



THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH
ADVOCACY CENTER

Dear Relatives,

In July, your Bishops and Deputies were successful in imploring The Episcopal Church to adopt resolution A155 “establishing programs for the Alleviation of Domestic Poverty.” Additionally, with the bold passage of D035, The Episcopal Church became the first church to repudiate the Doctrine of Discovery to begin the work of reconciliation and healing from policies in which our church was a core partner in the colonial marginalization of indigenous peoples around the world.

These actions converge with the extreme poverty rates on our reservations and communities: chronic unemployment, diminishing education opportunities, and family instability; which have contributed to high rates of alcoholism, violence, and suicide. Together, these realities sent an urgent call for a new partnership with Indigenous Peoples and The Episcopal Church. We seek new innovative strategies to address the pressing challenges of poverty. A155 seeks to establish a community development initiative in Indigenous communities in the new triennium beginning in 2010. Most importantly, that community development initiative is intended to emerge from the visions and voices of those living in the Indigenous communities while being heard in conversation with the broader church wide Episcopal community.

Next week there will be a gathering of Indigenous clergy and lay leadership in Salt Lake City, Utah. At that time those present will be invited into conversation around the particular experiences of poverty among Indigenous Peoples. And in keeping with the goal of community development we will seek to identify practical ways as Church to respond to the affects of poverty on the local or diocesan level.

In November leaders of both the Native American/Indigenous community and the broader Episcopal Church will meet in Chicago, IL. They will outline a strategy that helps to assure your voices and visions are able to be expressed throughout the development process. The strategy will focus on the four categories that emerged in the Presiding Bishop’s Summit on Domestic Poverty in spring of 2008. Those categories are vision, formation, networking, and advocacy. Together they can guide the Church as it puts its faith into action in the work of poverty alleviation.

You are being invited to shape those conversations right from the beginning in three important ways.

One. Help us develop a survey that reflects your voice and vision of a healthy community to live in. Send us the questions you seek answers to. Send us ideas you have that can make life better in your local communities.

Two. Four Indigenous people will be asked to share the responsibility of holding this process before the larger Indigenous community along with four other non-Indigenous people who will do so before the church wide community. Please nominate someone to serve as one of the four Indigenous leaders who will bear this responsibility on your behalf.

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Three. Invite the Spirit to lead us, because “the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words. And God, who searches the heart, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.” (Romans 8:26)

We have many gifts and resources to share with one another as the Body of Christ which we joined into in our baptism. Our capacity to initiate healthy development in our communities rests upon our willingness to make offerings from the gifts and resources we have as much as it does upon our expectation that God wants to work miracles of transformation in our communities to demonstrate the healing power of Christ’s love for us.

We are thankful that God’s Spirit dwells in you and ask God’s continued blessings upon you through the gift of that Spirit. Please join this initiative that leads to transformation and renewal.

Grace and peace,

Pilamaya,



The Rev. Christopher Johnson
Program Officer
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Sarah Eagle Heart, MBA
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