

The Rev. Doyle Turner

Autobiography

I was born in Minnesota on the White Earth Reservation. I was raised in a family of five with two siblings, a brother and a sister. My maternal grandparents were farmers and had a strong influence on my life. My grandfather was a hard working, but gentle person whose life was centered on his farm and family. My grandmother had a great sense of humor and was a collaborator with me in many adventures on their farm. My mother and father were honest hard working people who were married for 54 years. My father taught me all I know about the beauty, holiness and wonder of creation. He was determined that his children have the education he could not have. My mother was a wonderful cook and a great companion who gave me the mental strength to persevere in life. I was the first in my family to have a college education.

My mother and father were of different denominations, my father was Roman Catholic and my mother was Christian Missionary Alliance. I grew up in her church and was greatly influenced by a great uncle who was a pastor in that church for 60 + years when he died. He taught me about living my faith. He had a peaceful countenance and a wonderful way of bringing the love of God wherever he went. I began reading the bible when I was about 12 years old. I felt drawn to church life and ministry since I was young. I invited my mother and father to church telling them that the Episcopal Church was a good meeting place for their different faiths. I served the chalice at their first communion together. They were faithful members until they died.

Mary and I were married and have spent 44 great years as friends and confidants. After we were married, I became an Episcopalian because she was a member of the church. I fell in love with the liturgy with its beautiful and poetic language. It spoke to me and called me deeper and deeper into my faith journey. I was baptized, confirmed and married in Samuel Memorial Episcopal Church. Our three children were raised in the church. I was elected to the bishop's committee; I became junior warden, and later was elected as the senior warden. I was asked to study to become a lay reader. I was trained with a group of lay readers in region 1. We met often to study together and grew into a close knit group of spiritual cohorts who supported each other in prayer and in life.

I was called by the leadership of the congregation to begin studying for the priesthood. It meant I had to go to college, I deferred saying I wasn't the college type. They said have you ever tried? So I went to college and graduated with a degree in Personnel Psychology and a minor in Business. After college we moved to Evanston Illinois where I graduated from Seabury Western-Theological Seminary.

After seminary I was called to the four Episcopal Churches on White Earth. I was ordained there to the diaconate in 1985 and to the priesthood in 1986. We spent marvelous years building the churches, taking youth on trips, teaching release time

classes, pastoring, celebrating and sorrowing with the people. I was taught by an old abbot that if you feed the people's spirit the church will grow and prosper. "Peter son of Simon, do you love me? Then feed my sheep." This has become my touchstone as I have worked in the church.

I was called to serve on the bishop's staff as one of three Canon Missioners for Indian Work. I served in this capacity until I was called as Executive Director of the Indigenous Theological Training Institute (ITTI). Here I traveled the country training ministry teams and individuals for ministry. ITTI was also a funding vehicle for those who were going to seminary. This was one of the happiest times of my career. I engaged in work that was most satisfying, in that leadership was being formed for a new generation of ministers. I worked among bright and eager people who had an exciting vision of the church in their communities.

It was during this time that I served on the board of directors for The Leadership Academy for New Directions (LAND). LAND was funded by the national church and engaged in training leadership in small churches across the country. One of the most satisfying conferences I was part of presenting was a conference where newly ordained and called priests came with their senior wardens to learn to work together effectively.

In 2000 I ran for political office on the reservation and was elected as the chairman of White Earth. I serve in that capacity until 2004. This was a time where I learned to lead a large organization with as many as 1500 employees and a huge budget. I learned that a long range vision and a plan of how you reach the vision is vital to the success of any organization.

I was at home during this time so I began to serve as a supply priest at various altars around Region 1 as much for my own spirituality as that of the congregations. I became involved with Trinity Church Park Rapids as their mentor. They are a delightful congregation of Episcopal and Presbyterian folks who have formed a partnership and are enjoying good growth

In 2004 my wife Mary and I formed a consulting and training company we call "Peaceful Bay Enterprises." We provide strategic planning, leadership and employee development training to companies and churches. We feel that God keeps opening wonderful doors of opportunity to serve and grow if we truly listen.