

**Exhibit: National Inquiry into Missing and
Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls**

Location/Phase: Part 2 Regina

Witness: Clive Weighill

Submitted by: Ashley Smith

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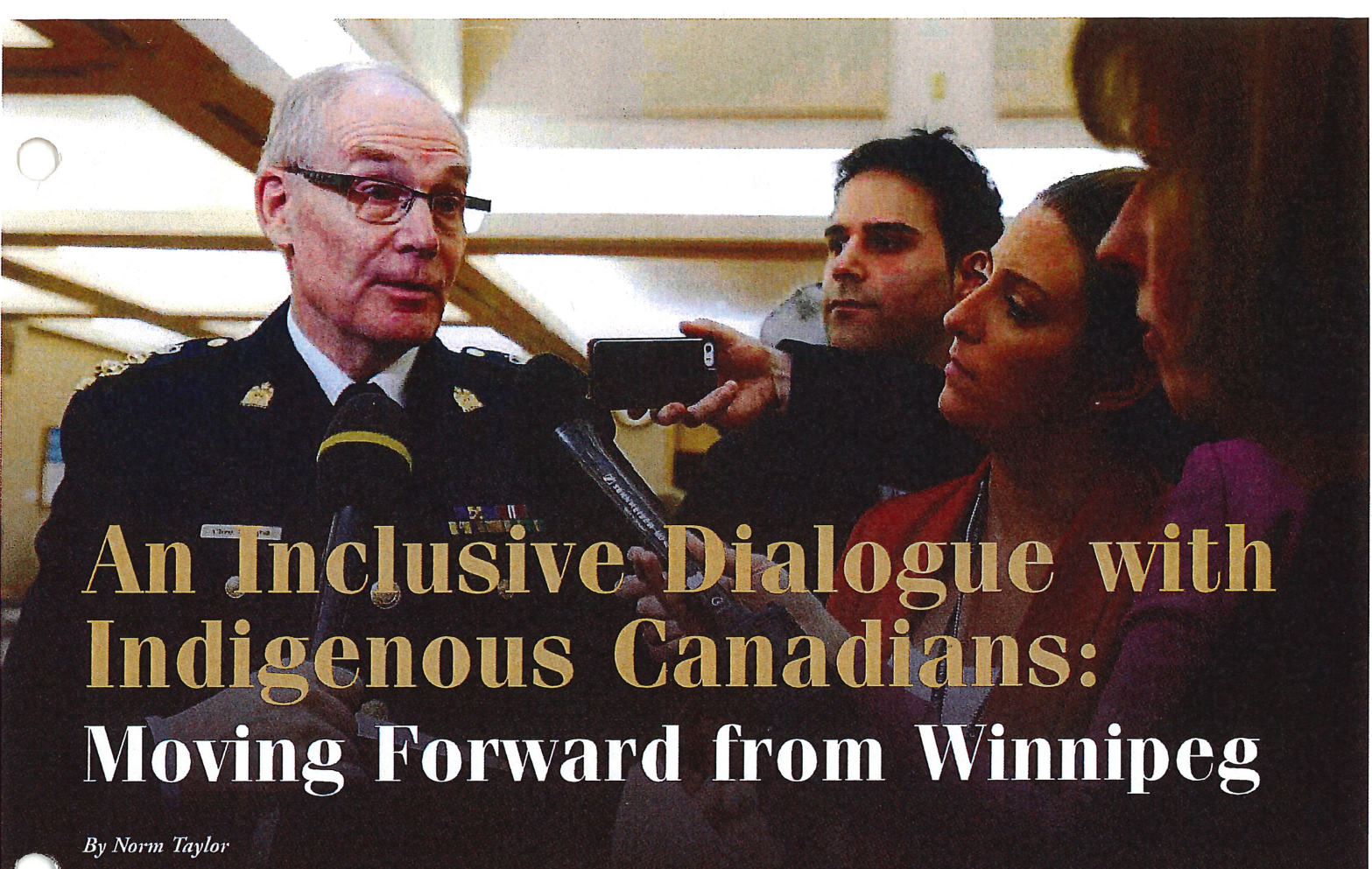
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An Inclusive Dialogue with Indigenous Canadians: Moving Forward from Winnipeg

By Norm Taylor

Upon reflection, the year 2015 may have been a watershed year in the evolving relationships among Canada's indigenous citizens and its policing system. The long anticipated Truth and Reconciliation report was released. The chorus of voices calling for an inquiry into the murdered and missing indigenous women and girls (MMIWG) gained in breadth and volume, with many police leaders beginning to join in. Accusations of colonial racism in policing and in whole cities were publicly denied by some and acknowledged by others, coupled in the latter case with pledges to root it out. In the midst of this, the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police made a bold decision: they would host a national conference in Winnipeg in the spring of 2016 entitled *Moving Forward Safer Futures: An Inclusive Dialogue Among Police, Policy Makers and Canada's Aboriginal Peoples*.

Much of the impetus for the conference came from the continuing work of the CACP's Policing with First Nations, Métis and Inuit Peoples Committee (PWFNMIP). This large and hard-working committee reflects a truly national scope of interests and perspectives and has significant aboriginal representation at all of its meetings. The committee contributed a great deal to the concept and design behind the Moving Forward conference, and they assisted the organizers by identifying and opening channels to potential speakers and panelists.

A great deal of credit must also go to CACP Past President, Saskatoon Chief of Police Clive Weighill, who was in many ways the inspiration behind the event, and who also came to be a defining figure within it. Chief Weighill said during the event, "Until root causes of violence are properly addressed (poverty, poor housing, disadvantage, etc.), Indigenous people will continue to be vulnerable and disproportionately represented in Canada's justice system. Overall, we cannot lose focus on that. Getting

tough on crime won't fix the challenges before us. We need to get tough on poverty, homelessness, racism and disadvantage."

It was this same sentiment that had led Chief Weighill to encourage his CACP Board colleagues to embrace the urgency and timing for the conference, and to set a clear expectation that this would indeed be an inclusive, respectful and productive dialogue. By late May 2016, over 180 delegates came together to participate. With thanks to the sponsorship of MNP Manitoba, and with logistical support from the Winnipeg Police Service and the RCMP's D Division, the two-day event was also punctuated by an evening at the Human Rights Museum of Canada, a fitting opportunity to extend the conversations beyond the conference room, very much on theme with many of the discussions that shaped the main event.

It was my privilege and honour to serve as the Chair of the conference planning committee and as Lead Moderator for the event. I've played both roles several times before at other events, but I don't recall ever feeling as much responsibility as I did before and during this one. There was an awful lot at stake for everyone concerned. The three stated goals of the conference set a high bar, and they established some delicate mutual expectations that simply had to be met. These goals now provide a useful framework for commenting on both the proceedings and the outcomes of this milestone gathering.

Goal #1: Achieve a more collective understanding of the historical, recent and current circumstances that continue to place a disproportionate number of Canada's indigenous peoples amid multiple and composite risk factors that severely jeopardize individual, family and community safety and well-being.

By now, we all know there are no magic solutions to such a complex set of circumstances as we see in Canada's indigenous and non-indigenous relationships and lived realities, and certainly no single event such as this can presume to resolve our troubled journey together. But, long journeys consist of many single steps, and the CACP membership can take pride in the new levels of understanding that were achieved during these two days of dialogue and sharing. About half of the presenters and panelists on the program were indigenous individuals. They and many others were fellow professionals with a deep and continuing commitment to understanding and supporting the aspirations of aboriginal families. In all, over 30 speakers brought their experience and their knowledge, both their science and their cultural wisdom, into the room with a view to identifying and reducing the risk factors that can impede those aspirations, and to strengthening the necessary protective factors, social policies and cultural practices that evidence shows us can best support hope and achievement in aboriginal homes and in all of our communities.

Goal #2: Create a renewed atmosphere of cooperation, collaboration and mutual respect between and among Canada's indigenous peoples, police, policy-makers, and the public services system.

In my experience, while many events may be remembered for their programming alone, few stand out as much for their texture. Amid the in-depth deliberations and discussions of policy and practice, this conference achieved a level of spiritual engagement, signaled a continuing respect for traditions, and ensured genuine mindfulness among all its delegates. Much credit for this goes to the elders and aboriginal leaders who attended and participated actively throughout, and in turn, to the CACP committee, board and individual police services who in many cases, made their attendance possible, and who seized on opportunities throughout the conference to make their participation timely and meaningful for everyone involved. The result was indeed an atmosphere of cooperation, collaboration and mutual respect.

Goal #3: Identify and accelerate the mobilization of collective, evidence-informed strategies to reduce risk, increase protective factors, and restore social equity for indigenous people in the context of the diverse communities and environments in which they live.

As has become a common practice at some of our major CACP events, the conference program was designed to lead through a logical flow of ideas and discussions toward a collective call to action in several key areas. A final consolidation exercise involved a distinguished panel of police and aboriginal leaders. Information and insights shared throughout the event were consolidated and emergent themes were captured to produce a framework for next steps in achieving a consistent, nation-wide approach for strengthening police relations and the lives of indigenous peoples. This resulted in several calls to action. The full text of these action items can be viewed within the CACP Media Release that emerged from the conference (see <https://cacp.ca/news/media-release-police-leaders-indigenous-representatives-seek-common-ground-on-solutions-for-safer-co.html>).

Among the highlights of these shared commitments were calls for more aggressive renewal of the First Nations Policing Program (FNPP), increased use of alternate justice options, greater investment in meeting basic needs in many communities, and a call for more urgent action in advance of an inquiry into the tragic MMIWG situations.

In direct regard to policing, I believe this item from the action list might say it best:

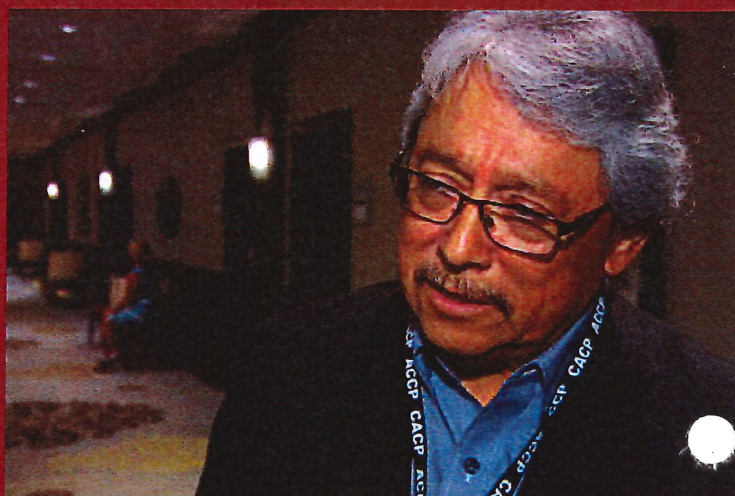
"The fundamentals of policing need to be enhanced: the development of relationships, especially with Indigenous youth, is essential to us working together to find solutions. It is about learning, listening, connecting, commitment and empowerment."

To that I might simply add what this conference made very clear, that it is all about moving forward to safer futures, together.

Norm Taylor is a frequent contributor to this and other publications on policing and community safety in Canada. In addition to providing professional advisory services for his firm's clients across Canada and the US, he serves as Program Director for the CACP Executive Global Studies Program and as Editor-in-Chief of the Journal of Community Safety and Well-Being.



CACP President, Chief Clive Weighill and National Chief, Perry Bellegarde, Assembly of First Nations



Elder, Mr. Dave Courchesne