

Sermon Video Intro: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZQYPIEoU9ko>

Life Is Walking



Today, I want to introduce you to “**Good Buffalo Eagle**” (**Ezekiel C. Sanchez**) the co-founder of the Anasazi Foundation in 1988. This foundation works through native metaphors and wisdom to guide young people into **GROWTH, HEALING, and RECONCILIATION** through outdoor behavioral health programs.



<https://www.thesevenpaths.com/?menu=about>

From his own indigenous, native experiences, Good Buffalo has written a book about **THE SEVEN PATHS** that leads to this transformative

experience. It is written in parable form, about an ancient Native American tribesman who rejects his family and community and walks off into the desert. During his journey, **he discovers the seven paths of the Anasazi way**, each path teaching a lesson iconically symbolized by an element of the natural world: **light, plants, stone, animals, water, wind**, through all of these lessons, collectively, the unity of all beings is seen with the Creator, which is the path of **We**. By walking these paths, he discovers the roots of **his own conflict** and the **way back toward reconciliation and redemption**. We call those two lessons (1) Our Sin and (2) Our Salvation.

The Bible says that God has **“planted eternity in the human heart” (Ecclesiastes 3:11 NLT)**. It is found in every tribe, tongue, and people group. As to the peoples of this world, God has **“determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place, that they should seek God, and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him” (Acts 17:26 ESV)**. These seven-path native metaphors are exactly that. They are what missiologists refer to as **REDEMPITIVE ANALOGIES**, the gospel pre-embedded in cultural mindsets to teach, train, and bridge their way (our way) back to God. And we do that by walking. This concept was captured by author and theologian, **Brian McLaren** in his book, **“We Make the Road By Walking.”**



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Life on planet earth is a journey, and there are two ways of walking. **Forward walking choices:** Peace, happiness, joy, comfort, knowledge, and wisdom. (sounds a lot like the fruits of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:23-24)). **Backward walking choices: Misery, despair, and** darkness. This sounds like the consequences Moses spoke of – from unfaithfulness comes **“disaster, confusion, and trouble” (Deuteronomy 28:20 GNT)**. Perhaps most importantly, Good Buffalo Eagle reminds us, from a native world view (and biblical kingdom world view),

"We need to leave the path of Me and follow the path of We"

Good Buffalo Eagle

The Native American Experience is profoundly spiritual and communal. To see all life as integrated, important, and sacred is to value the whole of creation and the whole of our journey. As author **William P. Young** of *The Shack* has said, **"If anything matters, everything matters."** So, we might ask ourselves today, using this native analogy,

Are we a TWO-LEGGED BEING THAT IS FULL OF LIGHT AND LIFE?

In the Native world-view, it depends on one's direction: Are you walking (living) **Forwards or Backwards**. The Christians life is biblically described as a "walk!" There are many narratives involving walking in one another's company: The Creator walks in the Garden with Adam and Eve; the three men (Angels), walking and talking to Abraham (Genesis 18:16); Elijah and Elisha walking along until a chariot of fire showed up to take Elijah in a whirlwind (2 Kings 2:11); The fourth man walking around with the three Hebrews in King Nebuchadnezzar's fiery furnace (Daniel 3:25); Jesus walking by the Sea of Galilee as he called disciples (Matthew 4:18); The two disciples who walk to Emmaus with Jesus (Luke 24:15); and now post resurrections disciples, learning to walk in step with the Spirit (Galatians 5:25), to walk in the light (1 John 1:7), and to walk in the truth (3 John 1:4).

Life is walking

Walking Forward: "Walking in his ways"
(Deuteronomy 8:6b ESV)

Walking Backward: "Walking contrary to me"
(Leviticus 26:40b ESV)

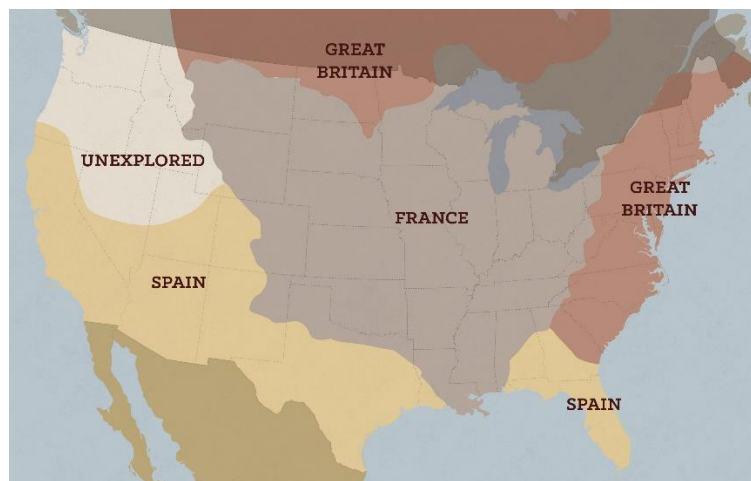
Today, we turn our hearts towards the wisdom of the Apostle John, who said this:

“I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are **walking in the truth**”

3 John 1:4 NIV

To walk in the truth is to walk in the ways of Jesus. Natives often refer to God as “Kitchi Manito” or “Great Spirit.” This is the Spirit whom Jesus said he would send from the Father (John 15:26). This is the Spirit who will teach us all things---especially---**how to WALK FORWARD! To live towards HEALING and RECONCILIATION.**

Today, we must acknowledge that walking towards healing and reconciliation has been a very painful and difficult path for our Native, Indigenous siblings. Great harm has befallen them under our long, historical immigrant invasion. Allow me to take you on a quick visual tour through history.



<https://americanindian.si.edu/nk360/plains-treaties>

During the colonial years, the Americas were essentially invaded by the countries and peoples of Spain, France, and Great Britain. Here is how they initially took charge of sections and territories of America.

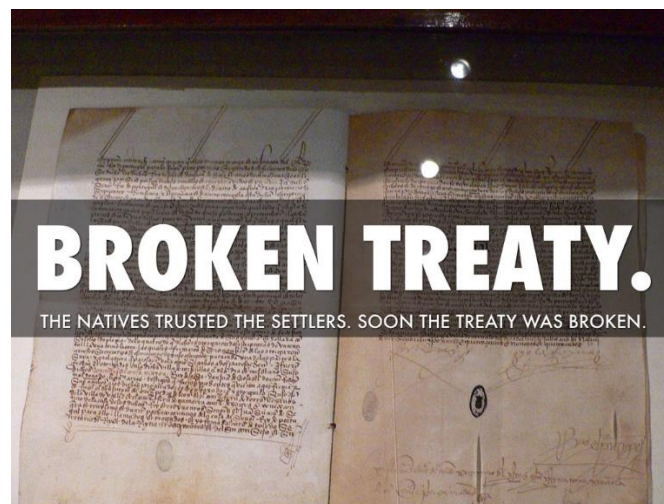


<https://www.vox.com/2015/5/27/8618261/america-maps-truths>

This map begins by showing Native Americans' land in 1794, demarcated by tribe and marked in green. **In 1795, the US and Spain signed the Treaty of San Lorenzo, carving up much of the continent between them.**

What followed was a century of catastrophes for Native Americans as their land was taken piece by piece. By the time the US passed the Dawes Act in 1887, effectively abolishing tribal self-governance and forcing assimilation, there was very little left.

Approximately 368 treaties that were negotiated and signed by the U.S. commissioners and tribal leaders (and subsequently approved by the U.S. Senate) from 1777 to 1868 enshrine promises our government made to Indian Nations." **Article 6, clause 2 of the United States Constitution says** that, "...all Treaties made, or which shall be made, under the Authority of the United States, shall be the supreme Law of the Land."



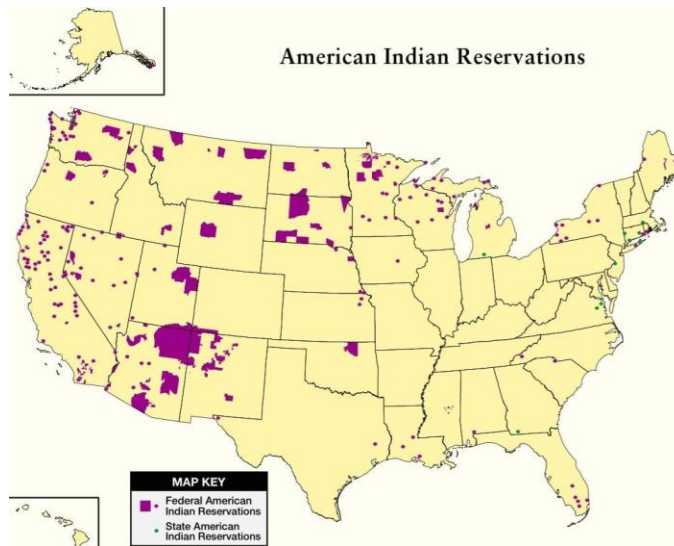
<https://www.haikudeck.com/native-american-events-education-presentation-nR7qyroMI#slide5>

But through the corrupted theology of “Manifest Destiny” (the belief that God was calling us to claim land and dominion over all lands and peoples of North America), virtually every treaty was changed or broken. Thus, our sad historical legacy aptly summarized by the phrase—**“BROKEN TREATY.”** Truth be known, if all our treaties were actually honored and enforced (just as the constitution demands they be), here is what our country would look like today:



https://www.reddit.com/r/IndianCountry/comments/rkwxol/what_if_the_us_honored_its_native_treaties/

One-third United States (European colonialists) and two-thirds Indigenous Natives. But through over a century of broken promises, through bait-and-switch relationships, and 350+ Boarding Schools for native children to be stripped of their family, culture, language, dress, hair-styles, food, and identity, so as to enculturate and civilize them and save them from themselves (as the **U.S. Gov. Motto** connoted - **“Kill the Savage but save the man”**). That was official United States government policy. And here is the modern-day legacy of what our nation’s “promises” produced:



<https://indigenous.boston/opening-a-business-on-native-american-land>

This current map of the United States highlights tribal reservations and jurisdictions in purple. Through small-pox and influenzas, the native population was decimated and rendered completely unable to resist any new territorial settlements by the colonists. And yet, (let's get back to scripture and theology), they ***KEPT WALKING FORWARD.*** Amazing! Astonishing!

The Rev. David Wilson is the assistant to the bishop in the Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference of the UMC. He reminds us that Native Americans have persevered in the faith through the ordeal of being removed from their homelands, contending with racism and dealing with the challenges of unemployment and economic adversity. For more than 180 years, despite this trauma, ***First Americans have been working through Methodism for the gospel of Jesus Christ. Using the gift of choice, to walk forward towards healing and reconciliation.*** Their scripturally informed Native wisdom, and historic Christian theology both agree: This is the way of discipleship!

WALK FORWARD TOWARDS HEALING AND RECONCILIATION

“So when you offer your gift to God at the altar, and *you remember*** that your brother or sister has something against ***you, leave your gift*** there at the altar. Go and ***make peace*** with that person, and then come and offer your gift”**

Matthew 5:23-24 NIV

This is the scriptural gospel of Jesus Christ. We begin by acknowledging wrong and injustice. We seek to make peace which is to embrace honoring the truth, restoring right relationships, and reversing the consequences of harm through restitution and restorative justice. This is what it means to **RE-FAMILY the whole world**. One person, and one people group, at a time! We are all **TWO-LEGGED BEINGS WITH CHOICE**, and we each have a story to write with our lives.

“From that time *Jesus began to preach* and say, “*Repent* [change your inner self—your old way of thinking, regret past sins, live your life in a way that proves repentance; *seek God’s purpose for your life*], for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”
Matthew 4:17 Amplified Bible

From start to finish, beginning to end, Jesus came for one purpose, and that was to save lives and get us all moving and living in the right direction. Repentance is heaven’s invitation to turn our lives around and move towards God’s kingdom and love. This is also the ancient native wisdom spoken by Good buffalo Eagle:

“AT ANY TIME IN YOUR LIFE,
NO MATTER HOW YOUNG OR
OLD YOU ARE, YOU HAVE
THE POWER TO TURN AND
WALK FORWARD.”

Good Buffalo Eagle



<http://www.theanasaziway.com/native-american-wisdom/>

May we all become a TWO-LEGGED BEING FULL OF LIGHT! And all of God’s people said: Amen!