



# Two-Eyed Seeing, Vision Quests and Sacred Stories: Exploring Indigenous Theology

A Workshop by  
The Rev. Canon Mary Crist, Ed.D. (Blackfeet)

Saint Mark's Episcopal Cathedral  
Seattle, Washington  
September 17, 2022

# A PRAYER FOR HEALING AND HOPE

O Great Spirit,  
God of all people and every tribe, through whom all people  
are related;

Call us to the kinship of all your people.

Grant us vision to see through the lens of our Baptismal  
Covenant, the brokenness of the past;

Help us to listen to you and to one another, in order to heal  
the wounds of the present;

And, give us courage, patience and wisdom to work together  
for healing and hope with all of your people, now and in the  
future

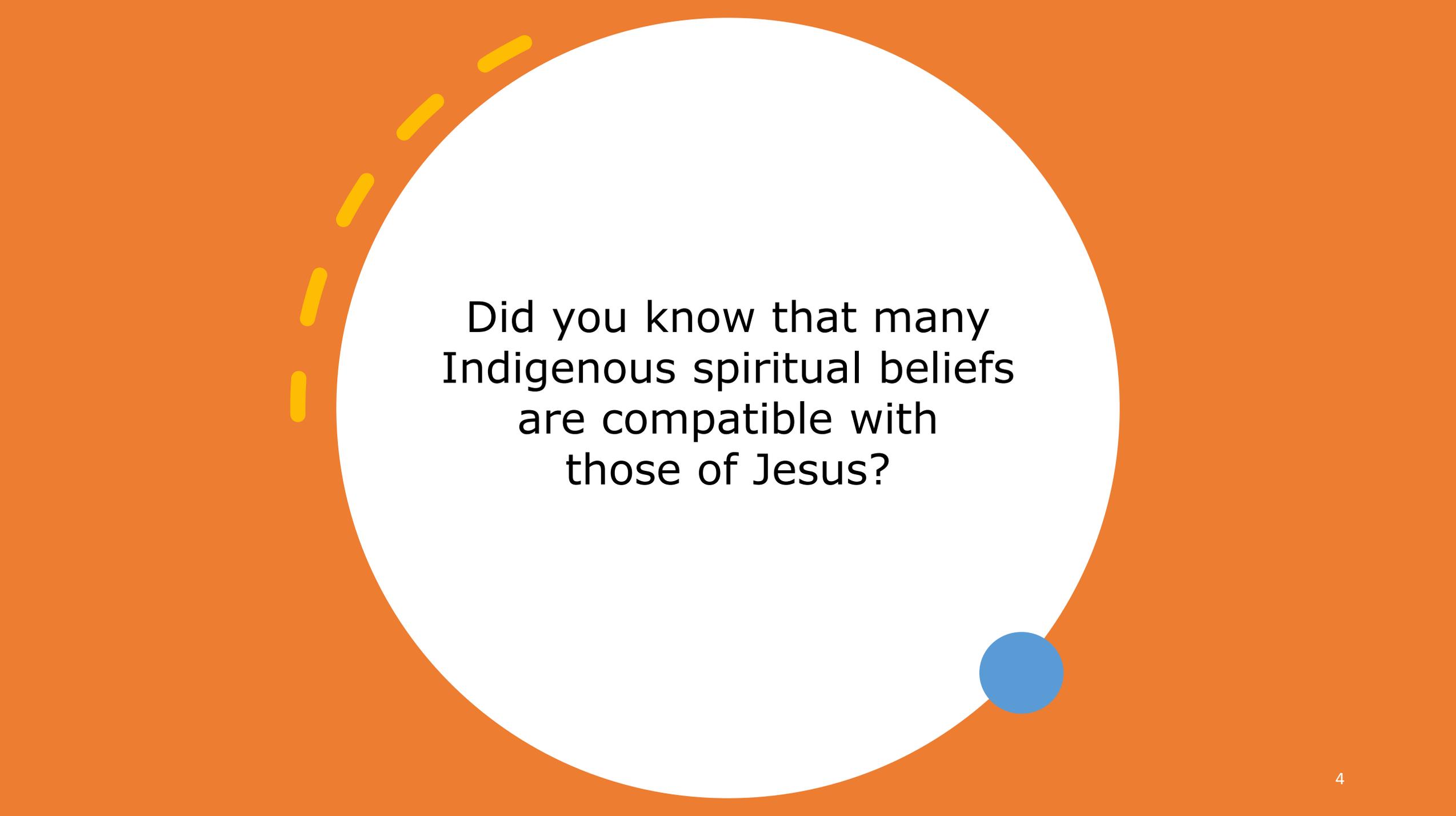
Mend the hoop of our hearts  
and let us live in justice and peace,

through Jesus Christ, the One who comes to all people that  
we might live in dignity. Amen.



Did you know that the Episcopal Church has over 400 years of history with Indigenous people in north America?





Did you know that many  
Indigenous spiritual beliefs  
are compatible with  
those of Jesus?



Did you know Indigenous people can be Christians and honor the spiritual practices of their ancestors at the same time?



Today we will discover how to use “two-eyed” seeing, vision quests, and sacred stories to explore Indigenous theology.

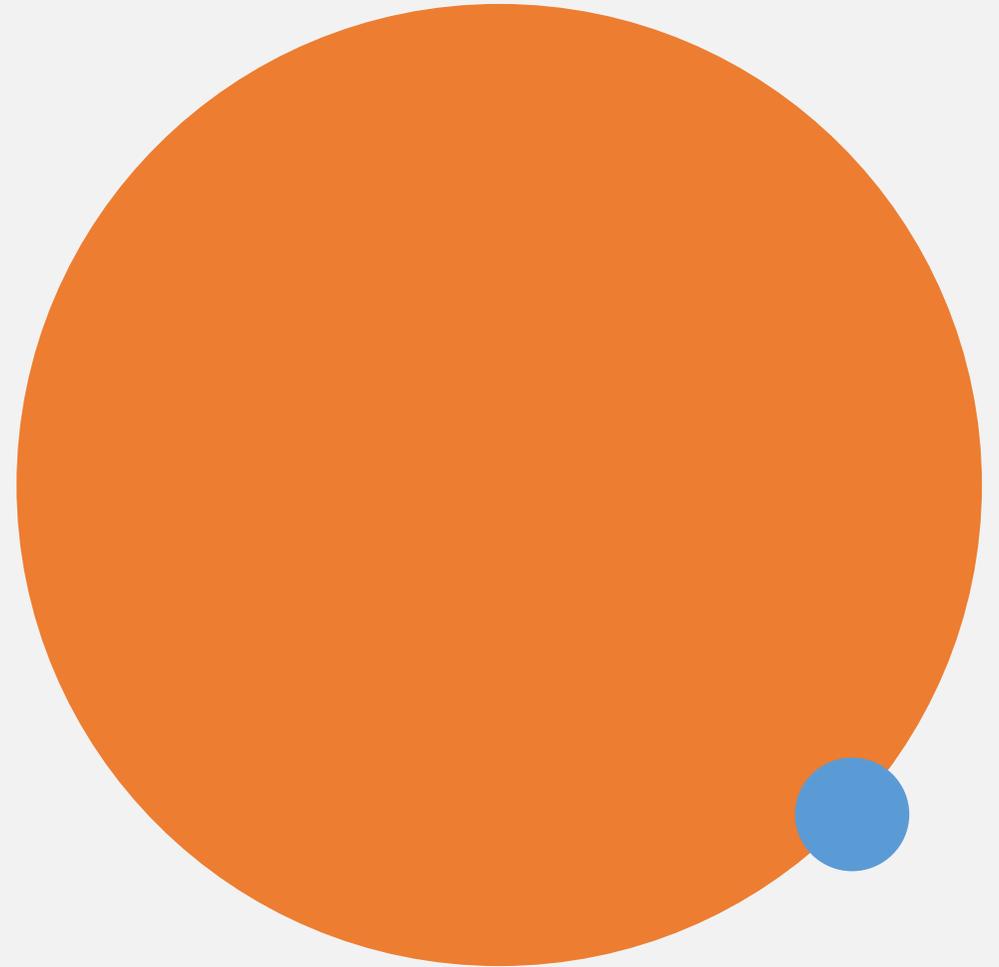
We will explore what Indigenous leaders in the Episcopal Church say about being both Native and Christian and how theological education is expanding.





“We cannot go back and change the beginning... but what we can do is start where we are now and create a different ending.”

*A paraphrase of theologian C. S. Lewis*





## Small Group Activity

In your assigned small group, introduce yourself in one minute. Tell your name, where you are from, and why you came to this meeting. Identify a timekeeper. Each person will have one minute. Persons who prefer not to speak may pass. At the end of the time, you will be taken back to the large group and we will begin the presentation. Thank you for being here.



Getting Acquainted  
*All My Relatives*



# Blackfeet Nation Montana

**ALLIED NATIONS OF THE  
BLACKFOOT CONFEDERACY**



# Some of The Blackfeet Women in my family





My people call these mountains  
the backbone of Mother Earth.

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This is Chief  
Mountain...  
our most holy  
place.



Here is the Marias River where 173 Blackfeet people died in 1870 in the Baker Massacre, a surprise attack on Chief Heavy Runner's camp.



How did the Episcopal Church get involved with the Indigenous people?

## Church of England and Indigenous People

- First contact: 1579 The chaplains to Sir Francis Drake meet and interact with Indigenous People on the West Coast. (unintentional)
- 1607 - Jamestown Colony
- Early 1800s - Bishop John Henry Hobart of NY begins mission to the Oneida people
- Mid 1800s - Mission work in Upper Midwest



CHASNCEY YELLOWBONE

Before entering Canada

On leaving Canada



"It may be beyond my province to offer these suggestions; I have made them because my heart aches for this poor wronged people."

-Henry B. Whipple to Abraham Lincoln, March 6, 1862

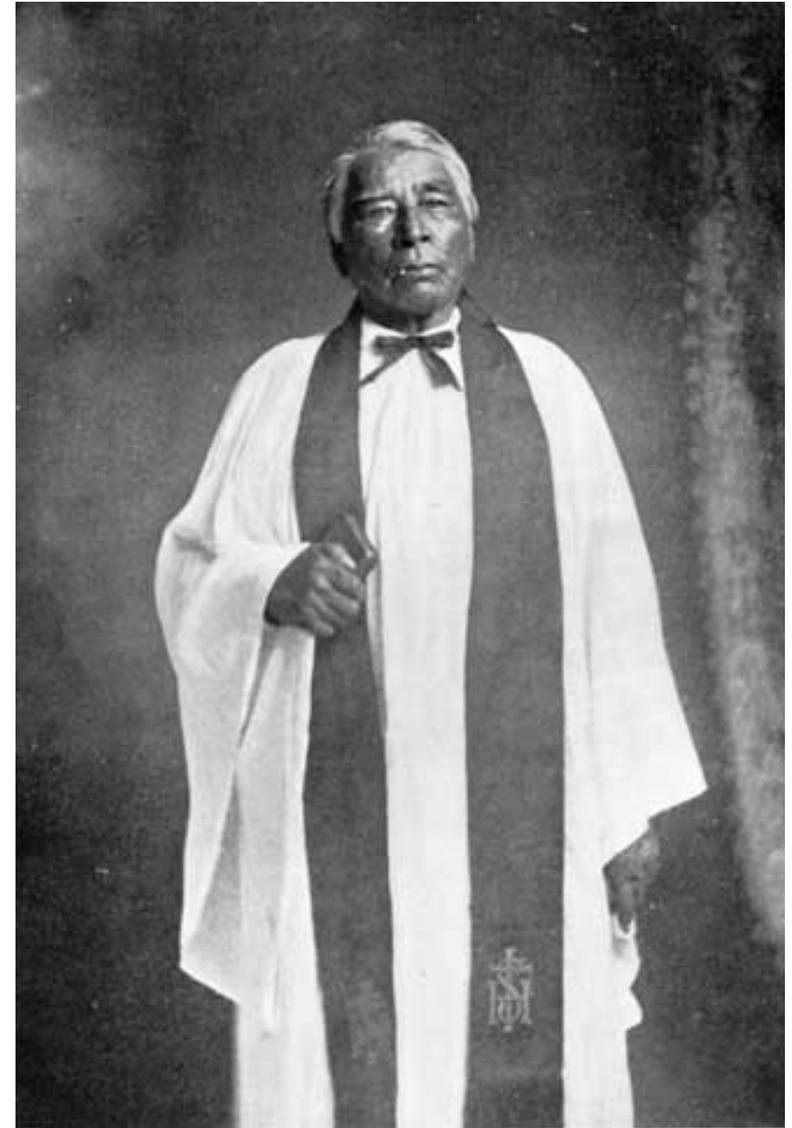
Bishop Henry B. Whipple  
First Bishop of Minnesota  
Advocate for Indigenous Peoples



Episcopal missionary with Dakota  
Indians, Minnesota, 1897

Enmegahbowh,  
First Indigenous Episcopal Priest

Ordained in 1867. This was 57  
years before Native Americans  
were made United States citizens.





Bishop Harold Jones  
First Native American  
Bishop

“He’d give you literally the shirt off his back, and he’d never check to see if he had a spare. He brought many of the characteristics of the best of Native American culture with him to this Christian expression.”



# Indigenous Ministries in the Episcopal Church Today

<https://www.episcopalchurch.org/ministries/indigenous-ministries/>



Water protectors  
protesting the  
Dakota Access Pipeline  
(DAPL) in 2016



2018  
Ordinations at  
Church of the  
Good Shepherd  
In Fort Defiance,  
Arizona



Wintertalk, 2020  
91 people in person pre-COVID



First Women Gather Around the Fire  
Diocese of Los Angeles



Native Youth Event, 2019  
St. Gabriel's Camp North Dakota



Brad Hauff (Oglala ...



Bude VanDyke



Leon Sampson



Shaneequa Brokenl...



Mary Crist



GJ Gordy



Richard Ackley



Lewis Powell



Rodger Patience



Samuel@Latin@Min...



Jenny Webster



Edijafra@yahoo.co...

**WINTER**TALK

2022

zoom

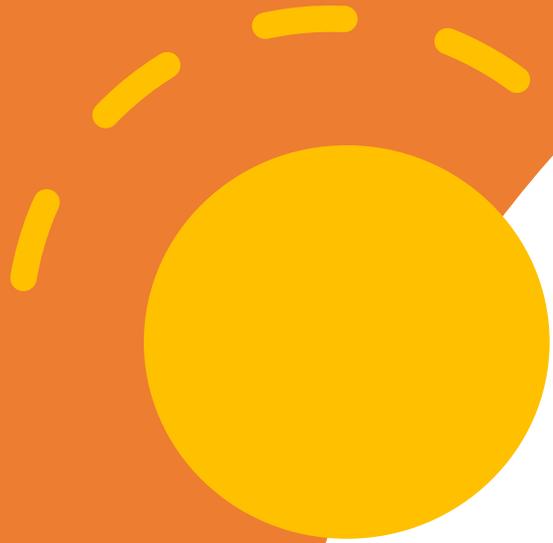
The Rev. Paul Reynolds, Rose Elu, the Rev. Bradley Hauff and the Rt. Rev. Te Kitoi Pikaahu after the seminar on Indigenous topics at the Lambeth Conference on Aug. 1, 2022.

Photo:  
Egan Millard/Episcopal News Service



## Why Would Indigenous People Join A Christian Church In The 19<sup>th</sup> Century?

- Traditional Indigenous ceremonies were illegal
- Out of necessity to survive
- Identification with the Christ figure as expressed and experienced in traditional stories and spiritual expressions



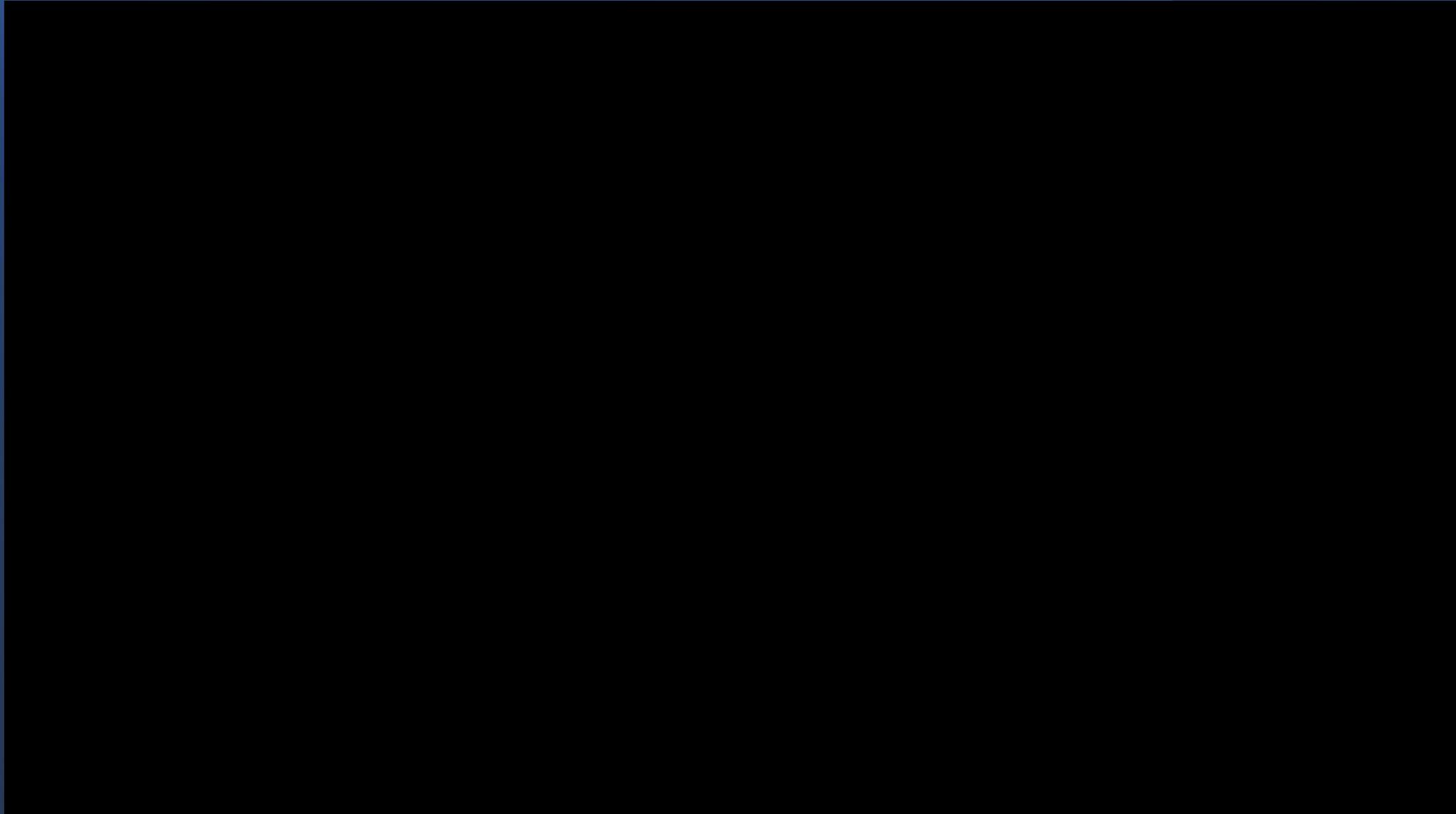
## Exploring Indigenous Theology

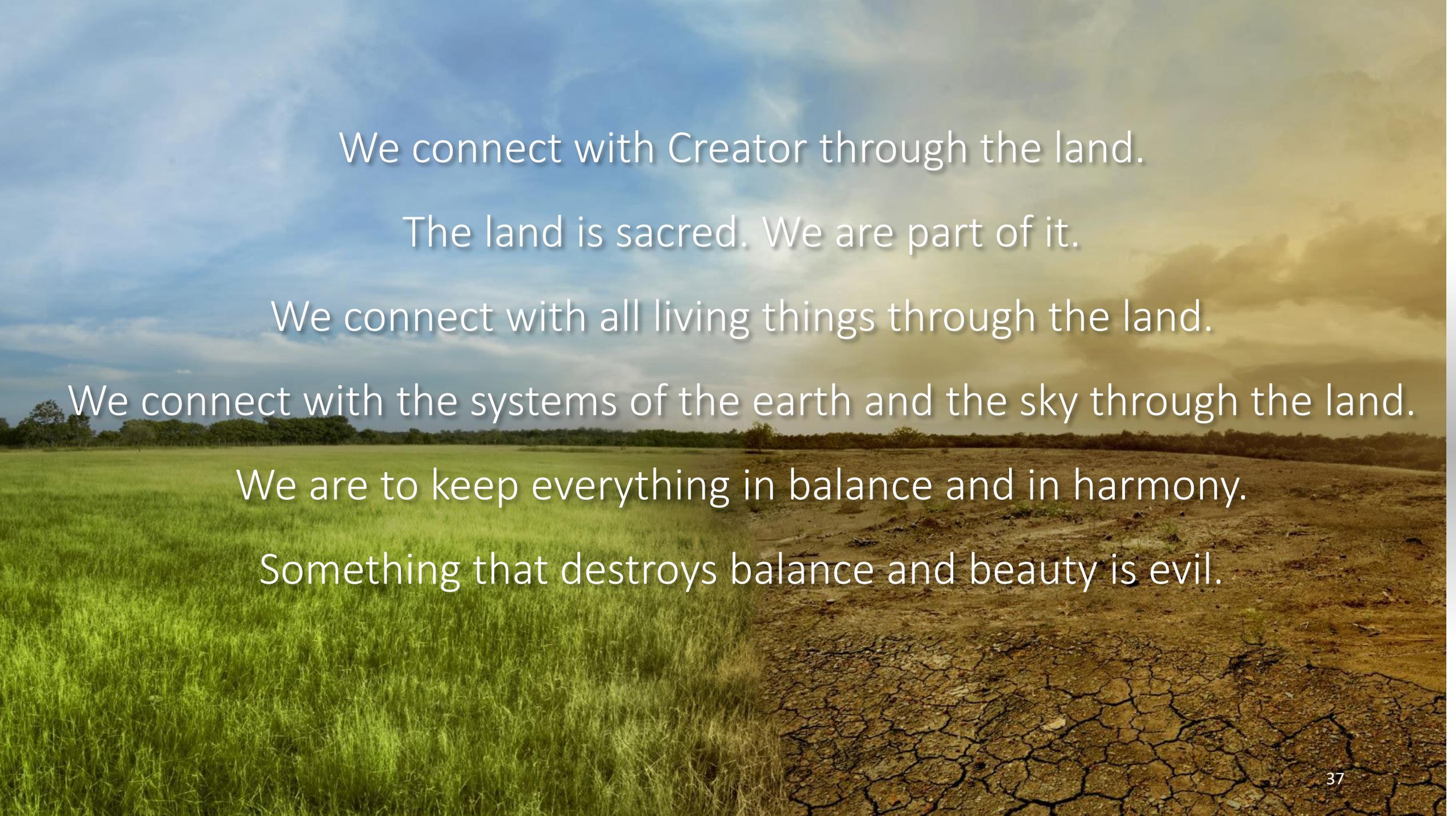


# Indigenous Ways of Seeing

# All Things are Connected

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MujzM>





We connect with Creator through the land.

The land is sacred. We are part of it.

We connect with all living things through the land.

We connect with the systems of the earth and the sky through the land.

We are to keep everything in balance and in harmony.

Something that destroys balance and beauty is evil.

# Social Values Comparison Chart

## Indigenous Values

Value the person

Respect elders

Share material goods

Humility

Honor the past

Emphasize mystery  
understanding

Harmony with nature

Community

Cooperation

## Majority Culture Values

Value the person's possessions

Idealize youthfulness

Private ownership of goods

Competitiveness

Plan for the future

Emphasize scientific method  
and hypothesis testing

Dominate nature

Individualism

Independence

Mann, Henrietta and Anita Phillips, *On This Spirit Walk: The Voices of Native American and Indigenous Peoples*, (Muskogee, OK: Native American Comprehensive Plan, 2012) 17.



## MINTO FLATS ATHABASKAN VALUES

Every Athabaskan is responsible to all other Athabaskans for the survival of our cultural spirit and the values and traditions through which it survives.

<https://asdn.org/wp-content/uploads/Alaska-Native-Cultures-1.pdf>

We must teach our children Athabaskan values with guidance and support from our elders. Our Understanding of our Universe and Our Place in It is A Belief in God and a Respect for All His Creations

Source: DENAKKANAAGA ELDERS CONFERENCE- 1985

Knowledge of Language

Respect for Others

Respect for Nature

Love for Children

Knowledge of the Family Tree

Humor

Hunter Success

Humility

Responsibility to Tribe

Sharing

Respect for Elders

Avoid Conflict

Hard Work

Spirituality

Family Roles

Domestic Skills



<https://asdn.org/wp-content/uploads/Alaska-Native-Cultures-1.pdf>



## **Being Indigenous and Christian**

“The Cultural  
Conundrum of the  
Indigenous Christian”

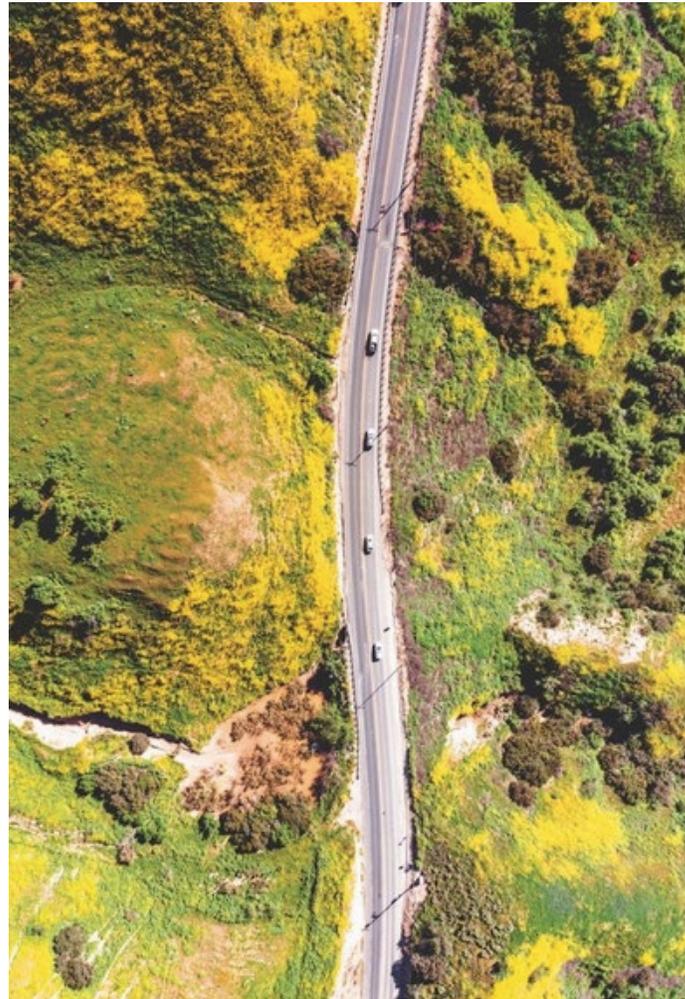
The Rev. Rachel  
Taber-Hamilton  
(Shackan First Nation)

[https://www.episcopalchurch.org/  
racialreconciliation/the-cultural-  
conundrum-of-the-indigenous-  
christian/](https://www.episcopalchurch.org/racialreconciliation/the-cultural-conundrum-of-the-indigenous-christian/)



How an Urban Native does  
Her Prayers:  
The Cathedral of the Car





## INDIGENOUS THEOLOGY

### COMPARED WITH

## WESTERN RELIGION

Creation-based, place over time  
Emphasizes harmony, balance, cooperation  
One God – Creator/Son, relational trinity  
Epistemological Orthopraxy  
(Truth comes from how others have lived.)  
Sacred stories, narrative carry knowledge  
Experience-based - ceremony & tradition  
Circular worldview - kinship  
Emphasis on relationship, holistic  
All creation has soul (panentheism)

Redemption-based, modern  
Emphasizes conquest, rule over nature  
One God – Trinitarian  
Epistemological Orthodoxy (doctrine, law)  
(Truth comes from how others have believed.)  
Sacred Stories written. Less oral story-telling  
Truth may be unrelated to experience.  
Linear worldview – hierarchical leadership  
Dualistic – Power-based – abstract  
Individuals have soul; humans qualitatively differ

The Indigenous concept of harmony/balance compatible with biblical concept of shalom/harmony. Jesus was Indigenous healer who provided shalom/harmony. Healing is for God's sacred creation – all of it.

Adapted from Randy Woodley, *Indigenous Theology and the Western Worldview*, 2022.

How can we move  
toward working  
together within our  
differences?



How do we Indigenous people follow Jesus without having to follow the culture that came with it from Europe, a culture that did not understand our lived experience of connectedness of nature that included the land and all living things.

The colonizers did not understand the holistic spirit of the people who were following Creator God for thousands of years before Jesus walked on earth.

We need to have models that bring us into the same space together.

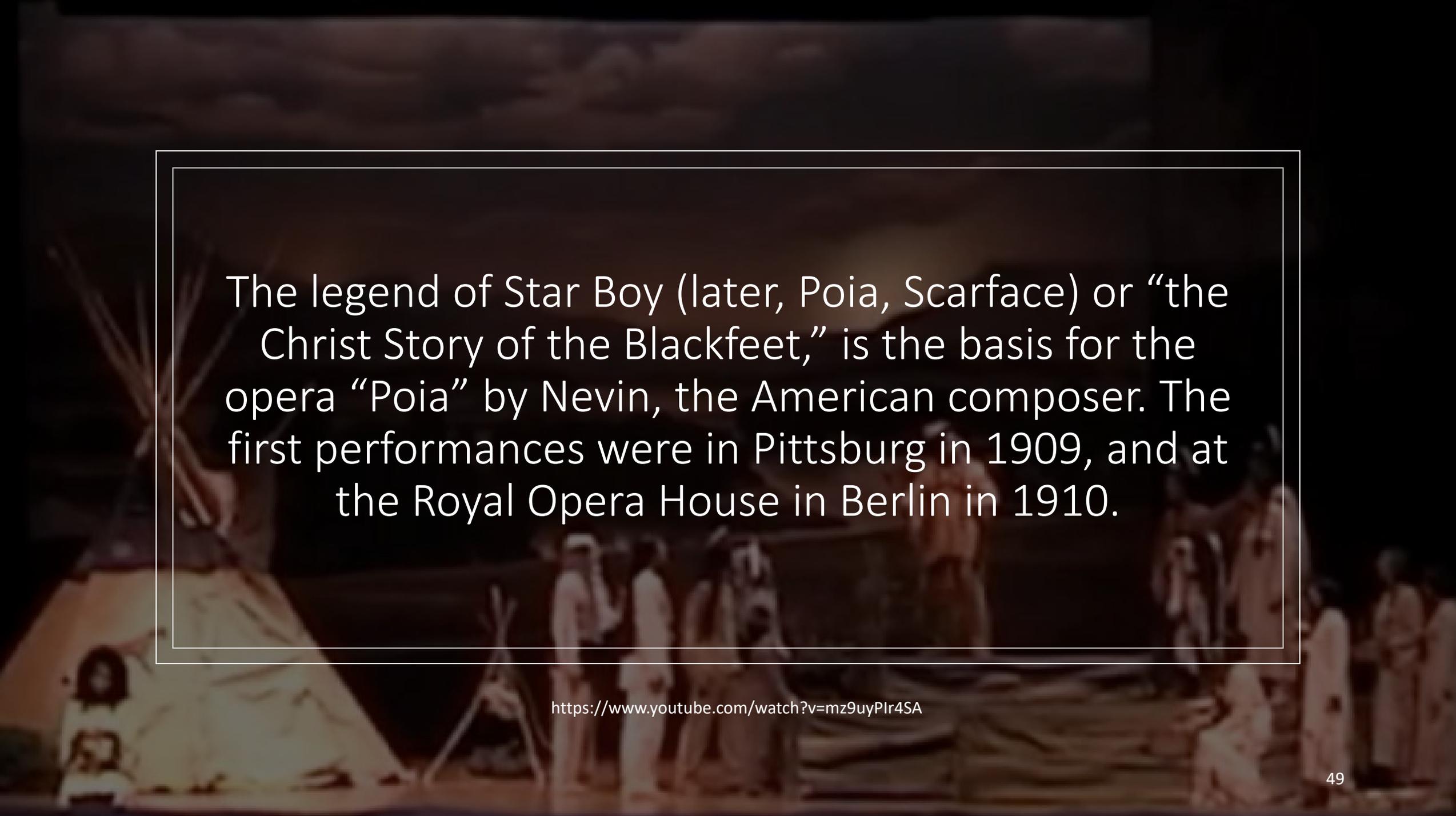
## The Stories

The stories of the People of Israel are respected, but they do not replace the tribal narratives for Indigenous Christians.

Every Indigenous nation has its own creation story and its own heroes and tricksters.

For example, the Blackfeet have a story that has been called "A Christ story" by some. It is called Scarface. There are many variations on the original, and Scarface is also called Star Boy.

We learn from all our tribal stories because they are passed down from our elders. Wise people are those who know the stories.



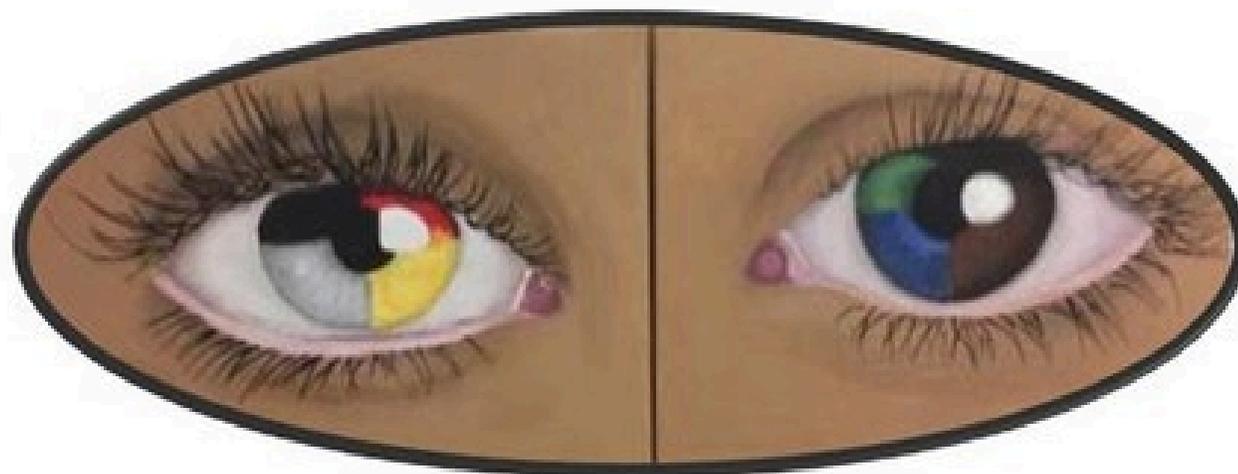
The legend of Star Boy (later, Poia, Scarface) or “the Christ Story of the Blackfeet,” is the basis for the opera “Poia” by Nevin, the American composer. The first performances were in Pittsburg in 1909, and at the Royal Opera House in Berlin in 1910.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mz9uyPIr4SA>

## Etuaptamumk: Two-Eyed Seeing

Term coined by Mi'kmaw Elder, Albert Marshall, 2004.

Learning to see  
from one eye with  
the strengths of  
Indigenous  
knowledges and  
ways of knowing



Learning to see  
from the other eye  
with the strengths  
of Western  
knowledges and  
ways of knowing

...learning to use both eyes together for the benefit of all.

# Two-Eyed Seeing

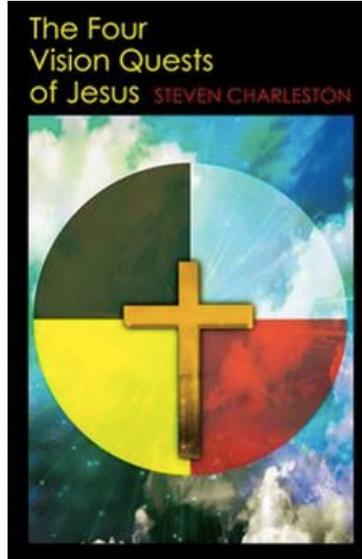
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CY-iGduw5c>





# **Sacred Stories Vision Quests**

# Introduction to the Four Vision Quests



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<https://vimeo.com/563468653>. (2:07)

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## The Four Vision Quests of Jesus

The Rt. Rev. Steven Charleston



## Small Group Work (10 minutes total)

Read Matthew 4:1-11 on the screen or in a bible. It is identified by Bishop Charleston as the first vision question of Jesus. In your small group identify the qualities of a vision quest that you heard discussed in the video.

Here they are:

1. Preparation – a time of prayer and purification.
2. Community – the presence of Others who join in the purification and stay with the person during the quest.
3. Challenge - A demanding challenge that tests the person's resolve and endurance.
4. Lament – A time of crying and vulnerability when the person begs for help from Creator

Give each person one minute to react to the idea of the sacred gospel as a vision quest. Identify a timekeeper. Allow persons to “pass” who would rather not share.

## **The First Vision Quest – Matthew 4:1-11 – Jesus in the Wilderness**

4 Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tested by the devil. <sup>2</sup> He fasted forty days and forty nights, and afterward he was famished. <sup>3</sup> The tempter came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread." <sup>4</sup> But he answered, "It is written, 'One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.' " <sup>5</sup> Then the devil took him to the holy city and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, <sup>6</sup> saying to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for it is written, 'He will command his angels concerning you,' and 'On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.'" <sup>7</sup> Jesus said to him, "Again it is written, 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.' " <sup>8</sup> Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory, <sup>9</sup> and he said to him, "All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me." <sup>10</sup> Then Jesus said to him, "Away with you, Satan! for it is written, 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.' " <sup>11</sup> Then the devil left him, and suddenly angels came and waited on him.



## **Theological Education: New Ways for a New Day**

# Indigenous Theological Education

Permits active learning in physical and spiritual Indigenous contexts to balance/replace reading and writing.

Is deeply spiritual – transcends thinking-only approach.

Focuses on being in right relationship with all things.

Teaches how to communicate in non-Native contexts

Teaches how to communicate in non-Native contexts drawing parallels between traditions and Christian beliefs

Adapted from Brokenleg, M. (2008). Themes in contemporary Native theological education. *Anglican Theological Review*, 90(2), 277-283

# Indigenous Theological Education

Incorporates the wisdom of the elders for the future.

Leads the learner to a healing truth.

Emphasizes the dynamics of forgiveness, reconciliation, and peacemaking.

Honors the traditions of the past and adapts to the present.

Collaborates with Indigenous peoples around the world.

Adapted from Brokenleg, M. (2008). Themes in contemporary Native theological education.  
*Anglican Theological Review*, 90(2), 277-283

# New Options for Indigenous Leaders in Training



The Episcopal Church Office of Indigenous Ministries and Bexley Seabury Seminary Federation are partnering to offer four new options for members of Indigenous faith communities to prepare for church leadership:

- ▶ **Undergraduate Training - "Two Plus Two"**  
Funding for tuition and required resources will be provided for participation in a four-year program that combines two years of coursework in discernment, fundamentals of faith, and leadership development offered by Bexley Seabury's Pathways for Baptismal Living followed by two years of courses from the Associate of Arts (A.A.) degree in general studies at Sitting Bull College.
- ▶ **Deacon Training** Learners develop their own learning plan and program timeline in collaboration with their Bishop, Commission on Ministry, and/or archdeacons to demonstrate mastery of the Association for Episcopal Deacons competencies.
- ▶ **Graduate Training - Self-Paced, Team-Directed Master of Divinity (MDiv) Pilot Program** Funding for tuition and required resources will be provided for participation in this pilot, competency-based, mentor-assessed Masters of Divinity degree program. Students develop their own learning plan and program timeline with a team of mentors from their ministry context, their diocese and Bexley Seabury Seminary. Participants will engage in personal and community experiences that prepare them to demonstrate their competence in meeting the program goals and learning outcomes.
- ▶ **Indigenous Church Leadership Training** Engage a series of self-paced online resources as well as onsite and online community programs that focus on pastoral care and leadership development.

## Contact

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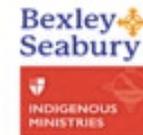
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or The Rev. Dr. Mary Crist at [mcrist@episcopalchurch.org](mailto:mcrist@episcopalchurch.org)

# Chief Earl Old Person of the Blackfeet Nation – Story and Prayer

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AJXmABfHOSI>

