOD -

This is the question period following Walter Linklater's talk.

Fr. Carl Starklof: What about the isolation that badly suffer the Indians living in the city? How can they cope with what you are talking about?

Walter Linklater: A person develops spirituality inside and it is possible to do so even in this context.

Fr. Alvin Gervais: 1. You are becoming an Elder. In order to pay the greatest respect to the Elders when we go to them for advice, what are the kinds of things that one does when they want to get some advice from an Elder?  
2. The second question refers to your experience in residential schools. Presently, I come up face to face with a certain number of young men and women who have anger, resentment, related to their experience in residential schools. How can I relate to those men and women?

Walter Linklater: 1. Traditionally, it is tobacco that you give to an Ojibway Elder to approach him. They know when they receive tobacco that there is going to be a request. They wait and you ask what you want.  
2. Tell the students to go back to talk to Elders. To learn the culture (spiritual 10 directions) in order to become powerful in themselves enough to overcome resentment and hatred.

Fr. François Paradis: It is about a woman who came to see me. She feels that if she asks advice to an Elder, she is then bound to follow the Elder's advice.

Walter Linklater: The person offering tobacco may or may not be bound to the Elder's response. There is free will in human beings.

Fr. Sylvain Lavoie: Why tobacco? Symbol?

Walter Linklater: It symbolizes all the good spirits in the universe.

Fr. Sylvain Lavoie: What is the role of Jesus according to the Elders in Native spirituality?

Walter Linklater: Jesus Christ was a good medicine man because he practiced spiritual principles that the Elders are teaching us today. He developed into a degree so powerful that he could perform miracles. Our Elders too, due to the spiritual development of our mind. The difference is that the history of Jesus Christ was written down (characteristic of European societies). The history of spiritualism of Native people was never written down.

Elders say that there are bad and evil spirits out there and you have to be prepared for the evils. Prepare yourself through prayer, meditation. Try to complete those 10 directions on a daily basis. Also use the incense of sweetgrass, sage or cedar on your body and mind everyday to protect you from the bad spirits and spread it around yourself (your room, your house). It helps to keep away the bad spirits.

## SUNDAY, JULY 7, 1985

This day was kept to allow a visit at Kahnawake where is the Shrine of Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha.

The Holy Eucharist was celebrated by Bishop Bernard Hubert, Bishop of St-Jean-Longueuil. The homily was delivered by Father Stan Fontaine and Dominic Eshkakogan performed a Sweetgrass ceremony.

Afterward, a lunch was served at Kateri Hall where Chief Jos Norton officially welcomed the participants of this 7<sup>th</sup> Summer Institute on Amerindian Christian Leadership.

After the lunch, people were given free time to pray and to visit. Then, it was the return to Collège St-Jean-Vianney in Montreal.

## MONDAY, JULY 8, 1985

On that morning, at 7:00, Walter Linklater has performed a ceremony of the Sacred Circle for a small group of about 20 persons. He will be performing this ceremony on every morning until the end of the Institute.

A little later, Bishop Gilles Belisle of Ottawa came to talk to the participants. He started by introducing two members of the Mission Commission: Father Claude Pagé and Father Lorne MacDonald. Then he said that his aim was to listen to the people and to share with them. "I came here to assure you of the support of the Canadian Bishops." He added that 1983 was a crucial year and a special year because two days were given to talking about the Indian dioceses.

Father Mike Stogre took the rest of the day to give his interpretations of Pope John Paul II's messages and to tackle the theme: "What Is Our Mission?", which was followed by group activity (work groups).

You will find the texts on which were based his talks on the next pages, as well as the reports from the work groups on "Faith & Culture" and on "What Is Our Mission?".



## ENCULTURATION

### THE INTEGRATION OF NATIVE CULTURE & CHRISTIAN FAITH

By Fr. Mike Stogre, S.J.

Introduction: The original announcement of the Conference listed three objectives. The first was to integrate Native culture and faith for the participants. Already these past two days the objective has been tackled in various ways ranging from the key note speech to the prayer of Elders through the speeches of John Paul II himself. In this first phase of the morning session I want to also look at this theme in a reflective manner. As I said last night out of respect for each one of you who bring a wealth of experience and knowledge to this Conference I would like each one of you for the first five minutes to jot down your own thoughts on the theme. What does the word enculturation mean to me? Might be a question you could ask yourself. What are my feelings about the integration of faith and Native culture? Is it possible? Is it desirable? What did John Paul II have to say on this theme when he was in Canada or in general in his writings, and speeches in other parts of the world?

Now that you have had a few moments to mull over the topic let me share with you my thoughts on the same theme.

I will try to do this in three parts. First of all, we will look at the papal speeches in Canada as they affect this theme.

Secondly, I will try to relate the theme to the tradition of the Church.

Thirdly, I will along the way suggest certain actions that might flow out of the discussion. Some of these we might want to tag and make part of our message to Church Leaders, etc.

To begin with it might be helpful for us to define some terms. Three in particular are often confused when the discussion of faith & culture comes up. I refer to **acculturation**, **inculturation** and **enculturation**. I prefer to use the last mentioned word but you may wish to argue for another choice of words.

Acculturation occurs when a person or a whole people voluntarily or through coercion gives up their own culture and adopts the culture of another people. In history this has often happened after war and conquest of one people by another. In a real sense the struggles of the early Church were about this issue. Did the Gentiles have to acculturate to the Hebrew culture in order to be Christians? We know the answer to be no, but not without much struggle and debate even between Peter and Paul.

Another term that is frequently used is **inculturation**. Both this term and **enculturation** have been used to express the idea that faith must be expressed in the cultural forms of every people if the Gospel is to be authentically preached. Some prefer the latter term and that includes myself because it tends

to convey the idea of a process coming from within the culture while the former could look like a bringing in from without. In any case you can decide for yourself what you think is best. But also let us keep these terms in mind as we examine the message of John Paul II. What approach did he advocate?

Apart from the speeches to the Native people the theme of Faith & Culture was prominent during the papal visit. The theme for Quebec City was Faith & Culture, and for Winnipeg/St. Boniface Faith & Culture in a Multicultural Society. Also in his meetings with the Slavic peoples (Poles, Ukrainians, Slovaks) the theme was prominent. Also John Paul II draws upon his own cultural experience to strengthen others. In an important speech to UNESCO in 1980 he had this to say:

"I am the son of a Nation, which has lived the greatest experiences of history, which its neighbours have condemned to death several times, but which has survived and remained itself. It has kept its identity, and it has kept, in spite of partitions and foreign occupations, its national sovereignty, not by relying on the resources of physical power, but solely by relying on its culture. This culture turned out to be more powerful than all other forces." (UNESCO, 14).

John Paul II was therefore the right person to speak to Native peoples about their history and the aspirations for their culture during a time when hope was fading for the cultural survival of so many ancient peoples.

During his speech intended for Fort Simpson but made at Yellowknife he alluded to a similar historical experience: "It is clear from the historical record that over the centuries your peoples have been repeatedly the victims of injustice by newcomers who in their blindness, often saw all your culture as inferior." (40-6) He is also aware that present attitudes may not be much different: "I know that relations between Native people and white people are often strained and tainted with prejudice. Furthermore, in many places the Native people are the poorest and the most marginal members of society. They suffer from the fact that recognition of their identity and of their ability to participate in shaping their future is late in coming." (6-5)

Despite the evil that has occurred much has been retained. John Paul II spoke at St. Anne de Beaupré especially of the spiritual heritage that can benefit not only Native people but the rest of society as well. He states:

"Over the centuries, Dear Amerindian and Inuit peoples, you have gradually discovered in your cultures special ways of living your relationship with God and with the world while remaining loyal to Jesus and the Gospel. Continue to develop these moral and spiritual values: an acute sense of the presence of God, love of your family, respect for the aged, solidarity with your people, sharing, hospitality, respect for nature, the importance given silence and prayer, faith in providence. Guard this wisdom precious. To let it become impoverished would be to impoverish the people around you." (6-3)



John Paul II knows that it won't be easy nor automatic that these values be maintained: "To live these spiritual values in a new way requires on your part maturity, interiority, a deepening of the Christian message, a concern for the dignity of the human being and a pride in being Amerindian and Inuit. This demands the courage to eliminate every form of enslavement that might compromise your future." (6-3)

What these texts, which to my mind are the heart of the message on Faith and Culture, say to us is that it is really "Christ animating the very center of all culture" (32-5) the model and message for us here is that of the Incarnation, of the word becoming flesh and pitching his tent among us. But even more so he pitched his tent among a particular people with a distinct culture that had been profoundly shaped by God's on going relationship with them. Our task is no less and no different.

By operating in this way, God revealed a great respect for culture as the vehicle for an expression of faith. As John Paul II notes you had already discovered in your cultures ways of living your relationship with God and the world. These expressed a set of profound meanings and values which he says were not only needed in the past but are vital today not just for you but for all Canadians.

Lest you think this was just a rhetorical flourish he repeated and developed further this theme at Midland: "Through his Gospel Christ confirms the Native peoples in their belief in God, their awareness of his presence, their ability to discover him in creation, their dependence upon him, their desire to worship him, their sense of gratitude for the land, their responsible stewardship of the earth, their reverence for all his great works, their respect for the Elders." (32-5)

Also at Midland John Paul II put forth a tremendous challenge to Native people: "The world needs to see these values... pursued in the life of the community and made incarnate in a whole people." (32-5) For John Paul II knows that culture is precarious and values can be forgotten. We have only to look at so many communities across the land to see what a challenge this really is for you and for me and the whole Church. Furthermore, while the "Gospel does not destroy what is best in you... it enriches as it were from within the spiritual qualities and gifts that are distinctive of your cultures." (6-3) In this text John Paul II was quoting Vatican II's document The Church in the Modern World. (#58)

The phrases to **"enrich from within"** and **"Christ animating the very center of all culture"** are what I mean by "enculturation", Christ is not against your culture, nor identical with it, but at its heart transforming it. As Bishop Marcel Gervais reminded us in Banff two summers ago Christ is the Light, the Word, that was in the world even before the Incarnation. (John 1:1-16) The word of God was present animating and transforming cultures even then.

Because of this positive history John Paul II is able to say even more: "Your Amerindian and Inuit traditions permit the development of new ways of expressing the message of salvation and they help us to better understand to what point Jesus is the Saviour and how universal his salvation is." (6-3)



I would add as well new ways and forms for worshiping the Creator. In the past we have relied upon Hebrew, Greek, and Roman cultures for understanding and expressing the mysteries of God revealed in Jesus Christ. Now Greek is a rich language and very helpful. But no cultural expression can exhaust the mystery. Each has its strengths and weaknesses. What are the untapped gifts of the Native languages and rites for theology and worship? This is partially what we are here to find out. We may want to frame some resolutions around these points during our afternoon session.

During the best moments of our Church history, enculturation was the accepted way of proceeding. I already referred to the first major expansion from the Jewish world to the Gentile Middle Eastern and Mediterranean milieu. As we know from the Acts of the Apostles this was accomplished, but not without pain and conflict.

Secondly, that second era of the Church history was also a period in which the Gospel enculturated within a variety of European settings. This was, I would say, very successful but of course far from perfect. (Think for example of Christianity making use of the symbolism of the Roman winter solstice and Sun God festival in our own celebration of Christmas.)

It became perhaps too successful, and too identified with a Latin enculturation. Thus, when the missionaries left Europe for other continents they by and large opted for an acculturation approach. There were some prophetic exceptions such as the work of Matteo Ricci in China and Bartolomeo de Las Casas in the Americas who tried to be faithful to the earlier tradition. But sadly we must admit that they did not succeed in their time. Yet they remain inspirations for us even today.

On the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the arrival of Matteo Ricci in China, John Paul II had this to say: "The Christian message is not the exclusive property of any one group or race...just as the Fathers of the Church in regard to Greek culture, so also Father Matteo Ricci was rightly convinced that faith in Christ not only would not have brought any harm to Chinese culture, but would have enriched and perfected it...in the light of the spirit of dialogue and openness which characterizes the Council, Father Ricci's missionary method appears very much alive and relevant." (P.10)

All through the documents of Vatican II we see a new openness to what had been the original way of proceeding by the Church. The question for us here in Canada and across the Americas is a profound one: Is it too late to begin again? Is it too late to build on the work already begun by so many dedicated missionaries down through the centuries even to our own day. Missionaries that John Paul II paid tribute to right across Canada. He acknowledged their and our weaknesses and sinfulness. But despite them all, he could say: "The missionaries remain among your best friends, devoting their lives to your service as they preach the word of God." (40-2) At Fort Simpson, he pointed out how their work in Linguistics and the Social Sciences was a contributing factor "in the marvellous rebirth of your culture and traditions which you are experiencing today." (40-2)

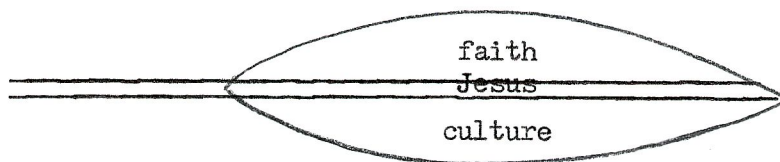
Finally, I could not close this session without recalling John Paul II's stirring affirmation: "Not only is Christianity relevant to the Indian peoples, but **Christ, in the members of his Body, is himself Indian.**" (32-5)



## FAITH & CULTURE (Work groups)

These are some of the reflections the participants made in small groups on what John Paul II has spoken to the Canadian Church about Native culture and faith.

- a) Basic principle: When approaching another culture, a respectful dialogue and openness to being taught are essential.
- Concern: To distinguish between a deistic faith and Christian faith. It is up to Christian Natives to express Christian faith culturally - to be open to journey with others - to learn from one another.
- Dialogue: We must promote dialogue between Elders who reject "Christianity" and Christians who reject traditional ways.
- Complementary: Culture and faith are like two sides of a feather: Jesus is the center, holding both sides together.



- Distinguish: The model we have now is a European model of Christianity. Do we need to explore de-culturation?
- b) Language is the key to open the door to cultures. That is why we should use our language in the liturgy because the translation from language to language looses the spiritual meaning along the way. "I think Indian and when I translate, it takes a different meaning." The loss of a mother tongue really impoverishes a culture and, quite sadly, already some of our youth do not understand the language of their Nation.
- c) Culture cannot be taken away from us. We need both culture and religion to make us complete.
- d) Faith goes beyond culture.
- e) Family life is the basis of faith life.
- f) Can faith and culture be blended successfully? Some feel yes if taken slowly and if being blended in their particular parish.
- g) We have to discern some elements of our culture. There are things we can take and there are things we have to leave behind.
- h) How can I introduce Jesus in the Indian way? How can we express our faith to our Creator? - Native people have simple ways of walking with Christ.

- i) Inculturation is possible and is now happening. However, we must expect struggle.
- j) The Native people have gifts to bring to the whole Church, and we are ready to share those gifts.
- k) Inculturation completes the identity of the Native person.
- l) More members of the clergy and other Christians need to be more accepting.
- m) We need the deacons ordained as priests, and also we need Native Bishops.
- n) We need to bless our traditional ways with the presence of Christ in us.
- o) As white missionaries, we must recognize the depth and extent of our prejudices toward Native cultures.
- p) The form used to express faith differs. The essential is that the content remains. The form is related to culture.

## RECONCILIATION

### THE HEALING OF NEGATIVE MEMORIES OF NATIVE EXISTENCE

By Fr. Mike Stogre, S.J.

Introduction: During his visit to Quebec City, the Pope spoke a word of caution about his speeches: "My word does not claim to bring forth an answer to all your questions nor be a substitute for your own searching. It will offer you the light and strength of faith in Jesus Christ." (1-7) We should keep this in mind as we review the speeches relevant especially to Native people. The Pope has provided us with a compass more than a road map in grappling with many issues. With his thought as a faithful guide to the catholic tradition, we will go in the right direction but we must make a way by actually going. We are taking the road less travelled as we explore themes of faith and culture and the future goal lies far ahead.

One of the obstacles to achieving a new synthesis of faith and culture relates to the second objective of the Conference. I have in mind the healing of negative memories. This brings up the theme of reconciliation which John Paul II referred to on several occasions during his visit.

At the outset I want to pull together the major texts addressed to Native people that call for reconciliation.

Secondly, I would like to present a biblical model relating to cultural conflict which may illumine our present period of history.

Finally, I would like to raise some questions about reconciliation and healing.

At St. Anne-de-Beaupré, Pope John Paul II had this to say on the theme of reconciliation: "As disciples of Jesus Christ, we know that the Gospel calls us to live as his brothers and sisters. We know that Jesus Christ makes possible reconciliation between peoples with all its requirements of conversion, justice and social love. If we truly believe that God created us in God's image, we shall be able to accept one another with our differences and despite our limitations and sins." (6-6)

At Midland, this theme was repeated and expanded: "This is truly the hour for Canadians to heal all the divisions that have developed over the centuries between the original peoples and the newcomers to this continent. This challenge touches all churches and ecclesial communities throughout Canada." (32-5)

He prefaced this quotation with a reference to the good Samaritan as healer: "Like the good Samaritan, we are called to bind up the wounds of our neighbours in need. Together with St. Paul, we must affirm: 'It was God who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the work of handing on this reconciliation.'" (2 Cor 5:18) Again at Yellowknife, John Paul II reiterated the urgency of reconciliation: "I have come to call you to Christ, to propose again for you and all Canada, his message of forgiveness and reconciliation. As I mentioned at Midland the hour has come to bind up the wounds, to heal all divisions. It is a time of forgiveness, for reconciliation and for a commitment to building new relationships." (40-6) Reconciliation is then both a biblical gift and an ongoing task of the community of disciples of Jesus Christ.



## THE FOUR DIMENSIONS OF RECONCILIATION

All human beings need healing and reconciliation in four basic relationships of existence.

There is first of all the relationship between humanity and God, the Creator. The bad news here is that nothing human beings could do could have healed this aspect of our brokenness. The good news is that God was in Jesus Christ reconciling us to himself. He did it once and for all and gave us the ministry of announcing this good news.

But the good news does not stop there. We also have a relationship with creation, with nature, which has suffered from human sinfulness. It is part of God's promise that creation too will be liberated from its bondage. (Romans 8) Again this is primarily a gift of God but at the same time we have a role, a ministry of reconciliation here as well. John Paul II alluded to it particularly at Yellowknife: "You are called to responsible stewardship and to be a dynamic example of the proper use of nature, especially at a time when pollution and environmental damage threaten the earth." (4-7) In the book of Genesis there seem to be two distinct but complimentary views on our relationship with nature. In chapter 1, we are blessed by God who said: "Be fertile and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it. Have dominion over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, and all living things that move on the earth." (Gen 1-28) This passage has often been cited by critics of western culture as at the root of our problems with ecology.

However, I believe it is simplistic to read back into Genesis interpretations shaped by 200 years of industrial development. The Jewish people were largely agrarian and had some sense about respect for the earth. Even to letting the earth lie fallow every seventh year. Be that as it may, we also forget the complimentary creation story in which "the Lord took them and settled them in the Garden of Eden to cultivate and care for it." (Gen 2-15) Today we need to emphasize this stewardship motif and mandate more than the domination theme which unfortunately in English connotes ruling over. A notion that is quite softened in the Hebrew attitude toward the material world. In any case, today our survival depends upon a renewed sense of stewardship for creation. The Native world view and traditional respect for nature was one of the spiritual values John Paul II hoped would be rekindled in the people and shared by the rest of Canadian society. This is a mission given perhaps especially to the Indigenous peoples of the Americas. To be Ambassadors of reconciliation with creation. Thirdly, we all have relationships with other persons and communities, indeed with the whole human race. The papers and television news reports are full of examples of the brokenness and separation we experience in this area of our existence. As noted already, John Paul II called all Canadians to work together to overcome the divisions brought about by centuries of oppression. There is ample scope here for all the spiritual gifts of the Christian and secular communities. Some might be adept at promoting marriage and family renewal, others might work at improving race relations. Still others, might be concerned with the liberation of the sexes, others again might have political gifts that would help create just and supportive structures for families, communities, the first Nations, and for the Nation State of Canada. Finally, and especially in our time, we need peacemakers on a local and international scale. In so many of his speeches in Canada did John Paul II mention this aspect of reconciliation including the texts cited at the beginning.



Finally, we have a relationship to ourselves as persons - the intra-personal. It is here that the negative memories we have lie sometimes out of awareness but all too often they are quite prominent and painful. God's healing and reconciliation intends to change this reality as well. Paradoxically, it is only by remembering that we can forget. It is only by bringing out in the open our hurt and anger, by facing up to the work of grief that must go on over broken dreams and broken treaties, wounded bodies and spirits that we will be freed up sufficiently to create our preferred future. In many of our communities the healing ministry of the charismatic renewal movement has been a great help in this regard.

St. Paul expressed well our brokenness in his Epistle to the Romans when he said: "I cannot even understand my own actions. I do not do what I want to do but what I hate. .... The desire to do right is there but not the power." (Rom 7:15-20)

John Paul II on so many occasions during his visit to Canada announced the good news of hope that we are now given the power of the Holy Spirit to overcome all obstacles, (e.g. 6-6) so that in acceptance we can say with St. Paul: "We know that God makes all things work together for the good of those who love him. (Romans 8-28) This must include the losses and tragedies of the past. Hopefully, during this Conference we can together further this healing process, this process of reconciliation which really is the work of a lifetime, more than an instantaneous remission. Ask any recovered alcoholic when was the moment of healing and they will most likely tell you that healing is still going on and they don't expect ever to be completely secure in this life.

I want now to share with you a very helpful biblical model for exploring conflict between peoples. In their book The Biblical Foundations for Mission, Frs. Senior and Stuhlmuehler while exploring biblical history it seems to me have also given us a way of understanding our own juncture in Canadian history.

Whenever a new people or a new idea (usually both happen together) comes on the scene there is generated a period of conflict and struggle.

However, after a time the new people or new idea adapts itself and puts down roots in the new setting.

Finally, after this period of indigenization, enculturation, there occurs a prophetic challenge on the home front.

They cite four examples from Jewish history:

1. The experience of Abraham: from Ur to Canaan + some ethical development.
2. The experience of Israel in Canaan: from Egypt to Canaan + prophetic challenge 500 years later.
3. The experience of exile: from Israel to Babylonian captivity and then a prophetic challenge (Ezekial).
4. The experience of return after the exile: from Babylon back to Israel - indigenization - but this time they remained a ghetto people.

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5. The experience of Christianity within Israel: religious movement brings conflict + indigenous expression in Hebrew cultural forms, then came Paul's prophetic challenge to break out into a universal mission.
6. The experience of Christianity within the Roman Empire: persecution, then edict of tolerance, finally the monastic movement can be seen as a prophetic challenge to the indigenization of Christianity.
7. The experience of Christianity in Latin America: conquest and conflict, a long period of indigenization taking many forms, and now one could see liberation theology as a prophetic challenge to both Church and State.
8. The Canadian experience: period of conflict, settlement, and now a prophetic challenge coming from Native people, some sectors of the Church, and as we have seen from John Paul II as well.

No model is perfect but this one has helped me understand our present situation and predicament.

Thus profound questions emerge for us and for the Church at this time in history. What is the role of the Church to be during this period? John Paul II at St. Anne-de-Beaupré cautioned that "The Church does not intervene directly in civil matters, but you know its concern for you and you know that it tries to inspire all those who want to live with the Christian spirit." (6-5) What Church was John Paul referring to, and is it true that the Church does not intervene directly in civil matters?

What do you think the Canadian Catholic Church should be doing at this time in history?

John Paul II has also said that reconciliation requires, conversion, justice, and social love. (6-5) What are we doing to promote conversion in ourselves and our communities, to practice justice and to work for justice in the land, to exemplify social love?



## LIBERATION

### TO FIND DIGNITY AS NATIVE PEOPLE

By Fr. Mike Stogre, S.J.

Introduction: The third objective of the Conference begins with the search for human dignity and includes the expression of faith in Native ways according to Native traditions as blessed by the message of John Paul II during his visit to Canada.

The first part of the objective sets out the foundation and conditions for the latter section. For when one talks about the dignity of persons of whatever culture in the Catholic tradition, one is talking about the foundation of all human rights: the dignity and worth of the human person.

For the most part during this Conference we are talking about cultural and spiritual rights, something the Vatican has spoken about for a very long time. John Paul II alluded to this in his Yellowknife address when he referred back to a papal document published in 1537. This is the document *Sublimis Deus*. In a sense this was the forerunner of a long tradition of speaking out on human rights and Native rights in particular. Even though it was for the most part ignored it became part of a tradition which developed into international law.

Recently, the Solicitor for the Bear Island Band, Bruce Clark, cited this document as proof that it was not mainline Church teaching that non-Christians have not rights. Let me cite the most important section of that document as a way into our own discussion:

"We, who though unworthy, exercise on earth the power of our Lord and seek with all our might to bring those sheep of his flock who are outside into the fold committed to our charge, consider however, that the Indians are truly men and that they are not only capable of understanding the Catholic faith but, according to our information, they desire exceedingly to receive it. Desiring to provide ample remedy to these evils, we define and declare by these letters....that notwithstanding whatever may have been or may be said to the contrary, the said Indians and all other people who may later be discovered by Christians, are by no means to be deprived of their liberty, or the possession of their property, even though they be outside the faith of Jesus Christ; and that they may and should, freely and legitimately enjoy their liberty and possession of their property, nor should they be in any way enslaved; should the contrary happen it shall be null and of no effect."

This theme of liberation from everything that enslaves us is very much part of the present Pope's teaching. We have already noted this in his speech at St. Anne-de-Beaupré but it comes out even more strongly in the Yellowknife address.



Today many people are concerned about liberation theology. Well, liberation has always been a central aspect of the Gospel message and will continue to be so. John Paul II himself has a very definite perspective on liberation. Here are his own words:

"There are close links between the preaching of the Gospel and human advancement, and human advancement includes development and **liberation**. And so today, I present to you the Gospel message with its commandment of fraternal love, with its demands for justice and human rights with all its liberating power."

A little further into his speech he goes on to:

"Proclaim that freedom which is required for a just and equitable measure of self-determination in your lives as Native peoples. In union with the whole Church, I proclaim all your rights and their corresponding duties. And I also condemn physical, cultural, and religious oppression, and all that would in any way deprive you or any group of what rightly belongs to you."

Finally, he stressed important items presently under negotiation in Canada:

"A just and equitable degree of self-governing....a land base with adequate resources....for developing a viable economy for present and future generations."

Overall these speeches clearly support Aboriginal rights, legitimate Native cultural and spiritual aspirations, and affirm the dignity of the Indian and Inuit peoples. Again at Yellowknife he went so far as to say: "Christ himself has become Indian and Inuit in you his members."

At this point, I would like to present a summary of the Catholic human rights position so that we will be in a better position to understand the tradition of social teaching out of which the Pope is coming, and to help clarify our own roles in the promotion of human rights in the world today.

Now it is one thing to proclaim liberation, reconciliation, and healing; it is quite another to see it happen in practice. The earlier human rights pronouncement of the Pope contained in *Sublimis Deus* were all but ignored as history clearly reveals.

Will the same be said for the updated human rights doctrine proclaimed by the Pope here in Canada?

Notice too that John Paul II stayed at a fairly general level of discussion. It was not for him to tell Canadians how to govern themselves. There is no one way all human beings have to live. There is no one way we as Canadians have to organize our lives. Self-government could take many forms within or without confederation. An equitable land base with adequate resources what does that mean concretely? No doubt this will be worked out over time in tough negotiations with the federal and provincial governments.

And on this score many Native groups like the Coalition of First Nations feel that negotiations are the wrong strategy, that in fact by negotiating you recognize the Canadian Government and its Constitution. This is to sell out Native rights. If you look at the progress of the First Ministers Conference, they may well be right. In any case it is not for the Church Leaders to spell out what would constitute a just settlement of land claims, self-government, and resource development.

However, the Church at this level must be prophetic as John Paul II was in Canada, and continuously remind governments to work toward a just society for all.

At the same time John Paul II reminded all of us that we too are the Church. As laity especially you are called to help change the attitudes and structures of society that continue to oppress people.

In this very real sense of the Church there is no way the people of God can escape being in politics. At the same time the Bishops and priests, sisters and brothers, also have a political role but it is more like that of John Paul II himself.

We must continue to teach, and preach, and form a responsible laity who will be the main agents for transforming the world. This brings us to the topic of our mission which we will leave till this afternoon.

## OUR MISSION TODAY

By Fr. Mike Stogre, S.J.

A number of years ago in an important document Pope Paul the VI<sup>th</sup> recalled to our attention the mission of the Church:

"We wish to confirm once more that the task of evangelizing all people constitutes the essential mission of the Church." (En #14)

And when John Paul II spoke at Yellowknife, he reminded Canadians of a particular mission task:

"On this occasion....I appeal to the whole Church in Canada to be ever more sensitive to the needs of the missionary North. The spirit of God is calling the Church throughout this land to exercise the full measure of shared responsibility for the needs of God's people in the vast regions of the North. The power of Christ's Paschal mystery that has sustained the missionaries of the past and present in total generosity will not desert the young people of today. It is the Lord Jesus himself who is asking the whole Church in Canada to be faithful to her essential missionary character - **without which she cannot exist as the Church of God.**

I appeal to the youth among the Native peoples to be open to accept leadership roles and responsibilities. I likewise appeal to the Catholic youth among you to be open to God's calling to the priesthood and religious life, and I ask all their Catholic Elders, leaders and parents to look with honour upon these special vocations and to support and encourage all those who freely wish to embrace this way of life." (FS)

These quotations set the context for our discussion this afternoon. In particular the Church in Canada has certain responsibilities to discharge in relation to the Church of the Indigenous peoples.

In the short run I believe the Pope and our own Bishops are asking Canadian Catholics to take up the missionary vocation in the North. So that in the long run the Native peoples themselves will take charge of their own churches.

## THESES ON EVANGELIZATION

- # 1. The Gospel is always culturally mediated. This is so because whatever is received, is received according to the cultural mind-set of the receiver.
- # 2. Thus the mediation process entails either acculturation or enculturation.



- # 3. In either case conflict is inevitable. (Recall the biblical paradigm.) (Also the theology of Luke: kerygma-belief-worship/kerygma-rejection-persecution) Sometimes I feel we are looking for the perfect method that will avoid all conflict. This is impossible. Read the Acts of the Apostles as the classic case study of this.
- # 4. When the missionary/evangelizer is receptor-oriented, the Gospel is liberating.
- # 5. When the proclamation of the Gospel requires acculturation it becomes an instrument of repression.
- # 6. The model of Christ incarnate provides the symbol and the method for enculturation. "As the divine Logos emptied himself and humbled himself in order to become fully human in Jesus of Nazareth, so the Church might be expected to empty itself in order to make itself completely at home among the tribes and peoples and nations who are humanity in its spatio-temporal extension. The Church in other words must accept these diverse and limited cultural worlds in the same radical way - and from the inside - that God in Jesus Christ embraced the Jewish cultural world of 2000 years ago." (Hillman)
- # 7. Jesus evangelized by the word of witness (e.g. by his very life), by the word of service (healing) and by the various forms of proclamation he used.

He was effective because he did it person to person, within the framework of the persons he spoke with (recall his homely parables from the Middle Eastern culture, recall Paul's use of Aesop's fable of the body to express our relationship with Christ, the Head of the Church). He also had credibility because of his life style and his healing ministry (at least with the ordinary folk of the time).

- # 8. So today God still intends to see the Christian Gospel, the good news, communicated through cultural forms. God is receptor-oriented.
- # 9. Cultures are dynamic. Always changing. There is no privileged culture in the sense that it cannot be improved, is not in need of reform. Furthermore, the Church is not bound exclusively and indissolubly to any race or nation, nor to any particular way of life, or any pattern of living either ancient or new (G & S 58).
- #10. Religion for John Paul II is the heart of culture; cultures are the forms of religion. (Culture = set of meaning and values that enform a way of life.)
- #11. Thus in our missionary work we must keep in tension the link between human liberation and salvation. In Jesus Christ they are profoundly linked but never identical. (En #35)

- #12. Furthermore, we must keep in mind that human liberation is not a sufficient condition for the coming of the kingdom of God. (En #35) Even if we could settle all land claims, develop appropriate forms of self government, create a new and sustainable economy for all Native peoples we would still be in need of the Gospel and the good news of the kingdom which transcends all human achievements however worthy and even necessary.
- #13. In the end, the only complete liberation comes with the Parousia - Christ's return in glory.
- #14. At the same time we must affirm that it truly is present, begins and develops in history.
- #15. Just as the life work of Jesus Christ lives on because of the resurrection so too, human efforts for liberation will be preserved through the same Paschal mystery.
- #16. Thus our basic mission at this time in history is integral liberation through evangelization by the ministry of word, work, and life. Only this is worthy of the Gospel, only this catholic in the sense of global comprehensive approach to the heralding of the Gospel will make it credible in our time, in our land.

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Let us now gather in work groups to work out some concrete goals and strategies, some resolutions that will be useful for us as the Church in Canada entrusted with the mission John Paul II gave us of completing the work begun over so many years of building a Native Church.

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## OUR MISSION TODAY (Work groups)

These are some of the remarks given by the participants gathered in small groups.

- a) Our mission is to respect nature, to love, to pray, to use the power of the Holy Spirit for healing. Also we must pay attention for dreams, reflect, and study deeper about Christ.
- b) Family should be involved for we must not rely only on school. In fact, family, school and parish should act in concert with one another.
- c) Institutional recognition of the powers given to the Elders (spiritual/civil). An Elders' Council could develop the objectives of a new catechism, adapt it, including traditional teachings.
- d) We should walk with the youth and thus build a new foundation for the future of our Church. They need support and encouragement to participate.
- e) Native people have to be empowered to be decision-makers in the Church.
- f) Explore the possibilities of new structures such as a "floating diocese" to serve Indian Nations/groups.
- g) Develop a Native clergy in a Native way with Native deacons, deaconesses, priests and Bishops. Further discuss the question of ordination of married deacons to priesthood.
- h) Establishment of a Native Church or a rite with autonomy. We must organize. The Bishops are not going to organize or set up structures within our communities (e.g. national, regional and local structures). It has to rise from within ourselves.
- i) Establish a National Native Church Council to dialogue and tackle Native Church issues.
- j) Support Native ministry programs - mandate such ministries in each diocese advancing towards ordination.
- k) Open a Formation Centre: Bible study, how to lead a Church service, training for ministries. Form a committee of representatives of each community. Have a Kisimanitou Centre concept in every province.
- l) The liturgy (+ homily and readings) should be in the language of the people for one of the most important doors of admission to the culture of another is the door of language.
- m) Communion with Christian Churches within the framework of Amerindian Church - inculturated with the Indian way of life.



- n) Have more resource centres closer to the communities with financial support to the community leaders. Have resource people come to the communities to teach and to dialogue with the people.
- o) Religious orders for Native men and women should be established. And also to see that some existing religious orders return to the charisms of their founders, i.e. having a sign (it does not have to be a cassock) and living a life of poverty (simplicity) so that Native people will feel at ease or at home.
- p) Involvement from the laity in all areas of the entire community with Native spirituality inserted. It should be treated as equal in terms of Church.
- q) Bishops should be more in tune and aware of what their priests are doing in the field. Moreover, reports should be coming from the entire community and not just from the priest.
- r) We should have with the Christian missionaries Native spirituality encounter sessions once a month.
- s) To see that the Church gets less commercialized and more culturized - but not so much culture that we do not know what is going on in the Church.
- t) To see that creation becomes part of mass, otherwise the youth ends up reading magazines (sic).
- u) A bulletin should be set up to facilitate communication around all these issues.
- v) We must learn how to discover and celebrate the life of Christ in other cultures - a life often present long before our own arrival. We must as apostles of Christ know how to follow as well as how to lead. We must know how to discover the ways in which strangers can enrich us, and in that process become our friends. We must not institutionalize the Church so much that it no longer shows the face of Christ. We must have confidence enough in God within us to know that we can teach the priests and Bishops. We must know how to learn from Elders, but also from the youth. We must be rigorously honest, filled with kindness, courageous in our forgiving, patient with the time it takes to journey, always willing to be women and men of prayer, aware of our difference and of the special measure of faith God places within each of us, ready even at times to walk along the way of the Cross before we can rise to the new life.



TUESDAY, JULY 9, 1985

The themes for the conference were based on John Paul II's message: "I am the Way, I am the Truth and I am the Life".

First, Father Carl Starklof said to the participants that some resource people would make an attempt to explain what it means to have the Indian traditional way and still be able to worship in the Catholic way. Hopefully that we can open our minds, our hearts and our spirits and not be afraid of dialogue with one another. He also stressed that nobody wanted to offend anyone at this conference but rather wished that we can unite with one another, with one voice, aiming that some day we will have a very balanced Native Catholic Church within the Catholic Church.

He explained that the Way in "I am the Way" refers to values, the Truth in "I am the Truth" to belief and theology and finally, the Life in "I am the Life" to worship and celebration. He also pointed out that religion is a work of art. "We build religion; it is not given to us by God all done. We create religion."

Afterward, the participants gathered in small work groups to answer the questions on the Way, the Truth and the Life. (See pages 31 to 35.)

Then, Father Stan Fontaine came to talk on Native leadership. He began by saying that it is usually the persons who speak the most who are the leaders within the Church and that this reality creates a conflict between the visions of leadership. "There are different types of leaderships, but the Indian leadership is based on the group." He gave the example of the Mohawks who had 9 chiefs. They had a group of chiefs with each one having a role. He added that the master is usually the one who is silent, who listens. "This is the one with control."

He continued by trying to explain how he sees his role as a Native person, as a Catholic and as a priest. "I have a role with the Amerindian people, and I can thank the Lord because it is the Indians who gave me values and a way to see things and interpret them. But I have a problem... It is to know who I am as a Catholic. To me, it is universal. I see the role of a Catholic as being linked to the whole world. Some think it is only my contact with the Bishops. In that case, Indians would not be Catholics. Some others say that it is being in a relationship with Christ. This idea is much more universal because we are all in a relationship with Christ."

Father Stan Fontaine went on to say that he has an identity crisis. "I have difficulty to define myself today. I must face the Indian people and the things they are asking me to do. I am asked to pray for the ills, for the deads, etc. I must be a man of prayer. A man of conciliation. I am asked to bless the people, the food, things, etc. I am asked to be many things... I go fishing, I go to parties, I even go to the tavern. They are asking me to be a man of vision, to give them advice, and to tell them what I would do if I had the same problem as they. They are asking me to be human."

"The Indians see that they have a personal value. We must help them to assert themselves, encourage them. They must be reaffirmed in their Amerindian values."

"Can Amerindians have the same autonomy within the Church? The same dignity at least? These are the needs of the Indian people. They are looking for a true sense of identity, and I want that the people be able to go deeper in their spiritual life."

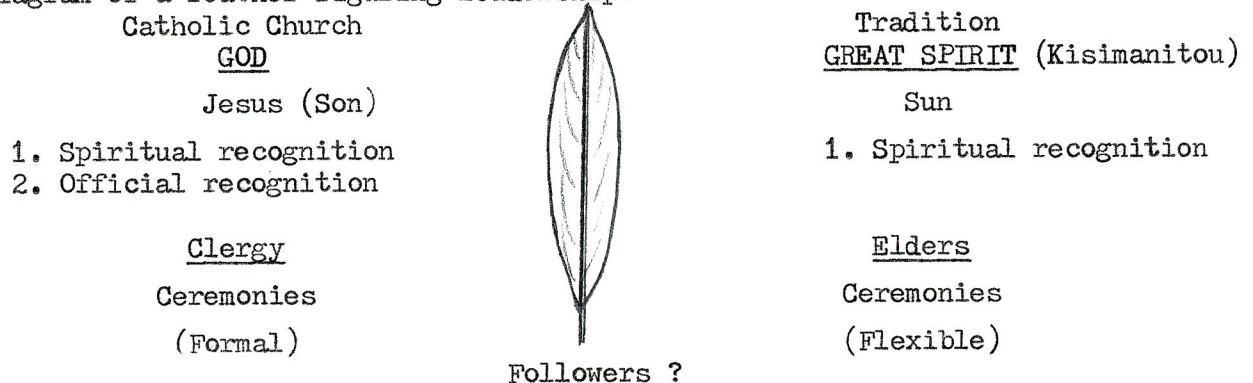
"Can we fulfill these needs of the Native people? What could we do today so that we can have a better future? We cannot go back to the old structures, obviously. Native people want their autonomy. They want to make their own destiny, make their own Church."

"Attention! What I am saying is not negative but the time has come for us to have an Indian Church, to have our own missionaries. We have never had an Indian Bishop. I must say I feel some political manipulation and it makes me uncomfortable. Yet, we have as much the right to take decisions, to be Bishops. We should be in a position to establish a national Native Church in Canada. We must restructure the Canadian Church beginning with the acceptance of rites, married priests, deacons and even deaconesses. Some say that we should have an Indian rite within the Church just like Ukrainians and Greeks have their own."

Another problem is the division between Catholics, Anglicans and Pentecostals. Father Stan Fontaine wonders if we could not have a unified Church. "Can we share between the different Churches? Can we give them Communion once in a while? Sometimes, there are Protestants who come to Mass and who come to receive Communion. What are we suppose to do then?"

To finish, he added that an honest sharing and decision-making would help promote the Gospel. "Today's Mission Church is really becoming an Amerindian Church."

Walter Linklater followed to talk about the general needs of Native leadership. One quality for leadership, he said, requires to be a model, to be an authentic chief. "What imports is the inner circle, the heart, the conscience." He also mentioned the importance of nature, to feel Mother Earth. Here is his diagram of a feather figuring leadership:



"It is good to be able to combine the two sides of the feather." (Walter Linklater)



## "I AM THE WAY"

These are some of the answers the participants gave to the following questions:

### 1. How I see the Way in Jesus?

- As the main road.
- It is like we are on a big journey with Christ, the Leader.
- As the role model for religious behavior who leads the way (dynamic).
- As the center of our lives, his teachings are our map.
- Seen as the one who walks with me.
- Through Christ, I've learned to die and rise.
- Christ is like a pair of glasses, a new way of seeing others and of seeing the world.
- As a balance of prayer and action.

What is necessary for me/us to be good Christian(s) on the Way?

- It is necessary to search for truth.
- Jesus has to be a living reality in my life.
- To be a doer and not just a talker. (Action)
- To have faith in Jesus.
- To practice the virtues.
- To learn how to share, how to be giving.
- To learn to love and forgive (challenge).
- To develop humility, out of which grows kindness to others.
- To treat everyone you come in contact with as an encounter with Jesus.
- To be yourself (not being phony), to be honest.
- To listen and learn from others, whom we may always want to teach (esp. the youth, the retarded, the outsiders, the lonely, the old, etc.).
- To show openness to all persons everywhere and in every circumstance of life and to accept each for what each is.

### 2. What are things that are helpful but not necessary? (Ceremonies, etc.)

- Material things (decorations, statues, etc.).
- Sacramentals, holy water, holy oil.
- Many rituals, movements.
- Prayer groups without ceremonies.
- The number of readings and long homilies.
- The singing, the processions.
- Personal devotions.

(Cont.)

## "I AM THE WAY" (Cont.)

3. What things are harmful, dangerous, needing correction?

- The Roman Curia.
- Non-optional celibacy.
- Cults not related to Christ.
- False prophets.
- Refusal of authority (not of the infallibility of Pope).
- Commercialization of celebrations (Christmas, weddings, funerals, etc.).
- Routine prayers.
- Rigid, overly structured rituals.
- Nepotism and favoritism.
- Jealousies, divisions, put-downs, criticism.
- Power struggles for personal glory and gain.
- Prejudices and generalizations.

4. What is the way Jesus would go about this? Include the message to yourselves and Church leaders.

- Jesus would recommend to be good, to listen, to be open-minded.
- Jesus would talk to individuals telling them to be understanding and compassionate.
- Jesus would advise against various dangers of pharisaism.
- He would do discipline (in a loving way).
- He would tell us to face the truth and to trust others.



## "I AM THE TRUTH"

1. What are ways I know that help us see better the truth that God made the world out of love, lives among us, will build a true Peace, and strengthens us for eternal life?

- Homily. Sacraments. Holy Spirit.
- Religious education.
- Moments of reconciliation (forgiveness).
- Our community.
- The gifts of nature the Lord has created for us.
- Our living is a witness of the truth of Jesus.
- The Lord living among us and within us through the sharing, the caring, the loving, the forgiving, the accepting, etc.
- The wisdom that comes from our Elders and spiritual Leaders when we search for the truth.
- Our communication and dialogue which has enabled us to transmit our valuable truths, parables and legends from generation to generation.

2. Are there things that prevent this truth?

- Lack of communication, lack of information.
- Lack of understanding. Prejudice, gossip and jealousy.
- Our fears.
- Being treated or treating others as children, not as adults.
- Not having enough love to be open to the truth in others.
- The masks we wear that keep us from sharing the truth about ourselves - sorrows, love, fears, loneliness, joys, anger, etc.
- Different systems of learning, life itself, often block us from hearing others.
- Allowing power struggles (divisions) to block our unity and communion with one another in truth and love.
- Not being "action witnesses" to the truth ourselves, not practicing what we preach.
- Being "overwhelmed" by those around us whom we think are smarter than we are.
- Native ways of communicating truth and non-Native ways are often very different in terms of patience, persuasion, story-telling, willingness "to be still".
- Truth in Native tradition is a result of careful listening, silent leadership, sensitivity to the whole group; this sometimes we forget and replace with "noisy barrels". Maybe our blocks to real truth get created because silent gentle listening is the opposite to noisy, aggressive persuasion.
- Blocks to truth are often our languages themselves. Indeed, teaching in Indian is somehow easier because it flows with one's home language, culture, ways of telling stories, rhythms of life, etc.
- Ignorance: lack of knowledge of the Church teachings.
- Alcohol, drugs.

(Cont.)

"I AM THE TRUTH" (Cont.)

2. Are there things that prevent this truth? (Cont.)

In the Church now?

- Religious dictatorship: Church structures that prevent us from finding the truth and keep us oppressed and subdued.
- Church not listening to people.
- Clergy and nuns claiming credit for work of people.
- Lack of action: hopes raised, nothing gets done.
- Over eager missionaries who spoon-feed us.
- Catholics are often so rigid that they do not want to dialogue with traditionalists. For many, the traditional way of life is equated with "bad medicine".



## "I AM THE LIFE"

1. Name the most "life-giving" occasions and ceremonies in our local community?
  - Contact with the Eucharist.
  - Sweetgrass ceremony with prayer.
  - Ceremony of the Sacred Circle.
2. What prevents greater life from growing in our religious practices?
  - Formalism is a problem and therefore there is a need for more flexibility, always with respect for a deeper meaning. (However, it should not be a rapid change.)
  - Materialism is another problem. Church buildings should not be overly ornate.
  - Church Elders, local leaders not being enough a part of the sacramental system (e.g. an Elder who would baptize).
  - Not learning the gift of love.
3. What do I see that we need locally to make for more life-giving occasions and celebrations?
  - We need to share stories of life, to portray values that have been lived by example. Sharing has priority over programmes.
  - To be good Christians, we must live a life of service, other-centered.
  - We need to have someone with whom we can chat in a spiritual way.
  - We need to build a true peace through forgiveness, fellowship, compassion, charity, love, etc.
  - We want that bread (bannock) and water, two life-giving forms, be taken at the Sacred Meal. This bread and water is meaningful to all cultures in Canada.
  - Another suggestion is the use of grape juice instead of wine (non-alcoholic).
4. What do I want to say to Church leaders about this?
  - We want that a study be made of the symbols and sacraments pertinent to Native rituals.
  - We want the ordination of deacons, deaconesses.

N.B. Due to a lack of time, it could not be developed as lengthily as the other two themes.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 10, 1985

A mention was made of the presence of Bishop Peter Sutton, Chairman of the Bishops of the North.

Then, pursuing the theme "I am the Truth", Father Carl Starklof talked on prophetic action.

"How is Jesus the Truth? He is the one in whom you may place your faith. As St. John told us, Jesus is the Word, the Word became flesh to communicate to us that we are here because we are products (?) of God's love. The truth is what we know through our faith. We get to know more by reading and studying the Scriptures. The old traditions are not to be lost; they are other truths."

Father Carl Starklof recalled what Jesus said to the Apostles. "He told them to talk to their own people and then after the Resurrection, he told them to spread the news to the whole world." This was the beginning of evangelization. To bring the news, to start a dialogue with non-Christians. There is a work of healing with any evangelization.

"We need people who are really trained to do this. Catechists (teachers) are very important to teach about the faith."

The homiletics (art of preaching) is general among Christians to inspire as well as to instruct, to communicate something. "What is our task? How does the Holy Spirit work in the evangelization?"

Father Stan Fontaine came back to talk about the great value of truth within our lives. "I think it is very difficult in many situations to live the life that Christ wants us to live. If Christ came today, what would he do?"

"For many of us, the situation, the context, the environment enables certain things to happen. The best way I can pray now is to let someone into the bus have a seat."

"To acknowledge one another as truth. There is a truth within old religions, within another human being. What kind of truth exists in bums? In oppressed people? In people who are our oppressors? There are many obstacles when we come to living a life of truth."

"Jesus' last words were: 'Father, forgive them!' It is important to realize the truth that exists within each and everyone of us."

Later on, Mrs. Marlene Castelano, a Mohawk, came to share her experience. She started by saying that the symbol of peace should be the white countries, and the symbol of reconciliation, a tree with an eagle on top.

"When I first learned about Indian traditions, my Christian education gave me difficulties. I was afraid to go too far and of getting confused." She continued with the stories of three Native persons who have been through confusion. The first one was Shirley, an Ojibway, who went to residential schools.



Shirley was forbidden to speak her language and she got punished whenever she did. But she was determined not to forget her language. That was the beginning of her faith in her culture.

The second one was George, a troubled young man. A bum in other words, who was on alcohol and drugs. He has known jail and hospital. One day, however, he was visited by a medicine man who took him to experience the sweat lodge. George came out as a new person. The last one was Jean, a middle-aged woman knowing considerable confusion.

"As Christians, what do you have to say to Shirley, George or Jean? How will you go about communicating with them or someone like them in your community?" These are questions Marlene Castelano has asked the participants to think about for 15 minutes before coming back to share their answers.

Dominic Eshkakogan had this to say: "Don't keep the bitterness inside of you. Forgive as you want to be forgiven."

A social evening was held on that day, with songs, dances and games. Sister Nancy Leclaire had tapes of Native music which delighted the participants. It turned out to be a very joyful powwow!

THURSDAY, JULY 11, 1985

Father Carl Starklof started by recalling the missionary situation. "They said to themselves that they had to present this message in the language of the people. But, though inculturation is a good thing and a necessary thing, it can easily become a bad thing. There is a danger that we force the culture. What do you want to say to Church leaders about this? When using bread and wine, Jesus was doing something with symbols. Symbols join together a person's past, present and future. That is why telling the people that they have to change their symbols all of a sudden is not right. When it happens very suddenly, it is very hard on people. Around 1970, some of us began to look at the traditions. Only, people got mixed up. They said that all these years we told them not to do that and all of a sudden it is good!

The Christian community has to be sensitive on continuing the symbols. How are the seven Sacraments meaningful now? It is wrong to the Church to take the Native ceremonies and say that they are Christians."

Father Stan Fontaine explained that rituals are tied in the whole history and not structures of attitudes. "It is very difficult to transpose rituals. They develop in their own way in each culture. The important thing for us to understand is to take the meaning that we truly understand."

He suggests that water, perhaps, would be more appropriate than using wine because water is the blood of Mother Nature. And also because some of us had problems with alcohol. "They go to Mass and are offered wine or they see wine at the Altar. Perhaps it had its own unique way to encourage alcoholism among our people."

Then, referring to the rituals in the Scriptures, he mentioned the ritual of dancing. "What better way is there to express life than to dance?"

After that, the participants gathered in small work groups in order to prepare statements for the Bishops. (See pages 39 and 40.)

Later on that day, Marlene Castelano said that there is a consensus about how the Native people wish to participate among the Church and together with Fr. Alvin Gervais and Father Mike Stogre, they worked on a restatement of the message to be taken to the Bishops. They came up with four recommendations. (See page 41.)

This was followed by a group discussion with Father Claude Pagé, Representative of the Catholic Conference of Canadian Bishops (C.C.C.B.). (See on the next page, 42.)

The Institute ended with the election of the new members on the National Board for the Amerindian Institute. (See page 43.)




## STATEMENTS FOR THE BISHOPS (Work groups)

These are some opinions expressed by the participants gathered in small groups and intended to the Bishops.

- a) We propose that a representative from the Bishops of Canada attend the Amerindian Conference in its entirety; also, a Native representative from each province should attend the Bishops' Conference to help strengthen our dialogue and flow of communication between our Native people and the Bishops of Canada.
- b) There is a need for Training Centres for Native Ministries (in our area), in order to form deacons, catechists, pastoral workers, counsellors, priests, nuns and brothers.
- c) The Bishop should form a Council for our area where we would meet on a regular basis to give him recommendations to take to the Catholic Conference of Canadian Bishops.
- d) We propose to establish a Leadership & Spiritual Renewal Centre in each diocese to better serve our Native people in different ministries.
- e) We need to get young adults involved in the communities. In order to achieve this, we would need active Community Groups that would lead to Regional Native Youth Conferences and finally, to a National Native Youth Conference.
- f) We wish the development of Native religious orders of men and women in connection with the Training Centres, e.g. Kisimanitou Centre, Anicinabe Centre.
- g) Ordain the Native deacons to the priesthood as the deacons declare their readiness for ordination.
- h) Recognize that Native people have things to say within the Church and require a forum to voice their views. The Amerindian Institute provides a forum now but should branch out to make sure there is follow-up on recommendations.
- i) Allow Indian people to manage their own Church affairs (administration, decision-making, policy-making, etc.).
- j) Limit the authority of the priest-minister to spiritual needs (more as a consultant). And also, give us the chance to train the priest and nuns who will come to our community and give us the chance to ask you to withdraw those who cannot respect our dignity.
- k) Indian people claim their right to explore and develop ways, rituals and symbols that will manifest their Christian life within their culture, and Native traditions.

- 1) We want our rituals to be meaningful religious experiences:
- Purification ceremonies
  - Water, cedar, sweetgrass
  - Ritual dances.

We also want the use of community symbols unifying past-present-future.

Jackpine  instead of palms  
Cedar

We recommend the use of non-wine whenever wine is synonymous of negativity. Finally, the use of bannock for the Eucharist would be very well advised. "Give us this day our daily bannock."

- m) Avoid generalizing. Respect the uniqueness of each community; be sensitive to their ideas, feelings and pace of life.
- n) Clarify the ministry of Elders:
- Institutional recognition of Elders to perform marriages\*, funerals, etc.
  - Open dialogue with Elders.
  - Encourage people to go to their roots, to their Elders.

\* Seeing that Elders long time ago, prepared young couples for marriage according to their tradition. Is it not possible to have our Elders recognized as official marriage ministers?

Seeing that the giving of a name is very important in the Native culture as to identity, and seeing that in initiating our children into the Catholic Church at Baptism we also give a name. We recommend that a process be started wherein our Elders could be directly involved in the initiation of our own children in name-giving and welcoming them into our community of faith.

- o) That a statement regarding the religious authenticity of the Native religions be made.
- p) That the Church Leaders recognize and accept that an experience of Christ can happen in different ways, and not only in the Catholic Christian way, but also in Alcoholic Anonymous Fellowship, traditional rituals, etc. building a Christian Church on this acceptance.

#### SUMMARY OF THESE STATEMENTS FOR THE BISHOPS

With a feeling of great urgency, this Assembly urges the Canadian Bishops to do what is necessary to establish a Native Church. This requires first of all the promotion of a Native clergy including Indian Bishops, a married priesthood, deacons of both sexes, and the full range of lay ministries suitable to an inculturated Church.

In order to facilitate this development, the Assembly recommended that regional ministries training centres be established (e.g. like Kisimanitou and Anderson Lake). These centres could in addition promote dialogue with Elders, traditional Indian religions, with youth, so that eventually new Native rites would develop in Canada. For we are the new wine that must be poured into new wine skins.



RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE SEVENTH SUMMER INSTITUTE  
ON AMERINDIAN CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP

Held in Montreal, Quebec  
July 6 - 11, 1985

RECOMMENDATION # 1

This Institute recommends that the Catholic Church establish an ongoing structure for communication between the Bishops and the Native people, and that the National Coordinating Committee of the Amerindian Institute be recognized as the vehicle for exploring the appropriate form.

RECOMMENDATION # 2

This Institute recommends that the role of Native people in all aspects of decision-making and Native ministry be EXPANDED and supported through appropriate training.

Expanded participation will include:

- a) Recognizing authority of local Native Councils on matters of administration and staffing.
- b) Ordination of deacons to the priesthood.
- c) Extending the responsibilities of lay ministers.  
For example: Eucharistic Ministers  
Authority to baptize, to marry, to bury, prepare for Confirmation and Matrimony.

Appropriate training will include:

- a) Training for lay and priestly ministry.
- b) Availability of training in locations close to where the participants live.
- c) Centres and programs directed by Native people.
- d) Native people orient religious personnel assigned to work in Native community.

RECOMMENDATION # 3

We recommend that high priority in the dialogue between the Bishops and the Native people be inculturation of the Catholic faith; that is, faith expressed in the living symbols and rituals of the local Native community.

RECOMMENDATION # 4

This Institute recommends that the needs and the gifts of the Native youth be recognized in all aspects of the dialogue on Native participation in the Church.

- GROUP DISCUSSION -

This is a group discussion centered around Father Claude Pagé, Representative of the Catholic Conference of Canadian Bishops (C.C.C.B.).

Fr. Dominique Kerbrat: The Pastoral Committee for Native People (with Fr. Stan Fontaine) never got off the ground. We were an official organization and we received no support.

Fr. Claude Pagé: At the Conference of the Bishops held in October of 1983, a whole day was taken to talk about the dioceses of the North. Many proposals were made. Though the follow-up for these proposals is rather slow, it does not prevent a possible continuation of the dialogue between the dioceses affected by these new problems. Indeed, there is good will! This Institute can be very useful. What has been said here must be repeated and it will end by passing. Indians must get involved more deeply. It is very difficult to reach the Bishops, and it is very slow to get an answer. At the next Assembly in October, they will make a presentation of the question.

Dolly Roach: I suggest that a parish council be formed with 24 Elders coming from all over Canada to represent the Native people.

Fr. Robert Châteauneuf: It seems to me that this committee is somewhat remote. To my opinion, the actual committee seems to be more appropriate. It could take directly to the Bishops the recommendations of this Institute.

Fr. Claude Pagé: In September, the Episcopal Commission of the Missions will have its meeting.

Father Stan Fontaine: I would favor the establishment of some kind of vehicle as the first step. Native people have to be consulted to explore. We need more participation. I am in favor of the creation of a committee.

Fr. Alvin Gervais: Father Stan's idea of having a Native representation has to be underlined.

Fr. Maurice Provencher: Which way is the Catholic Conference of Canadian Bishops going to use to answer directly the Native people?

Fr. Claude Pagé: It is very difficult to pass over the diocese. The question is to use better the committees we have formed. How? More Indians should get involved in those committees. We have the tools but we don't know. I would hesitate to have more committees because it is very expensive. They don't want to spend money for several committees.



## RESULTS OF THE ELECTION

The newly elected members on the National Board for the Amerindian Institute are as follows:

- Mr. Ronald Boyer, President
- Mr. Matthew Many Gunns, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President
- Father Stan Fontaine, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President
- Sister Bernadette Feist, Secretary
- Bishop Gilles Belisle
- Father Alvin Gervais, O.M.I.
- Father George Leach, S.J.
- Father Léon Lajoie, S.J.
- Mrs. Theresa Hall
- Mrs. Evelyn Gilles
- Mr. Bossy Ducharme

The next meeting will held in SASKATOON (Sask.) in 1987.

Details will be given later.

AMERINDIANS ARE PRAYING THE GREAT SPIRIT. (Excerpt of LE DEVOIR,  
July 10, 1985  
Free translation)

By Lynda Baril

Reunited since five days at Collège St-Jean-Vianney of Rivière-des-Prairies, about 20 Amerindians took part yesterday to a ceremony of the Sacred Circle, a moving ritual of prayers addressed to the Great Spirit. The ceremony was being held within a six-day seminar of reflexion in which are participating, since Saturday, about a hundred Amerindians who came from all over Canada. However, for these men and women who are questioning themselves on their role within the Church, the road to a celebration of the faith that would celebrate at the same time their culture is full of obstacles. Their position in favor of the ordination of married Native priests is not the least.

**The Ordination of Married Priests Is a Priority.**

The Amerindians wish to celebrate their faith in their own way. The majority agrees to ask for the ordination of married Native priests, who would be more apt to understand the problems and the difficulties of their people.

This question of celibacy of priests is, nevertheless, only one of the several questions being discussed since five days by the 125 participants to this 7<sup>th</sup> Summer Institute on Amerindian Catholic Leadership.

"Some express the desire of a married clergy", explains Mrs. Theresa Hall, a member at the Planification Committee of the gathering, "because in our traditions, the family life is extremely important".

According to Oblate Father Alvin Gervais, from Winnipeg, the Canadian Bishops are willing "to open the door" to the integration of the Amerindian culture within the Christian rituals. The matter of the celibacy of priests, though, remains somewhat conflictual, underlines Mrs. Hall.

Since 1978, the Catholic Natives are gathering each year to exchange over their problems and to stimulate the emergence of an Indian leadership. These sessions are partly financed by the Catholic Conference of Canadian Bishops. Next September, the latter will receive a résumé of the propositions discussed at this Institute.

Amerindians wish, among other things, the ordination of a greater number of their peers. In Canada, about 30 of them have been ordained deacons, but only three Native priests have a ministry.

"We want to promote our culture within our Christian communities, continues Mrs. Hall. More and more, we are getting conscious of our identity. Our rituals are very rich and significant and we want to integrate them in the expression of our faith. It is one and only voice that is rising everywhere in the country".

Whether they be Crees, Mohawks, Ojibways, Blackfoot, Montagnais, Algonquins, Atikameks or Mic-Macs, the Amerindians want to speak out. Whether they be from the Eastern or the Western part of the country, they want to participate to the taking of decisions. Whether they be young or old, they want to perpetuate the Native rituals and get their own part of the leadership of the Church.

Pope John Paul II, at his passage in Canada last year, while at Sainte-Anne-de-Beaupré had encouraged the 4000 Amerindians representing the nine Nations of the Quebec territory to become "the makers of their future".



## APPENDIX "A"

### ALBERTA

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ROB OAO

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Sr. Jean Perry, C.S.J.  
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Sr. Norberta Ryan  
Our Lady of the Assumption R.C. Mission  
Davis Inlet  
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AOP 1A0

Sr. Joan Baldwin, P.B.V.M.  
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Rev. Peter Sutton, O.M.I.  
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J5R 3X8

F. Labat  
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Fort Francis, N.W.T.  
XOE OG0

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Mr. Dominic Eshkakogan  
P.O. Box 326  
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POP 1P0

Mrs. Theresa Hall (Organizer)  
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Mrs. Monica Hookinmaw  
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P9S 3M3

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POV 2S0

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Mrs. Christine Okimau  
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Mr. George Hookimaw  
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