

Outline Presentation Diocesan Council 6/6/20

## Origin of the Committee on Indian Relations

### I. Quincentenary of Columbus' discovery of America

#### A. Episcopal Church Executive Council Resolution Feb 1989

Resolved, That the Executive Council of the Episcopal Church respect and affirm the dignity of Native Americans and call upon its member dioceses to analyze and reflect upon differing effects that Colonialism has brought to our various people—colonizer and colonized—and to act faithfully and prophetically on that reflection as the Church in 1992 observes the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the voyage of Christopher Columbus.

My analysis Episcopal Church has the principal issue analyzed correctly – colonialism

**Colonialism** is the policy of a country seeking to extend or retain its authority over other people or territories,<sup>[1]</sup><sup>[need quotation to verify]</sup> generally with the aim of economic dominance.<sup>[2]</sup> In the process of colonisation, colonisers may impose their religion, economics, and other cultural practices on [indigenous peoples](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indigenous_peoples). (Wikipedia, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Colonialism>, accessed 5/17/20)

All the resolutions (three to follow) could share screen

#### B. Diocesan Resolution Resolution 7 5/91

**WHEREAS** the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the landing of Columbus in the Western Hemisphere will be commemorated in many ways throughout the United States; and

**WHEREAS**, Native Americans continue to struggle in our day to maintain their identity in the face of hostility, romanticizing and misunderstanding; and

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that this 172<sup>nd</sup> Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Maine commends to all its members and congregations active efforts to get to know the Native American people of Maine; to learn about their histories, cultures, values, and yearnings, and join with them as we all share in the ministry of reaching out to all the people of Maine in the name of Christ; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Bishop appoint a Committee to assist in this effort and to work with other church bodies to help us move beyond the 1992 Commemoration as an historical remembrance to present and future sharing and action.

**CARRIED 5/18/91 AT THE 172<sup>ND</sup> CONVENTION OF THE DIOCESE OF MAINE.**

Noteworthy about this resolution:

- 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the landing of Columbus linkage to Episcopal Church Executive Council resolution

- 2<sup>nd</sup> whereas clause Committee has similar view "struggle in our day to maintain their identity"

- Initial resolved clause "join with then as we all share in the ministry of reaching out to all the people of Maine in name of Christ" This resolution strikes me as implicitly recognizing how this work is consistent with the Great Commission and central to Jesus' teachings. Yet Mission Priorities Committee in 2017 questioned whether support for K100 was consistent with criterion one of the Seven Criteria for Mission

1) Diocesan resources will support program/ministry efforts that are Christ-centered and Gospel oriented.

Note that Bishop Brown one of his earliest acts as Bishop chose to fund from money under his control the K100 in 2020

### C. Diocesan Resolution 11/92

#### Legal Status & Lines of Responsibility

The Native American Project Team agrees to be guided by relevant Canons and State Law. The Project Team will be responsible to the Diocesan Council through its Commission on Outreach and Services. The Project depends on the Convention, through the Diocesan Council for its basic funding.

#### Membership and Terms of Office

Membership in the Native American Project Team includes Episcopal clergy and lay persons, ecumenical members and members of the Wabanaki people. Appointment is on an annual basis, by the Bishop on recommendation by Diocesan Council. Officers will be: Chair, Secretary and a Treasurer

#### Provision for Record of Actions

The actions of the Native American Project Team are recorded in the form of monthly minutes distributed to the appropriate persons and bodies.

#### Evaluation

An evaluation of the work of the Native American Project Team will be done at the project meeting the first week in April 1993. Members of the Project, members of the diocese and Native Americans of Maine will be invited to assist in this evaluation.

## Comments on Legal Status & Lines of Responsibility

- Project Team will be responsible to the Diocesan Council
- Project depends on the Convention, through the Diocesan Council for its basic funding

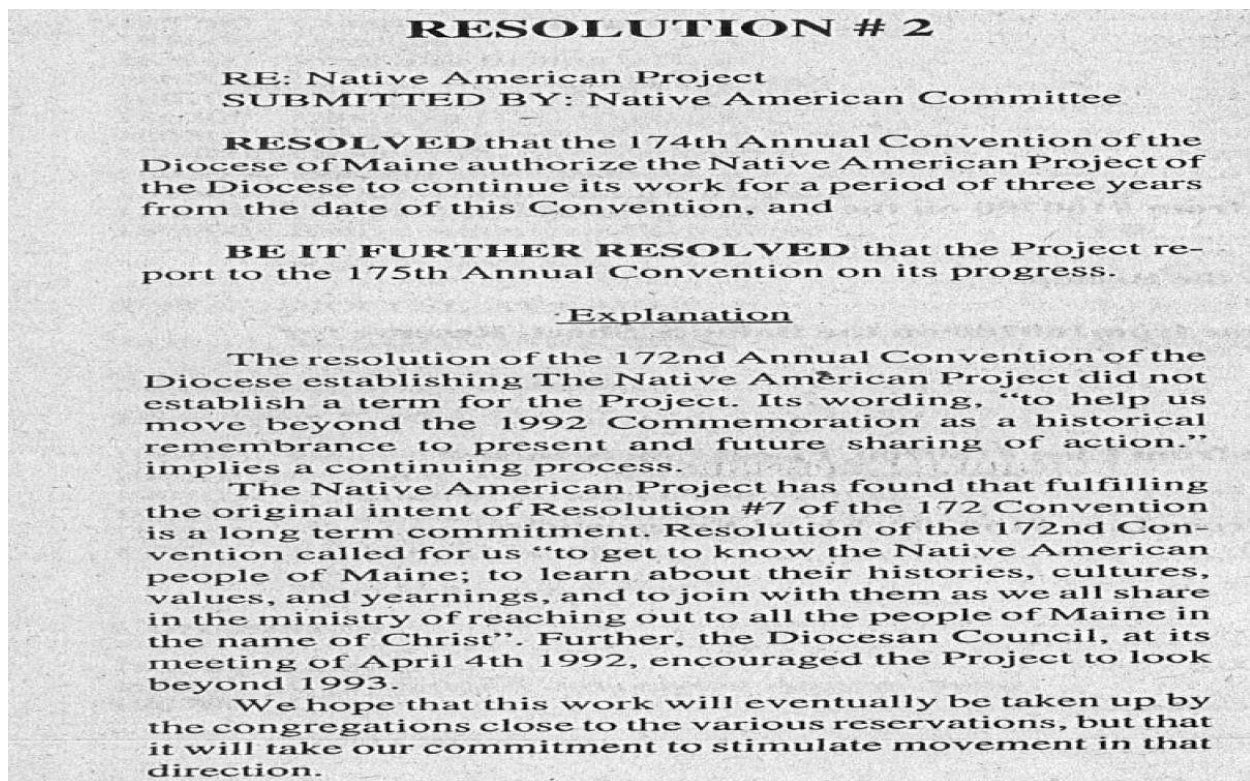
## Membership & Terms of Office

- Group is comprised of clergy & lay people, people of other faiths No current Wabanaki members. Butch Phillips considers himself an advisor, not member. We have not been functioning on an annual appointment basis. Explain my criteria for membership.

## Provision for Record of Actions

- We do keep minutes. We have discussed ensuring Diocesan Council receives them.

## D. Resolution #2 174th Annual Convention



## Comments on the resolution

- Agree with observation "implies a continuing process"
- Concur with 1<sup>st</sup> sentence, 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph of explanation "The Native American Project has found that fulfilling the original intent of Resolution #7 of the 172 Convention is a long term commitment." The Diocese should view this as permanent work with no end date or sunset.

- The last paragraph no church in the Diocese ready to assume the work of the Committee.

Review of what CIR knows about the work of Episcopal churchers closest to Wabanaki communities

Aroostook Band of Micmacs (Presque Isle) St. John's

Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians (Houlton, Littleton) Church of the Good Shepherd CIR work with Church of the Good Shepherd JDK met with Ginny Urbanek 2/13/18 John has invitation to preach there fall 2020 CIR held at least one joint meeting with Church of the Good Shepherd, Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians.

Passamaquoddy Tribe @ Motahkmikuk (Indian Township) St. Anne's, Calais JDK preached there 6/3/18. According to Sara Gavit, St. Anne's leadership discussed forming more intentional relationship with Passamaquoddy Tribe but nothing pursued.

Passamaquoddy Tribe @ Sipayik (Pleasant Point) Christ Church, Eastport JDK preached there 5/19/19. Madeline Murphy, Pat Phillips became active with CIR.

Penobscot Nation St. James', Old Town CIR most in-depth relationship with any Wabanaki Tribal Government is with Penobscot Nation. Penobscots hosted CIR meetings for decades. Several Penobscot citizens were active with CIR. Alan Sanborn co-chaired CIR in early nineties. Arnie Neptune, Watie Akins regularly attended. CIR worked with Penobscot Nation leadership to arrange a legislative visit to Indian Island in 2011. CIR been invited to several Penobscot Chief inaugural events.

Pause - questions

### **History/Achievements of the Committee on Indian Relations**

- Early years building relationships
- Committee successful relationship with Penobscot Nation
- Early work sponsored speakers such as Bishop Steven Tsosie Plummer March 1993

Excerpt from mission statement

The task is basic to our baptismal call, simple, yet complex. We seek to help our Episcopal community address and repent of own sin of racism. We work to break stereotypes and free ourselves to help both races to know and honor each other in depth and fullness, with openness of mind and heart and equality of dignity as

our starting points. Yet with all the assumptions and exploitation and/or neglect that attended our Anglo-Indian relationships over the last five centuries, we do not even know what we must undo before we can begin the great work of reconciliation to which we are called.

So the Project has adopted a “spirit of self-restraint,” as Evelyn Eaton called for in her book on her own spiritual apprenticeship with Indians, *I Send a Voice*. The greatest acts of reconciliation from our side may be not to do things, but simply to be attentively supportive of Indian choices.

We are ambassadors of reconciliation, called to our work by a God who forgives and loves all people. The work of learning to know and to love one another across the natural human boundaries of diversity is a demanding but a joyful work.

**1996-1997** Task Force on Tribal-State Relations Legislative task force chaired by CIR Chair Roger Smith. Reflection of recognition by Wabanaki leaders, especially Penobscot Nation, CIR’s commitment to tribal self-determination. Produced report *At Loggerheads – The State of Maine and the Wabanaki*

CIR has regularly testified on bills related to Wabanaki-Maine relations

**2005** Creation of documentary *Invisible*

**2010** Submission of the Episcopal Diocese of Maine Committee on Indian Relations on the United States’ human rights record relevant to the UN Universal Periodic Review April 19, 2010

CIR greatly benefitted period 9/2005 to 2/2017 John Dieffenbacher-Krall was Executive Director of the Maine Indian Tribal-State Commission and actively involved in CIR.

**2-11-15 letter of Bishop Lane to CIR** The sunset letter Lowest point in CIR’s relationship with the Diocese

Point of information: Can a bishop unilaterally void a decision of diocesan convention?

**3-26-15 CIR meeting w/ Bishop Lane** Attendees Bishop Lane, Heidi Shott, Nick Smith, Karen Rienert, Judith Coburn-Harris, Joanne Smith, and Ted Kanellakis. Outcome of the meeting.

...there is no present change in our status as a Committee of the Diocese. We, as with other committees will continue to operate within the Diocesan structure, which places responsibilities for supporting mission initiatives and decisions about Financing them, with the Mission Priorities Committee and ultimately with the Council of the Diocese. We will continue to participate as we have to date. It is important to note, that there have been no Council decisions to

change our status as a Committee. (Ted Kanellakis summary of 3-26-15 meeting with Bishop Lane)

Commentary on this period: CIR was forced to spend considerable portions of its meeting time discussing how to address the Diocese. When new Wabanaki citizens attended they were sometimes turned off by all the internal discussion about the CIR/Diocesan relationship. It was a significant drag on our work.

Pause - questions

### **Current Work of the Committee on Indian Relations**

Bishop Lane appointed John Dieffenbacher-Krall chair 2/15/17

John had several priorities

Increasing active membership of CIR Bishop Lane had cited as one of the contributing factors leading him to suggest sunseting the Committee "CIR has diminished and aged over time and is now a very small group." CIR has grown so much Bishop Brown has questioned whether CIR has become somewhat unwieldy.

Strengthen CIR relationship with Aroostook Band of Micmacs, Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians, Passamaquoddy Tribe

Actively study critical information related to the Maine Indian Claims Settlement Act We read *Unsettled Past, Unsettled Future and Restitution*.

Consider more varied meeting times to boost attendance – CIR had met for years on the same day of the month on Indian Island

Work more closely with the Friends Committee on Maine Public Policy.

Strive to change the political climate to cause Maine voters/residents to prioritize more just relationship with the Wabanaki

Build capability to do remote meetings via technology

Recommit to serving as a catalyst to spark stronger relationships between Episcopal Churches closest to Wabanaki communities and those Wabanaki Peoples

Current focus: LD 2094 An Act To Implement the Recommendations of the Task Force on Changes to the Maine Indian Claims Settlement Implementing Act