

GOING BEYOND DISCUSSION

Become aware of the barriers that separate the descendants of settlers from Indigenous people. Be willing to admit to and address the root causes of those barriers.

Pray and look for natural connections to Indigenous groups in the area. Approach the leadership of those groups regarding your interest in partnering with them. If they are willing, ask them what they think the partnership would look like.

Relationship is an important aspect of Indigenous culture. Commit to long-term partnership, rather than short-term projects. Sometimes it is more appropriate to work alongside a partner who has already built strong relationships with a community. Look for leaders in both communities who are willing to commit to ongoing relationship and leadership.

Apply the teachings of Jesus in Matthew 5-7. Being salt and light, pray, fast, trust and seek God.

These ideas were contributed by our authors.

Stories collected and edited by Conrad Mann
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STORIES OF FRIENDSHIP

Indigenous Peoples and Mennonite Brethren

An invitation to reflection & discussion

Five years ago, our Missions Ministry Team asked Darryl Klassen of MCC if he knew of any reserves requesting help. He told us about a band counsellor and former chief of the Cheam band who had asked for help in planting a small orchard on the reserve. We formed a team of youth and planted the trees. The band counsellor and her husband provided an impromptu salmon barbecue for us.

After that, we began discerning if God was leading us to deepen our relationship with our First Nations neighbours.

After months of teaching, videos, guest speakers and discussion around the question,

the Journeys class at Sardis Community Church had come to decision time. A respected, long-time member of the class cleared his throat.

“I would like to propose a motion,” he said.

Surprised, I responded, “George, this is not a congregational meeting, how can you propose a motion?”

“I propose that Don Klassen write a Reconciliation Statement over the summer that we can consider next fall,” George replied.

passed away a few days after we left the village. We were thankful that God gave us the opportunity to be there to support that family during the crisis.

This year we visited the boy’s grandma again and we are thankful that she has kept her faith in the Lord. She is a clear example of how her community, despite all the brokenness and bondage weighing them down, continues to hold onto a sincere and vibrant faith in God.

QUESTIONS

When have you come alongside someone dealing with a family crisis? How can you support someone in that situation?

What do you think are some of the “past hurts” mentioned in the story above? Do you have any hurts in your life that are keeping you in bondage? What would it take for you to be healed?

NO PERMISSION TO RECONCILE

by Don Klaassen
of Sardis Community Church, Chilliwack, B.C.

Missions Coach with Outreach Canada

PRAYER REQUESTS

We have built up friendships and have identified a few people who we could further disciple to be spiritual leaders in the community. Please pray that we can find ways to strengthen believers besides the annual children’s VBS trip .

Our friends in Kitwanga are struggling from past hurts. Pray that they would experience the power of God to release them from their brokenness and bondage, so that they can be healed.



From 2005-2012, our church, Port Moody Pacific Grace Church, partnered with Cornerstone MB Church to host a summer VBS in Prince Rupert. As we spent more time in Prince Rupert, we observed that there are many First Nations people living in the area. We realized that they were dealing with brokenness from past hurts as well as a significant generational gap.

God soon moved in our hearts for the First Nations people and we started to pray about opportunities to serve First Nations communities in Northern B.C.

God answered our prayer in 2013 by connecting us to Love Corps Missions, a

Korean organization with a mission to reach out to the First Nations villages of Northern B.C. Last summer, our church made a trip to Kitwanga Reserve through Love Corps.

One night after VBS, a grandparent came to thank us for taking such good care of her grandson, who has special needs. She insisted on giving us a tour of the neighbourhood and then invited our team into her home.

While we were there, we learned that her husband was not feeling well. We prayed for him, and after some discernment, he was taken to the hospital in the city, which was an hour's drive away. Later that night, he had a stroke. We learned that the boy's grandpa

BEING PRESENT THROUGH PAST HURTS

by Fiona Wu,
of Port Moody Pacific Grace MB Church,
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Children's Ministry Lead Pastor



Despite my hesitations, the class voted and decided that I should proceed. Journeys class discussed, revised and rewrote the Reconciliation Statement many times but eventually agreed upon it. Working through that statement clarified for many of us why we should be on the path of reconciliation with our Indigenous neighbours. After being scrutinized by many others, the statement was presented to the Cheam chief and council members as a rationale for our desire to partner with them.

Last year, we approached the Cheam band about doing more activities and the chief was very supportive. Soon, we were invited

to build grow-boxes and provide a camp for Cheam foster children. Over a community dinner two weeks ago, after SCC members had camped at Cheam reserve for five days, Chief Ernie Crey publicly declared that he was telling other chiefs in B.C. about what was happening on his reserve regarding the partnership with Sardis Community Church. "We are not waiting for the government to give us permission to reconcile," he said. "We are going ahead now!" According to Chief Ernie, other chiefs around the province are interested in doing the same.

PRAYER REQUESTS

We want to see Sardis Community Church's relationships with the chief and council members of Cheam grow in trust.

People at Sardis Community Church want to find ways to partner with the band. Pray for us as we tackle social and spiritual challenges together.

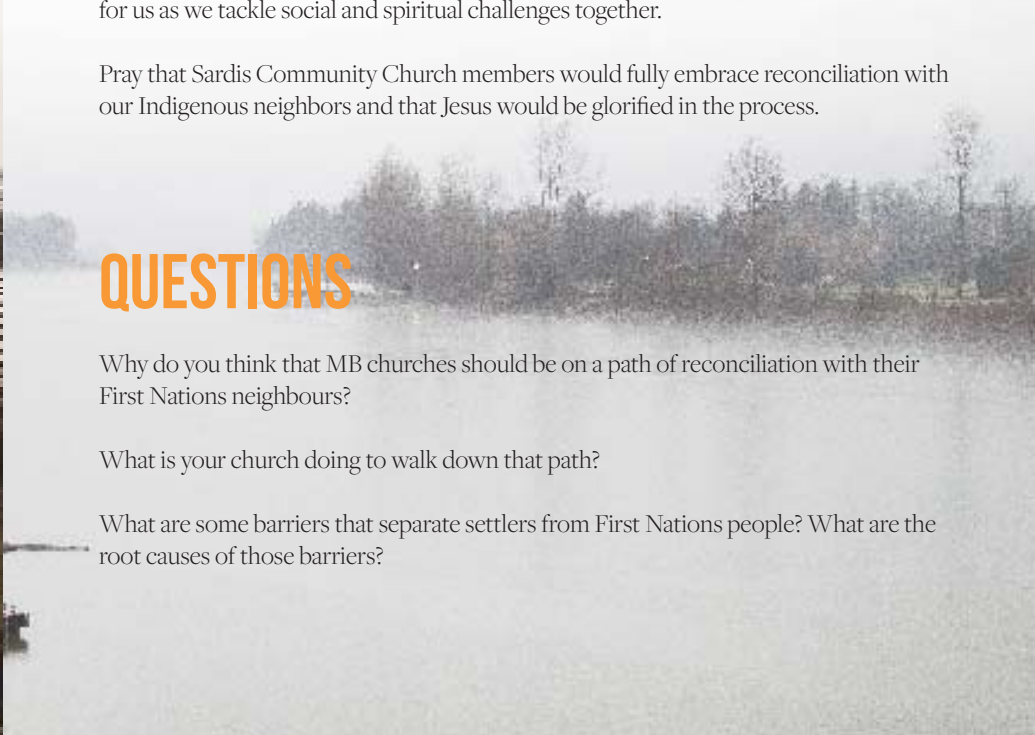
Pray that Sardis Community Church members would fully embrace reconciliation with our Indigenous neighbors and that Jesus would be glorified in the process.

QUESTIONS

Why do you think that MB churches should be on a path of reconciliation with their First Nations neighbours?

What is your church doing to walk down that path?

What are some barriers that separate settlers from First Nations people? What are the root causes of those barriers?



While I was in Shamattawa First Nation, I had an opportunity to make bannock with one of the women at the women's shelter. As I got to know her more, I learned that she had two young children, aged 1 and 2. As I have two boys, I could appreciate what a busy time that is for a parent! Her daughter's name was Ariel and her son's name was Uriah.

"Uriah, that's a Biblical name," I commented. She nodded, "My boyfriend told me that much, although I admit that I don't know anything about the story of Uriah or where he was mentioned in the Bible."

I began to explain the story, "Well, it's found in the story of David and Bathsheba. Uriah was Bathsheba's husband. He was very noble and honest, but David arranged to have him murdered."

I quickly realized that my friend was quite interested in the story and that I should add some more details. I told her that I'd have to come back later with my Bible and show her where it was. "I think I have a Bible," she said, already on her way to her room.

In a moment, she brought back a Bible that had been given to her, and so I was able to look for the passage with her. Once we found it, I read to her about how Uriah was noble

and brave and how he never wavered from doing the right thing. "That's what I hope for your Uriah," I told her, "that he's noble and brave and does what's right."

She seemed very encouraged, and asked me to bookmark the passage. I don't know what will become of Uriah or my friend, but I'm hoping that this seed of Scripture will fall on fertile ground.

QUESTIONS

How can you use Scripture to encourage others?

Has there been a time in your life when you have spoken God's Word but have had to wait and see what happens next? Have you seen God cause seeds to take root?

THE URIAH STORY

by Beverly Burke
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Participant on MB Mission's ACTION
program to Shamattawa First Nation, Man.

PRAYER REQUESTS

Please pray for families in First Nations communities. Pray for wise and loving parents and brave and obedient children.

Pray for healing and reconciliation in communities who have heard the good news but have been hurt by the church.

