



Circle of All Nations
Home: 231 Pitobig Mikan
Maniwaki, Quebec, J9E 3B1
Mail: c/o 506 Stratas Court
Kanata, Ontario
K2L 3K7

May 8, 2009

Her Majesty The Queen
Buckingham Palace
London SW1A 1AA

An Urgent Message from 95 year old Algonquin Elder William Commanda to Her Royal Majesty, Queen Elizabeth 11

Dear Majesty,

May I present my greetings?

In 1953, upon your coronation, I received a royal certificate and medal, intimating an invisible yet tangible direct connection to you; I was forty years old at the time, and I was serving my community as chief appointed by acclamation.

Now, I am being honoured in Canada by appointment as Officer of the *Order of Canada*. With this recognition bestowed upon me by your official representative in my homeland, the Governor General of Canada, I am drawn again to the periphery of your circle, and now I come to you, fifty six years later, with a special mission.

I am now almost ninety six years old. It has not been easy to witness the great struggles of my grandparents and parents and the continued pain and oppression of my people throughout the continent of North America, over this century of unprecedented global change. Believing, as we Indigenous Peoples do, that we belong to Mother Earth, the repercussions of the wanton abuse of our lands, waters and natural resources have overflowed into our already traumatized lives. Like Mother Earth, we too are experiencing extreme stress.

In 1982, Canada repatriated the constitution and specific provisions regarding Indigenous Peoples were incorporated within its charter of responsibilities. These remain unfulfilled.

Today, Canada stands alone as one of the few nations that has refused to sign the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

A few are beginning to realize that the salvation of Mother Earth is inextricably linked with the survival of Indigenous Peoples, and that our prayer and ancient wisdom is essential to global healing – a few, but not yet many.

The fundamental prayer of the Indigenous Peoples of the Americas, *Ginawaydaganuc*, contains in its essence the profound understanding that we are all inter-related –as members of the great human family, and with all that the chief elements, Fire, Earth, Water and Air provide to sustain us; biodiversity in all its forms is the fundamental principle of life.

Over the years, I have pondered the power of England over the Globe, and while I daily mourn the demise of my language, I note that today, the English language is used across the world – there must be some reason for this, beyond what has been undertaken in its name by its use and manipulation to date. Today, the world is drawn together by unprecedented environmental crisis, war and the collapse of financial and social regimes that governed life over the past five hundred years. New ideas are needed now, to be communicated to and understood by all, because we now realize we are a global community.

But maybe we need to return to old values. Recently, I was heartened by your words acclaiming the meeting of civilizations when your first ancestors met mine in this New World. This world and beyond is now fast becoming the *Paradise Lost*. I believe Indigenous Peoples, though so invisible on the world stage, have something of crucial importance to offer to the world, and it is of urgent importance for this message to be really heard and understood now. I believe that your voice is needed now to facilitate this.

Over the past decade, I have worked constantly to develop and advance an integrated vision for the healing of Indigenous Peoples, relationships with others, and our collective relationship with Mother Earth, at the Ancient Sacred Site at the Chaudières Falls in the capital city of Canada, across from the place that your own ancestor, Queen Victoria, chose for the Parliament Buildings. It is no accident that Winston Churchill, carrying that drop of Indigenous blood (Anne Pennington Mayer, who served you on during a visit to Canada, tells me that his granddaughter Mary Churchill noted recently that she was one ‘*thirty two-th*’ Red Indian) delivered the *Sinews of Peace* speech to the world from this place. For six thousand years, this place was the meeting place of the ancient peoples. But over the past few hundreds Indigenous Peoples have been moved away from it, and it has become a contaminated and desecrated wasteland. I am told that it is not clear who *owns* various portions of this tiny space of modified islands and water. I do not believe we have any right to buy or sell Mother Earth; this area remains unceded, unsurrendered and unconquered Algonquin Territory, and the place remains precious to us.

You will understand this, as perhaps the original Lords of Trade might have. I am told that in recent times the United States wanted to buy the land its Embassy sits upon in England and it was reminded of the sway of the law of the multi year lease and of the accompanying bankruptcy provisions. In 1532, Franciscus di Vittoria, acclaimed as Founder of Modern International Law, asserted to the Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire that *the Indians were the true owners of the land, holding it in honour of the Creator, and that the pearls of the sea belonged to them.* This is where the notion of Aboriginal Rights has its roots in North America. This is the zone of the *Honour of the Crown.* Treaties were not negotiated in good faith over much of this country, and *here,* the traditional territory of my ancestors remains unceded, unsurrendered and unconquered land. Some, like me, have deep reservations about laws, and regulations and amendments, often seeing these as tools that have given others unjustified rights over our lands and resources. When my ancestors first met Philomen Wright, the first white settler, at the Sacred Chaudière Site on the Ottawa River in 1800, and asked by what right he cut down the trees and took the land, the stranger drew a paper from his pocket and read *“The Indians have consented to relinquish all claim to the land, in compensation for which they receive annual grants from the Government, which shall be withheld if they molest settlers.”* This paper, my ancestors saw as a big *“loup garou”*, an indescribable monster supposed to have supernatural powers, and in my own lifetime, I have experienced the deep fear this reference brings to native peoples. Such are the roots in the struggle for land.

I am told that at the present time, Domtar Inc. holds the lease in perpetuity to the Sacred Chaudière Island for \$100 a year – others have claimed this stranglehold control over the sacred site over the past century – a site that was the “commons” to us. Domtar is a paper company that became rich by clear cutting the timber in my traditional territory, but it is now obliged by the *Laws of Nature* to disengage from this activity; it now wishes to exploit and commodify another sacred natural resource, Water, provided by the Great Mystery for the use of all.

I believe a symbolic gesture to signify transformation of this relationship with Mother Earth is of crucial importance.

Over the past four decades, Indigenous Peoples have begun returning to the Sacred Site. And we have developed a vision which restores our relationship with the sacred area, and constitutes a symbolic statement of reconciliation with Mother Earth. It is also a vision for the healing of Indigenous Peoples; in this age of information sharing, and awareness of our collective histories and our present day reality of oppression, who could deny we deserve no less? Moreover, others need to be forgiven by us in order to break the energy of the cycle of abuse and shame, and we know that. We have had to carry a great burden for the world and our sacred prophecies tell us that it is now time for transformation. Thus our vision is for a place of reconciliation and reconnection with all others.

The core elements of our vision include an Indigenous Centre on Victoria Island, a Peace Building complex, an Eco City Park and Think Tank on the Environment, and a Historic

Park. It is the Indigenous vision for hope, reconciliation, integration and inclusion, with potentially huge national and international relevance.

Ten years ago I shared this vision with the former Governor General of Canada, thereafter with a range of Canadian Ministers, and now I have returned to report on my efforts to Her Excellency, the new Governor General. I am attaching a copy of my correspondence to her for further clarification and elaboration on this effort.

Yes, I have a vision for the Sacred Chaudières Site, a vision to commence the healing of half a millennia of oppression and injustice inflicted on the people of the Americas – a vision to shine a beacon of hope and visibility for my people, to consecrate the relationship with Mother Earth, and ignite peace and reconciliation with all others. This is the dream my ancestors dreamed, and one that I have carried as keeper of the ancient Sacred Record Keeping Wampum Belts. It has not been a light responsibility. It is time to share it.

Today, I am almost ninety six, and suddenly, I find myself in a hospital bed. I know it is time to deliver this mission and vision to you, the one who carries the *Honour of the Crown* on your shoulders.

Please accept my appreciation of your tremendous courage and global leadership in a century of such change, and my best wishes for your continued good health.

Sincerely,

William Commanda, Hon. Phd., O.C
Algonquin Elder
Founder, Circle of All Nations

circleofallnations@sympatico.ca

www.circleofallnations.ca (General Information)

www.asinabka.com (Indigenous Centre Information)

<http://web.mac.com/circleofallnations> (Elder Commanda's Recent Activities)

4 files included