

I HAVE CALLED *You* BY NAME



GENERAL SYNOD OF THE ANGLICAN CHURCH OF CANADA, JULY 10 TO 16, 2019, VANCOUVER, B.C.

Response to “An Apology for Spiritual Harm” offered by the Indigenous Elders of General Synod 2019 July 16, 2019

We the Indigenous Elders of General Synod 2019, humbly receive the *Apology for Spiritual Harm* containing the Church’s commitments for spiritual healing. We commit to conveying Your Grace’s loving and thoughtful words to the Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples (ACIP) for its consideration and sharing with our communities.

Let us say first of all, that we know the Church understands that healing and forgiveness is so deeply personal, and is usually a journey, a process, not a single act. We cannot speak for those who were spiritually harmed by the Church’s approach to colonization. Each individual and each community across this vast land has had different experiences and is at different stages in the healing process.

But we the Elders of General Synod 2019 believe that your words of apology will support this healing process. We understand and respect the deep meaning of this Apology and the commitment and honour with which it was made. Those of us who have had the pleasure to work with and to know Your Grace, appreciate beyond what words can convey, that you have heard and understood us. We are touched to the depths of our souls by your words and commitments.

We must clarify, however, that no single statement of ‘acceptance’ is possible on behalf of Indigenous peoples in this land. We respect the right for each individual to ponder your words and we hope that those who are at the stage of their healing to accept and forgive, will do so in the privacy of their homes and communities. Trauma can easily be reignited by simple cues in day-to-day life. Anger, despair, hurt and humiliation can easily reappear, often without warning, even when one has embraced forgiveness. But we sincerely hope that your words will provide comfort, and help convey God’s grace and love to those affected by spiritual harm and by the Church’s role in creating this harm.

For its part, we are sure that ACIP will want to share this good news document that embraces what God created us to be. ACIP can be a bridge in disseminating this document within our Indigenous Nations, and sharing the love with which it was delivered.

This is an historic week in the life and future of our Church. We did it together! We are partners in change. It was our finest moment as a Church. As a fully recognized self-determining people within the Anglican Church of Canada, the Apology is timely in reinforcing that the Church is walking side-by-side with us as we continue our spiritual journey for healing.

We now ask that the Council of General Synod and the House of Bishops continue in your commitment to our journey of spiritual renewal, and to being “champions of change”. We need you to strengthen your partnership with our Indigenous Archbishop. We must move forward together to demonstrate that restoration of our spiritual practices to their rightful and proper place in the Church can only strengthen Anglican discipleship across Canada.

We want to share a reflection by Grace Delaney, one of our Elders, on the personal depth and the meaning of your words of Apology:

“First, I just wanted to crawl into bed and cry myself to sleep. I wanted to cry for those who have passed on who have not had the opportunity to hear the Primate’s beautiful words of Apology for spiritual harm. I wish that they had known that their pain was not in vain. Though they rest in peace and are in perpetual Light, I can’t help but rejoice for them too.

There have been many, including Indigenous people, who have responded to the call to carry the Word of our Creator, and have worked hard to spread the Gospel among our people. There are those among our people who, though Christian, completely reject their own values and systems of their traditional heritage. And there are those with courage who have stood and are standing up openly in the

face of criticism and anger. They have beheld the yearning of our Saviour's heart: our previous Primate, Michael Peers, our current Primate, Fred Hiltz, and many others across this temporary earthly home of ours, defend their belief in justice and reconciliation.

Across this land many have felt remorse and even shame, and have chosen to change the tides of the former norms of our Church. Now our Primate takes a step, to reiterate in word, the thoughts of hearts – an apology that can help build bridges and help us be the way our Creator has intended for each of His diverse People. Each Nation can now be true to the way Creator/God intended and fulfill their true destiny. They do not have to choose between their God and their culture. I feel such strength and release in the words of our Primate's Apology. It couldn't have come at a better time. Many of our people, young and old, have not found their identity and are caught in a chaotic state, not being able to figure out the real "me". I truly believe that if our Creator made us different in colour, in customs and cultures, then there really is a purpose and reason for each one of us both diverse and collective, to see one another in the image of our Triune Creator.

This is a moment to recognize that the courage that has been displayed in this apology has come from One greater, stronger and more powerful than our Primate. There have been great Orators throughout the history of humanity, and we were given Fred Hiltz. In part of our Gospel reading for July seventh, Luke 10:17-21a, the seventy-two returned with joy, and said, "Lord even the demons submit to us in your name". Our Lord responds, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven". "I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you. However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven." At that time Jesus, full of joy through the Holy Spirit, said "I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth..."

Luke 10:17-21a

It is in that same Holy Spirit that I thank you Your Grace. Thank for listening...all my relations.

We thank you for your courage, for your eloquent Apology and for truly listening to the compassion of our Lord's heart to accept us as your brothers and sisters with love. In our Creator's love, and peace we welcome your words of Apology. Thank you. May our Creator/God be always with us.