

## Province VIII Winter Talk Report

January 7 – 9, 2011

Reno, Nevada

### Friday, January 7:

The Gathering of Province VIII opened with speakers emphasizing the importance of holding a provincial Winter Talk. Malcolm Chun stated that Reno is an appropriate gathering site because it is only thirty (30) minutes away from the Pyramid Lake reservation, homeland of the Paiute people. Gathering near native communities is important because it validates local ministry by encouraging youth and elders to attend (many do not like to fly even if travel monies were available many would prefer to drive). In addition, Reno is cost effective because there are many who do not like to fly even if travel monies were available, free shuttles to and from the airport, and buffet meals available to reduce on cost of meals. Finally, we support the local economy and further strengthen and develop our relationships with the host Paiute people.

Reynelda James, tribal Paiute elder who will be confirmed to the diaconate in April welcomed all of the participants to the homeland of the Paiute people, who attend primarily two churches: St. Mary's, which is in Nixon (on the reservation) and St. Michael's, which is in Wadsworth. After her welcome prayer, James stated that she said that she was very happy that Province VIII chose Reno, which is close to them, some people do not like to travel on planes. "We're all related somehow in our spiritual lives," she said, and that she has in the past "met priests and lay people [at these Winter talks] and they become your family." She also added that "Winter Talk is education, learning experience, [and is] very valuable to me."

As the altar was built, each participant came forward and placed items of spiritual significance to them, their families, and/or their communities. At the same time, each participant provided background information on themselves and the objects that they brought with them.





**Buz Locke Wasler and Karin Schöen-Wasler**

The first presenters were Buz Locke Wasler and his wife Karin Schöen-Wasler, the creators of the award winning DVD "WinterTalk", which was filmed at the 2004 Winter Talk in Oklahoma. The Waslers shared that they do their work for the future of Native youth: "The truth of the youth is in there. It brings strength for tomorrow." In "WinterTalk," Native youth and those in Native ministries were interviewed. The DVD received many national and international film awards, including three Telly Awards and the best Native American Short at the Southern Winds film festival in Shawnee, Oklahoma.

After the showing of the DVD, a discussion was held on the impressions received from the audience. Some of the comments were:

- The youth are the living tradition, we are the culture, reclaiming the old ways.
- Participating in church sometimes felt like you had to leave your culture outside the church door
- "not taking anything away from being Native to be Christian"
- Can now develop new traditions, new ways of walking with God through our culture, we bring forth Christ to all the world.



### **Buz Wasler**

Buz Wasler further commented that being Native American means a lot of responsibility - we need to walk in two worlds, know our identity and be proud. It is important to embrace our rich history, build strength into our identity for youth. Digital media, such as the DVD, can be an important first step to help Native youth identify their spirituality. "WinterTalk" has received many awards, and it is important to promote the DVD, and have it recognized in the various communities. Wasler said that "people feel more like joining a group when they feel like they are a part of it." For Karin Schöen-Wasler, the DVD was made to begin the healing in partnership with Native communities. She said that future plans include a user guide to help facilitators present the DVD.

Further discussion ensued and the following comments were elicited from participants. Reynelda James stated that "as I grew older, I always saw Jesus with blue eyes and blond hair until I started going to Native ministry gatherings like ECCIM and Mountains and Deserts." For Rose Mary-Joe Kinale, a social worker and a Paiute member of St. Paul's Church in Wadsworth, Nevada, it was a cultural epiphany for reaffirming the truth and acceptance of native languages and cultures in the Church. "I encourage my clients to look at spirituality. If people say that's heathen, I say we have one God, we worship one God. Come back to what you were." Jeanette Allen, a Paiute member of St. Michael's in Wadsworth agreed. "She's (Reynelda) brought back our young people," said Allen. "Our boys are helping with the altar. Things like that haven't happened for years. To hear the comments reaffirms what the film can do. Films are part of the arts. The finished product is put out for people's interpretation. It's the Spirit at work. No way you can write that kind of stuff. It comes from their hearts. It's timeless. We learned English for economic reasons, so why are we still poor?" "At a minimum," said Thelma Chun, Native Hawaiian member of the Cathedral of St. Andrew's church in

Hawai`i, the DVD "provides great food for thought." Linda Sproat, a Native Hawaiian member of Christ Memorial in Kalihiwai, Kaua`i, Hawai`i said that the DVD is "very inspirational. It can be used right now. We should send copies to all the seminaries." Her husband David added that the DVD "establishes common ground, we're all struggling with [bringing] our youth [to Church]. The DVD is a powerful teaching tool." Paul Nahoia Lucas, Coordinator of the Province VIII Indigenous Peoples Network and Native Hawaiian member of St. John's By the Sea Church in Kahalu`u, O`ahu, Hawai`i, agreed. "We are also struggling to keep [the]youth involved [in church, but just because the youth do not regularly attend church] doesn't mean they are not interested [in worship]." Finally, Elsie Dennis, Co-Chair of the First Nations Committee from the Diocese of Olympia and member of St. Matthew's Church in Auburn, Washington, encouraged the use of the DVD "in anti-racism trainings. Native people are made to feel 'less than' yet my mother grew up knowing and speaking four languages."



**Rose Mary Joe-Kinale**

**Saturday, January 8, 2011:**

The first full day of the provincial Winter Talk began with a presentation on Native American Iconography, by Malcolm Naea Chun, Native Hawaiian member of the Cathedral Church of St. Andrew's in Honolulu, Hawai`i, and Candidate for ordination to the Priesthood. As Chun explained the first western icon was the face of Jesus on a piece of linen cloth. The second icon image was that of St. Luke with the Virgin Mary where she points the way to her son; veneration not adoration given to an icon. However, Native American iconography is a flat, two-dimensional art form, which provides symbolically "windows to heaven." In other words, the icon does not have to portray physical reality and often deliberately avoids realistic appearance (no shadows). Some of the more famous Native American/Indigenous

icons include: Kateri Tekakwitha (Maori); the Navajo Madonna (Navajo); the Apache Christ (Apache); Wewha, Zuni prophet (Zuni); King Kamehameha IV and Queen Emma (Native Hawaiian); and Matoaka, aka "Pocahontas." (Powhatan).



### **The Rev. Canon Robert Two Bulls**

After Chun's presentation, the Rev. Canon Robert Two Bulls, an ordained minister from Minnesota and member of the Lakota Nation of South Dakota, spoke on Native American Art, and how it encourages our youth's spirituality. "We are a very visual people," stated Two Bulls. "We like our music, [and I] haven't met anyone who doesn't like the drum." Father Robert stated that Native theology is found in our artwork, and provided a brief glimpse into his artwork: the Seven Tipis; the Red Shirt Art Project Cross; the Cross for First Nations; the Two Stations of the Cross, "Whatever Happened to Johnny Blackfeather?"; his recent icon painting of Matoaka (Pocahontas); Bishop Paul Jones of Utah, the only pacifist Episcopalian Bishop to publicly oppose U.S. involvement during World War I; and the 38 Tears of Bishop Whipple, a painting in remembrance of the 38 Dakota warriors who were wrongly hung by the U.S. government in Mankato, Minn., and Bishop Whipple's intervention and plea for their clemency. Each tear on Father Robert's painting is depicted as a hangman's noose. As Two Bulls says, "I leave for the viewers to decide for themselves what [the artwork] means to them."



**Paul Nahoa Lucas**

**Afternoon session:**

The afternoon was spend viewing the DVD "We are Here," DVD produced by Paul Nahoa Lucas through a grant from the Church, which discusses the implications for native peoples following the passage of DO 35 at the Church's General Convention in 2009. DO 35 formally recognizes the Church's repudiation of the European Doctrine of Discovery. While passage of the church resolution was celebrated by Native Tribes and tribal communities nationwide, it received little or no attention from the Church and its members. The DVD is designed to educate members of the Church of the profound implications for the Church and the native members of its church.

The DVD consists of selected interviews with the Rev. Dr. Martin Brokenleg at the 2010 Province VIII Winter Talk in Auburn, Washington, the Rt. Rev. Mark MacDonald, National Indigenous Bishop, Anglican Church in Canada, at the 2010 national Winter Talk in Poarch Creek, Alabama, and the Rev. Canon Ginny Doctor, Diocese of Alaska, at the 2009 General Convention.

Bishop MacDonald emphasized that native people are people who have refused to sever the living relationship with the land. They serve as a "prophetic witness" about human life, the "God-given communion with Creation," and Jesus' communion with water. The Rev. Dr. Martin Brokenleg spoke on the origin of the Doctrine of Discovery, and about how it began in early discussions between the Portuguese and Spaniards over whether Native people in the "New World...have souls." Papal edicts stated that if land is not owned by European Christians then it is considered vacant. This European thinking was carried over to the United States in Supreme Court decision enunciated by Chief Justice John Marshall, who declared that Native American tribes were "domestic dependent nations." This "Right of

Discovery" allowed European colonizers the justification to own, rule and exploit anyway they wanted to do. The doctrine of discovery, Brokenleg states, validates racism. The Rev. Canon Ginny Doctor shared that an elder told her "we have forgotten how to dream because so much has been taken from us." Reverend Doctor said that it is important to "reclaim" what was taken from us.



**Participants in small group discussions**

Following the showing of the DVD, participants broke out into five small groups to discuss the following questions:

1. Give one or two examples of how the Doctrine of Discovery was applied to you or your community.
2. What can you do in your community to implement the Church's Repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery resolution as it relates to your church?

The following are some of the observations that each individual group was able to share with the larger group following the break out small group discussions:

**Group One:**

- Clergy often appear not interested in raising up native people for leadership roles in the Church. We have deep feelings and deep thoughts. We've been taught to be respectful and not talk back, not to be lazy. Women are the basis of the families. Don't mock the less fortunate.
- Grandparents are the wisest of all people. We need to return to the way we were, got to make changes for children and grandchildren.

### **Group Two:**

- Mainland priests coming to the (Hawaiian) islands tend to be culturally insensitive, especially about what is already in place and working (local customs and practices);
- need to look at alternate paths to priesthood for those in our communities who feel called, let's look to the Minita-A-Iwi ("Ministers of the Native peoples") program developed in Aotearoa (new Zealand) which makes native non-stipendiary priests available to their communities to conduct baptisms, funerals, available in the community;
- Look at more aggressive ways to involve youth. We need to develop culturally sensitive approaches to make church interesting to youth (e.g. do cultural activities, planting taro, canoe paddling), and then slowly introduce the Gospel to their lives.

### **Group Three:**

- Strong distinction between Native tradition of recognizing that people are called versus Western "individual calling" view of ordination;
- Look at Christian tradition and Native tradition;
- Look at ways of limiting inculturation, and promote "enculturation";
- develop sense of trust with all parties, step outside the box, the DVDs that were shown at Winter Talk can open dialog

### **Group Four:**

- The impact of the Doctrine of Discovery was too painful to talk about in their group. Territorialism, controlling attitude exists about what is expected of ordained leadership, authorities don't have to pay attention to what the Natives say so they don't;
  - o shared a story of how Bishop Sandy Hampton was criticized for bringing a dream catcher into the church in celebration of a ceremony, and that it was referred to by some as a "pagan symbol"
  - o See a double standard of accepting western symbols (e.g. Yule logs, etc.) but not native symbols;
  - o need to honor and respect each other in order to face the future together

### **Group Five:**

- Accept the fact that some individuals won't change and that's okay, but we need to respect and tolerate differing views and forms of celebrating the Eucharist;
- clergy need to be comfortable conducting different types of services; look at differences between mainland and islanders;
- a lot of education about the Doctrine of Discovery needs to be done;
- churches have lost touch with the people and are viewed more as private "clubs."

At the end of the day, all participants unanimously voted to adopt a resolution calling for: 1) the congratulations of the Province VIII Indigenous People's Network Coordinator for organizing the event and urging "the Province VIII leaders to continue their commitment and support of this annual gathering as a means for us to network, and to have these intense discussions and deep learnings;" 2) the Indigenous People's Network to develop a plan for the full participation of indigenous families, elders, and youths to attend Winter Talks through funding from the National Church; 3) each of our individual home dioceses, through the office of our Bishops and our diocesan Native American and Hawaiian ministries "to conduct and complete a study of the implications of DO 35, a Resolution passed at the 2009 General Convention which specifically repudiated the Doctrine of Discovery as it applies to the Church." The DO 35 study "should explore the implications of the Resolution upon our participation and life in the Episcopal Church, especially in the development of ordained and lay leadership. It should also determine and identify findings that would rectify the effects of the Resolution upon our life in the Church" and that the studies be reported to each of the dioceses in Province VIII, the Executive Council's Committee on Indigenous Ministries (ECCIM ) and at the next General Convention in 2012. The participants further "urged our relations, who will gather at the 2011 National Wintertalk in New Mexico, to realize the urgency and opportunity to respond also to the Resolution, finding their own ways to report to their respective dioceses, Provinces and to the 2012 General Convention;" 4) to encourage the National Church to "better utilize and distribute" the Schöen-Wasler's award winning 2006 DVD "Wintertalk;" and 5) congratulating Reynelda James with her upcoming ordination to the Diaconate in the Diocese of Nevada. A complete copy of the resolution is attached to this Report.

### **Sunday, January 9, 2011:**

The Provincial VIII Winter Talk closed on Sunday with a celebration of the Holy Eucharist led by the Rev. Albert Krueger, Missioner for Native Ministry for the Diocese of Oregon. Father Albert celebrated the Eucharist utilizing a special service he conducted for Repudiating the Doctrine of Discovery held on October 10, 2010, one day before Columbus Day (aka Discoverer's Day).

After the Eucharist, participants made closing comments and expressed their gratitude, and removed their personal items from the altar. Rose Mary Joe-Kinale said that "even though the group was small, it was one of the best gatherings I've been to. That's the way God meant it to be." Reynelda James concluded the event by saying: "I thank you for coming. We look forward to Winter Talk. It's always [held] so far away, and many of us can't go due to work and family. Thank you for choosing this place not so far from our homeland. This is the homeland of the Paiute, Washoe and Shoshone peoples."

Father Albert stated that March 10 will be the anniversary of the flooding by the federal government of Celilo Falls on the Columbia River in Oregon for a flood control project. Celilo Falls was once a predominant and sacred Indian community. There will be a remembrance ceremony held there. Father Krueger invited Province VIII to co-sponsor the 2012 Winter Talk at the Spirit Mountain Lodge in Grand

Ronde, Oregon. Province VIII would share the sponsorship with the Diocese of Oregon and the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde.



**Some of the PVIII Winter Talk participants pose for a photo**