

Eighth Fire Gathering
September 2008

Dr. William Commanda's Greetings
Algonquin Elder
Founder: Circle of All Nations

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A CIRCLE OF ALL NATIONS
A CULTURE OF PEACE

**Eighth Fire Gathering, September 12 – 14, 2008 Petersham,
Massachusetts**

**Greetings from Elder (Dr.) William Commanda, Algonquin Elder,
Keeper of the Sacred Seven Fires Prophecy Wampum Belt, founder of
*A Circle of All Nations.***

Thank you for inviting me to offer my greetings as you commence this cross cultural Gathering of Native American Elders, sustainability leaders and concerned citizens to build a network of sustainable cultures across the Northeast coast of Turtle Island.

You have called your meeting the Eighth Fire Gathering. As some of you may know, I have been the carrier of the sacred Seven Fires Prophecy Wampum Belt for over three decades, and at its core lies a prayer for a renewed and revitalized relationship with Mother Earth and all her children. In 1995, I served as spiritual guide for the Sunbow Five Walk, which commenced at First Encounter Beach on the Eastern seaboard of the state of Massachusetts, and native and non-native peoples walked across the continent to take prayers and messages of sustainability and peace-building to the land and the people.

Many other native people have been passionate about sharing this message over the years too, and there is a relationship of trust evolving with the many new peoples who now also live on Turtle Island, and who are also beginning to realize that we face common challenges of an unprecedented nature today. Daily, we watch the power of Mother Nature unleashed on the Northeast coast; and now we realize we are one people, irrespective of culture, race or borders, who must come together to with *one mind, one determination, one heart and one love* to create a sustainable future for our children.

Many are beginning to understand that the prayers of the original peoples of the land are crucial to create this understanding. As we walk this path together, then, we work towards igniting the Eighth Fire of hope and promise. Our ancestors welcomed the newcomers to Turtle Island many generations ago, and First Peoples continue to honour that commitment, and all are included in our prayers. I believe that it is only when the newcomers truly honour that welcome that they will find deep peace. When people come to their knees and ask forgiveness for the abuses of the past to the land and its peoples, with deep sincerity, only then we may see the transformation of the Eighth Fire.

For many years I have been working to advance a vision for an Indigenous Centre in Ottawa, on the Mighty Kitchissippi, the Ottawa River, the Sacred Site where our ancestors met regularly for over five centuries. It is a vision for the strengthening of the voice of Indigenous peoples, and the healing of our relationship with Mother Earth and each other

(brochure attached). I believe we need the central meeting places of old to ignite the coals of the ancient council fires. I hope you will bring your voices together in all support of manifestation of this vision.

I commend the Sacred Earth Network for its efforts in organizing this Gathering and ensuring that the wisdom of our ancestors is honoured. I am sure you will all share a very meaningful experience together and we shall animate *The Circle of All Nations, The Culture of Peace*. I look forward to hearing reports about this special event.

Megwetch

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