

## **Anglican Indigenous Network Conference 14-17 April 2015, New York**

Te Pihopatanga o Aotearoa delegates to the 2015 Anglican Indigenous Network conference at Stony Point Centre, New York, led by Bishop Te Kitohi Pikaahu are represented by the following:

Mr Charles Hemana – Te Manawa o Te Wheke (Administrator)  
Mrs Lynnore Pikaahu (Kāhui Wahine)  
Reverend Ngaio Keelan – Te Tai Rawhiti (Clergy)  
Mr Kerry Davis – Te Taitokerau (St John's College Theological Student)  
Mrs Brigitte Te Awe Awe-Bevan – Te Upoko o Te Ika (St John's College Theological Student)  
Mr Moana McNeil – Te Waipounamu (Rangatahi)

### **Sunday 12 April 2015**

The Aotearoa delegation gathered together for a meal hosted by fellow delegate Kerry Davis and Kerry's wife Vaoa. This gave opportunity for delegates to meet for this first time, as well as familiarise themselves with the up and coming programme in New York.

### **Monday 13 April 2015**

#### **Māori Television Interview**

On Monday morning delegates met at Te Karaiti Te Pou Herenga Waka Church in Mangere, where Bishop Kito Pikaahu and Reverend Ngaio Keelan were interviewed by TV One's Te Karere reporter, in accordance with the journey to New York. Bishop Kito explained both the purpose of the Anglican Indigenous Network and the reason for the delegated journey. In addition the group was to be visiting the United Nations, former Prime Minister and Head of the United Nations Development Programme Ms Helen Clark, and the New Zealand Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Mr Jim McLay. The interview with Te Karere can be viewed at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yVsrDFSnbbo>

The delegation flew out that afternoon, arriving in New York late Monday evening.

### **Tuesday 14 April 2015**

#### **Visit to United Nations & Head of the UN Development Programme, Ms Helen Clark**

Tuesday morning started at the United Nations where the delegation was met by the two New Zealand representatives to the United Nations Permanent Forum. Here the delegation was provided with a thorough, guided tour of the United Nations before paying a courtesy visit to Ms Helen Clark, former Prime Minister of New Zealand and current Head of the United Nations Development Programme.



Above: Aotearoa AIN delegates while visiting the United Nations

Ms Clark warmly welcomed the AIN Aotearoa delegates to the United Nations. She was interested to know about the Churches efforts in indigenous issues, particularly ahead of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues which was soon to be held in New York. The delegation briefed Ms Clark on the purpose of this year's AIN conference, particularly the importance it holds in strengthening people to people links of indigenous Anglicans and the world wide communion. The delegation also presented to Ms Clark a gift of "*Marae*", the recently published book by Bishop Muru Walters. Ms Clark wished the delegation well in achieving their objectives at the conference. A letter on behalf of St John's Theological College Manukura\Principal Tony Gerritsen was also presented to Ms Clark, inviting her to address the college at some point when she is back in Aotearoa.



Above: Aotearoa AIN Delegation with Ms Clark

In addition, Ms Clark provided the delegation with an insight to global issues she deals with as Head of the United Nations Development Program. On reflection of and through her graciousness as she spoke to them, delegates were provided with a further awareness of Ms Clarks' work at the United Nations, and are reminded of the Churches' ongoing commitment of prayer for world leaders.

#### New Zealand Consulate Visit to NZ Ambassador Mr Jim McLay

The delegation then visited Mr Jim McLay at the New Zealand Consulate. Mr McLay welcomed delegates to New York City, where he also expressed his appreciation for their visit. Mr McLay acknowledged the indigenous perspective that the New Zealand mission in New York is able to bring to its work at the United Nations. For example the commissioning and installation of tukutuku panels at the United Nations, a gift from the people of Aotearoa New Zealand as part of the major renovation of the United Nations Headquarters. The tukutuku panels stand in pride of place at the main entrance to the General Assembly building. The panels reflect the uniqueness of Aotearoa New Zealand and were the initiative of the Honourable Dr Pita Sharples in 2010. A ceremonial dedication and unveiling included blessings from the First Nations people of Manhattan supported by a number of the artists from Aotearoa who had worked on the project.



Aotearoa delegates with Mr McLay



Part of the Tukutuku display at the UN

### AIN Welcome

That afternoon delegates travelled to the Anglican Indigenous Network conference held at Stony Point Centre, some 45 minutes drive east of New York City. On arrival the delegation was immediately greeted with a healthy 3 course meal, showing hospitality to all the AIN delegates in attendance. There the delegates met and were also reacquainted with old and new friends. These being the five other AIN delegations attending the conference – Australia, Canada, Hawaii, Torres Strait, and USA. Following the meal AIN Delegates were officially welcomed to the conference by representatives of the First Nations Shinnecock-Sewanaka tribe of the area. From here all the delegations looked forward to more inspirational and empowering theological discourse over the following days. The evening concluded with worship led by the Canadian delegation.

*Each day saw a delegation taking worship as part of the programme. In addition the delegations enjoyed inspirational solidarity while presenting, sharing and discussing with each other concerns, celebrations and ideas. Many of the concerns provided overarching similarities, with final resolutions from the conference being brought together and written in to a communiqué, which was then forwarded to the Anglican Consultative Council to act upon.*

### **Wednesday 15 April**

#### USA

Reports from the USA included but were not limited to the Blue Book report resolutions to be acted upon at General Convention in June 2015 which resonated also with all delegations. The new publication of “In the Spirit of the Circle” also comes out at the General Convention.

Included in the USA report were at-risk teens; establishing young men’s ministry; Tribal College Campus Ministry; indigenous theological training and raising up indigenous leadership in the Church, with particular mention made to the Bishops Native Collaborative effort. Human trafficking and its connection to oil fracking and the Bakken fields of North Dakota is also prevalent in the USA Native communities and in particular effects women and children.

Recognition of ongoing work, especially in the Diocese of Minnesota and others outside of the 4 aided Dioceses that are constant and important in their efforts need be recognised.

#### Canada

AIN delegates rejoiced with Canada in the passing of Canon 22 by the last General Synod, which gives recognition to Bishop Mark McDonald, the first National Indigenous Anglican Bishop, and the formation of a Mishamikoweesh ministry of indigenous peoples. Canada also informed of resource development they were undertaking for indigenous catechist training to train lay ministers, and empower congregations so as not to be dependent on priests. This resource development being towards continued healing and reconciliation work essential for their communities today, but also for youth and young people, in order to equip them to be effective leaders. A copy of the Indigenous Theological Training Institute (ITTI) “Disciples Prayer Book” can be downloaded from the following link <http://www.anglican.ca/im/files/2013/11/A-Disciples-Prayer-Book.pdf>. There were over 225 attending the last sacred circle gathering. The next sacred circle gathering is in August 2015 at Lake Heron. This will be a time to meet and discuss Canon 22 and its implementation. A video produced by the church’s youth was also presented, and according to Canadian delegates, was very empowering for all those who participated in making the video.

#### Australia

Delegates celebrated with Australia over the consecration of their new Assistant Bishop the Right Reverend Chris McLeod, to the Diocese of Adelaide, with a special ministry to Aboriginal peoples across South Australia. However delegates also listened with great distress to the plight the Aboriginal peoples in Western Australia are presently facing as they are being forced off their ancestral lands through the removal of Government services. Every indigenous person at the AIN meeting could connect with the loss of land in terms of spirituality, culture and self identity.

The Australian delegation also expressed a wish for the wider mainstream church to better engage with Aborigines and Torres Strait islanders, especially with indigenous peoples in their community, as peoples to be ministered with, and not only as a source of outreach.

#### Torres Strait

The Torres Strait Island delegation spoke on the serious threat of Climate Change.

Also announced was the retirement of Bishop Mabo, who will now have his own church as Priest in Charge. The gathering was also informed there will not be another Bishop for a long time as full consultation with the people is required. Prayer is needed.

#### Aotearoa

Aotearoa reported they are developing programs to shape both lay and ordained leadership.

Resources will be submitted to St John's Theological College to add in to their curriculum. This curriculum uses core Māori values which are also theologically Kingdom values. The curriculum looks at the true values of a leader, for example humility, and is important in the church and also to the wider community because of its strong cultural base.

Kāhui Wahine information on indigenous women's fellowship was also presented, along with Kāhui Rangatahi on the development and progress of youth programmes within Te Pihopatanga o Aotearoa.

An AIN Facebook page has been established to help with communication between delegates, and as a vehicle to share stories with each other. Delegates were encouraged to engage in ongoing story telling by posting their stories on to the page. These could contribute to an e-journal to be launched biennially at the start of each AIN conference. The AIN Facebook page can be found at

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Anglican-Indigenous-Network/682488498508776?ref=hl>. There is also an AIN website which is linked to the Anglican Communion at

<http://ain.anglicancommunion.org/>

#### Hawaii

The Episcopal Diocese of Hawaii continues to raise up Native leadership through two local formation programs; Na Imiloa, (*the Seekers*) a diaconate program which started about 6 years ago, and Waiolaihui'ia a local formation of clergy program, in its 4<sup>th</sup> year. Through Na Imiloa, Hawaii have ordained at least 8 people to diaconate and priesthood. Currently four native Hawaiian postulants are to graduate and will be ordained by the end of 2016. Their training is hosted once monthly in Honolulu. This represents financial investment from Diocese.

The Committee on Native Hawaiian Ministry focused on celebrating their culture and offered workshops on the kukui nut, himeni (hymn) and pule (prayer). One of their parishes have shared their learning of the kukui nut, and with the help of their parish youth, extracted the kukui nut oil and uses it to care for their church altar. The himeni and pule workshop also offered hula and encouraged the integration of hula in worship. Some present in the delegation had been asked to undertake work on leading a task-force to commemorate Queen Lili'uokalani to include her in, 'Holy Women, Holy Men' and all subsequent church calendars.

Issues such as homelessness, change in climate, genetically modified food industry and mental health were also reported on. The church has a huge outreach to the homeless in all counties throughout Hawaii. Most notable is the *Cup of Cold Water* outreach on Maui island that includes the shared ministry of all 4 Episcopal churches.

Australia and Torres Strait concluded the day with worship and prayer.

#### **Thursday 16 April**

This morning began with worship led by the Aotearoa delegation. Following worship the forum discussed yesterday's meeting. Resolutions from the meeting documented in a communiqué to be forwarded to the ACC were then drafted.

A Steering Committee for the AIN was elected as per the photograph below:

Reverend Chris Harper (Canada), Mr Edward Hanohano (Hawaii), The Right Reverend Te Kitohi Pikaahu (Aotearoa), Ms Rose Elu (Torres Strait), Reverend Daryl McCullough (Australia), Ms Jasmine Bostock (United States), and Mr Charles Hemana (Secretary).



Hawaii and Canada offered possible venues for the next AIN conference to be held in 2017, location still to be decided. Thursday evening saw the exchange of gifts between delegations, and farewell speeches.

#### **Friday 17 April**

Worship was led by the Hawaiian delegation, who had also invited Bishop Te Kitohi Pikaahu to preside.



Following worship the draft communiqué to the Anglican Consultative Committee was finalised, and sent to the Anglican Consultative Committee to act on. Along with various issues mentioned in the delegations reports above, included in the communiqué is a strong resolution stating the Anglican Indigenous Network's stand in solidarity with the Aboriginal peoples of Western Australia in asking the Government to reconsider the poorly conceived and destructive policy of forcing Aboriginal peoples off their ancestral lands.

Also included in the communiqué is the affirmation from the Aotearoa delegation affirming the Treaty rights of Māori in Constitutional Reform, as this issue is currently under consideration by the Constitutional Advisory Panel.

In the closing statement on the communiqué to the ACC the AIN expressed:

"We move forward with great clarity and hope in our vision, asking for your prayers and support as we move into our future, standing tall and proud on the shoulders of those who came before us."



*Above: Anglican Indigenous Network Delegates 2015*

The 2015 AIN conference concluded with karakia led by Bishop Te Kitoi Pikaahu.

Four of the Aotearoa delegates returned home on 18 April, while Bishop Kito, Lynnore Pikaahu and Kerry Davis remained on in New York as AIN observers at the 14<sup>th</sup> Session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. They then continued on to London with Bishop Kito presiding as the Anglican Church of New Zealand's representative at the ANZAC Day centenary commemorations.



*Left: Kerry Davis & Bishop Kito Pikaahu at the United Nations General Assembly.*