

JANUARY 17, 2021 -- Indigenous Lives, Race & Reconciliation with Joel Gordon & Andrew Thunder

Questions Answered During Live Q&A

1. How does a Christ follower begin to reconcile their Indigenous culture with their Christian beliefs?
2. Andrew, how does your Indigenous heritage complement your faith in Christ?
3. How do we minister effectively to indigenous populations when there has been so much hurt by the church in history?
4. From the christian point of view is there a difference between reconciliation and forgiveness?
5. As a non-indigenous person, how does one balance acknowledging the painful past and sinful actions of Christians against the Indigenous community, with encouraging the Indigenous community towards knowing Jesus?

All questions answered during the Live Q&A with Joel Gordon & Andrew Thunder can be found here: <https://youtu.be/XnLcilQ3hYM>

Bonus Questions Answered by Joel & Andrew

1. **We got several questions about the importance and interworking of forgiveness and reconciliation: In our relationships where does forgiveness for the past allow anyone to move forward? The Corinthians passage about reconciliation it is God who is not counting our sins against him. The onus is therefore on God who was the one wronged (sinned against). Does this then suggest that the onus for reconciliation is with Indigenous people?**

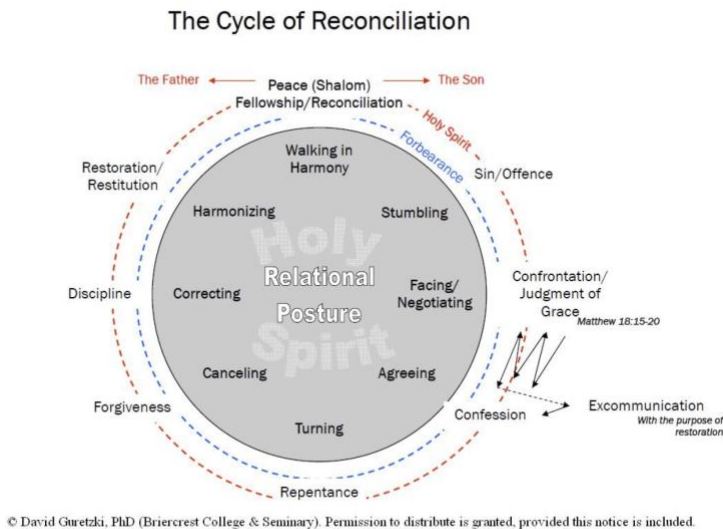
Joel Gordon: Our Executive VP and resident theologian at EFC, David Guretzki teaches a course on reconciliation and forgiveness at Briercrest. He has a helpful graphic on the topic (see below).

The Cycle of Reconciliation: A Biblical Model

- Reconciliation/Peace (Shalom)/Fellowship
- Love
- Forbearance
- Sin/Enmity
- Confrontation
- Separation/Excommunication
- Confession

- Repentance
- Forgiveness
- Discipline
- Restitution and Restoration

This biblical model applies to our relationship with God and with each other. With sin, confrontation, confession, we need to understand how wrongs of the past impact present day ideologies, practices, laws, and social structures. Some have suggested that if sins of systemic oppression and racism have caused harm over 7 generations, it may take another 7 generations to start to find meaningful healing. Guretzki's model provides a relational framework with the Holy Spirit at the core. Ultimately, God is the driver of reconciliation – The Holy Spirit convicts of sin. I'm thankful that he invites us to participate in this journey of loving well and being in the right relationship with Him and each other.



Additional Questions

1. **Is it ok for non-indigenous people to visit indigenous territories nearby? And if yes, what are some of the do's and don'ts?**

Stay tuned as we're hoping to hear from Andrew Thunder or Joel Gordon on this question.

2. **My understanding is that there is a difference between efforts to decolonize the church and an anti-colonial agenda. Which one does the biblical value of reconciliation fall under? How do we practice reconciliation if certain aspects of the North American church and nation are deeply embedded within colonial**

structures?

Stay tuned as we're hoping to hear from Andrew Thunder or Joel Gordon on this question.

3. How can we think about local and global missions as a reconciling practice when it is heavily attached to colonial sentiments?

Stay tuned as we're hoping to hear from Andrew Thunder or Joel Gordon on this question.

4. As we mature as believers, we learn that in difficulties (like feeling overwhelmed or with stress or sadness - and in all situations really) we are to RELY on Christ and not on our own strength. What a gift this is, but how can we actually do this? Any suggestions (or studies we can use to learn more)?

Paul: Good question and welcome to the day to day struggle in this great journey of faith, hope and love! Here are a few things that have really helped me along in my journey:

- Pray. I know it sounds so obvious, but often gets neglected or underestimated. Pray for joy, peace, courage and contentment. Consider fasting and/or prayer walking.
- Memorize. I've memorized passages like Romans 5:1-11, Job 23:10-12 or Lamentations 3:16-27 and have found them to be a source of strength in times of need.
- Study. There are good resources like Max Lucado's "[Anxious for Nothing](#)" or Erwin Lutzer's "[Managing Your Emotions](#)." All Bay Parkers have access to this wonderful resource called [RightNowMedia](#). If you haven't already logged on just email the office and they'll get you set up an account. FYI the Anxious for Nothing series is on RNM.
- Together. Don't go this journey alone. Get involved in a LifeGroup, invite someone to pray and study with you. I have found such strength in God's family be it prioritizing corporate worship, life in small groups and close friendships with weekly check ins and accountability.
- Health. Be sure to look after your body and mind. I'm a late comer to this lesson in life but God created us as holistic and integrated beings. Getting proper sleep, eating healthy (which in my case means watching out for too much sugar), and getting regular exercise all play a critical role in how we feel and think.

5. What is the Lord expecting of me as I grow in his word? And how can I confirm God's will in my life?

Ryan: I think the answer to this lies in the question already! :) Through God's Word! Often we imagine the "will of God" as this bullseye target. The arrow is our life plan and the bullseye is the only place God will be happy if we hit. Rather, I imagine God's Will as a path or journey. God's Word lays out for us how to pursue this path. God's Will is that we live *wisely according to his ways*. To put it another way: God is more concerned about the type of person you're becoming than he is about the job you take or city you move to. Not that those aren't important but first things first: am I being formed into

God's image? As for looking for guidance to the big decisions of life I'd highly recommend Elizabeth Elliot's brilliant book *A Slow and Certain Light*. In just a few short pages she'll explain how God wants to guide you along this amazing journey we call "his will." Spoiler alert: This includes anything from Holy Spirit inner compulsions to advice from friends and supernatural means, all under the authority of God's Word. You can read a sample of it on [Google Books](#).

6. How can I evangelize aboriginal people while at the same time showing respect for their culture and love for them?

Ryan: An extremely famous saying dating to the 1600s sums this up nicely. "In Essentials: Unity. In Non-Essentials: Liberty. In All Things: Charity." In other words, in any and every part of their culture, heritage, and belief system that does not contradict the Christian worldview and Gospel message... learn to embrace and celebrate it (and not just tolerate it)! Paul says in 1 Corinthians 9: "I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some. I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings." Even if it's outside of your culture or norm, learn to appreciate those elements that do not contradict Christianity. A note of caution here is to avoid [cultural appropriation](#). Then, share the Gospel, and share it in such a way that is a personal expression of your own faith. Learn what aboriginal indigenous people believe and value, listen well, then ask if you can share some of your own viewpoints. In this space share your own Jesus redemption story. By listening to and befriending them you may learn unique aspects of their culture that Christian belief can speak into directly. For ex: European colonial culture is very individualistic and indigenous cultures are very community-oriented which is quite biblical. Then, in all things, whether celebrating or agreeing to disagree, show love, please! Love does not mean agreeing on all points of view, but it does mean treating one another respectfully and with Image-of-God honouring dignity.

7. What concrete steps are we putting in place in our Christian faith communities to restore trust between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people? To make real changes to the day-to-day challenges of Indigenous people?

Ryan: I think the short answer is we aren't putting in place any concrete steps currently. I wish we were doing more. I am not speaking for all the Church. I am sure there are Churches out there that are. But Bethel, and even more so Bay Park, really need to give this some thought and consider next steps. We need passionate people to step up and take on this mantle of leadership and justice. People that will work with our church leadership to encourage them in this direction. This is a "we" challenge that I'd like to see our two churches and many more evangelical churches embrace in the future. The onus isn't just on pastors (although I recognize the central role we play), it's on all of "us" together. Please reach out to your church staff if you have some ideas, visions and dreams!

8. What role does the church play in putting in place concrete steps that promote an on-going/year-long relationship w the people of Constance Lake - for example – so as to deepen our relationship with them, i.e., do things together: have student exchanges, invite the people to join our virtual Life group(s), pray/worship together on Sundays and when we have prayer meetings ... so as to build trust, intimacy, and

bring about forgiveness, restoration/reconciliation?

Mark: A brief answer is that the church (assuming this may refer to the leadership) can put into place various initiatives as mentioned above that are programmed into the 12 month cycle of the church. This would be top down. However, organic, self initiated acts done through Life Groups or individuals that compliment the larger church strategy are also key in sustaining a strong partnership with the community. The challenge over the years with CL has been the distance between the two communities- the church and CL.