

FIRST CONTACT SERIES

Discussion questions and notes

Season 01 Episode 01

-Part 1-

We meet the non-Indigenous group:

Ross, 50 (Edmonton, AB)

Avonlea, 28 (Chilliwack, BC)

Don, 65 (Ardrossan, AB)

Ashley, 32 (Ottawa, ON)

Jamie Sue, 35, (Ingersoll, ON)

Dallas, 26 (Keswick, NB)

Question: What do you think about the stereotypes described?

Starts in Winnipeg

Michael Champagne - Meet Me at the BellTower (Winnipeg's north end)

Dallas comments: "you don't see any Caucasian reserves"

Don comments: "I am a native Canadian because I was born here"

Don's offensive shirt: "FI or FO" (ie. assimilate)

Ashley's question: why can't indigenous people resolve their issues?

(her comment: "Get off your ass if you're unhappy and do something about it"

"I fixed my life, why can't they?")

Question posed about Indian Residential Schools (IRS):

Even though I'm not responsible, do I want to contribute to the solution?

-Part 2-

Bear Clan patrol in Winnipeg's North End with James Favel

and "Drag the Red" looking for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls

Kimmirut (Inuit community of 400)

Dallas comments: "I've never felt so foreign in my own country"

Jeannie and Elijah Padluq, hosts; "Sak" translates

The biggest issue for people is intolerance (racism)

MP Hunter Tootoo going public with his own issues of alcoholism, and struggles

First hand knowledge and "proof" of IRS (for Don)

Comments made: "They've got skills that we don't have"

"They're a lot more similar to us than I thought they'd be"



S01E02

-Part 1-

Isolated reserve in northern Ontario - Muskrat Dam (fly-in reserve)

Chief Stan Beardy

300 residents from Cree and Ojibwe nations (Oji-Cree language)

Jamie Sue's comment about the reserve: "Reminds me of cottage country"

Dallas' comment: "Sense of insecurity; I'm the minority here"

Everything is locally owned and managed

There has been a boil water advisory since 2003

Health centre - just two nurses, no ambulance

Mariah Beardy and Avonlea have similar stories about sick kids

School - Roy Morris, education director

Education embedded in culture (all teachers are from the community)

Maskwacis (in Alberta) - Cree

Rough - crime, gangs, high rates of suicide

Samson Creen Nation pow wow

Greeted by Monique Cardinal

Kirk Buffalo - offers info about cultural riches, how news only covers crime

Question: how might we talk about the differences of lived experience between Indigenous and non-Indigenous?

Questions: what is your reaction to Roy's residential school story? How would you react to a cultural experience like they have in AB?

-Part 2-

Site of Ermineskin IRS (Maskwacis)

Comments: "why does it always come back to IRS? I didn't do it."

Michael Bear - cultural teacher

Rick Lightning - IRS survivor (6 yrs at Ermineskin) 64 years old

Cree sweat lodge with Rick

"Everyone wanted to save us...but took away our belief system"

Sweat - prayer for whoever needs it

-when it gets so hot, your focus goes beyond it, you don't feel it

Question: what do you know, and what might you be learning about...
-intergenerational trauma?
-treaties?

Questions: can our views change?
What [values/views/opinions] do we cling to, and why?



Gloria Dei
LUTHERAN CHURCH

S01E03

Questions: what is a genocide?
In what ways can people be dehumanized?

-Part 1-

Group heads to Calgary

When leaving a reserve, and going to an urban centre, people sometimes end up on the streets

Alpha House - detox shelter

Safe place to stay (harm reduction)

Wade Maude smudges building twice daily

Michael Firing-stony tells his story of addiction

Questions: what is the value of eating together?

Aboriginal Friendship Centre

Sidney Gill - outreach team (reformed inmate)

Verna Dee's daughter murdered - case never solved

Are there parts of Canadian history you are learning, now?
How is addiction a social issue?

DOAP team - downtown outreach addictions partnership

Ross's comment: "you're a drunk person's cab"

Trent from Sixica makes the comment:

"Speak your name, you gotta pray" (about repairing relationship)

Edmonton

Prison population disproportionately Indigenous

Key to healing: self-determination

Female Indigenous Healing Lodge - Buffalo Sage (minimum security)

Warden Claire Carefoot "Anyone [not playing the games] truly involved in their culture, and on their healing path, does not come back"

Stan Daniels jail

Question: what parts of the justice system work against Indigenous people?

-Part 2-

(Day 2 in Edmonton)

Trina (from Birch Lake, SK) described abuse, and horrible foster homes

Ahousat (off Van Isl) - has gone through tough times, but community is turning around

Elected Chief Greg Louie

Tom Paul - started youth drop-in

Rebecca Atleo, Director of education

Question: what are you learning about the Indian Act?

Final day of journey:

Dave Frank and Mary Donahue - Ceremony for closure



S02E01

-Part 1-

We meet the non-Indigenous group:

Brennan, 32 (Mississauga, ON)

Samantha, 25 (Whitby, ON)

Stephanie, 35 (Tyndall, MB)

Laurie, 44 (Prince Albert, SK)

Jackson, 18 (Midland, ON)

Larry, 60 (Brantford, ON)

Question: how sheltered has your experience of Indigenous neighbours been?

Starting in Ottawa

Ian Compeau, host: "The decimation of the Indigenous way of life had to occur for you to be able to live as you do now"

Community of Vanier - Colleen Cardinal (host of Samantha and Jackson)

Dion Metcalf (Inuit family)

-from Labrador, but raised in Ottawa, now a cultural teacher

Colleen: raised as a foster child (60s scoop)

her comment: "when you don't belong anywhere, you have no sense of self"

Question: what are you learning about the 60s scoop?

Kanesatake (near Oka, QC) - history of 1990 standoff recounted briefly

-Part 2-

Hosts, Ellen Gabriel and John Cree

(among the so-called "Mohawk warriors" in 1990)

Question: what happened in Oka in the Summer of 1991?

Natuashish (north-east Labrador) Innu community (distinct from Inuit)

Mary-Jane Edmunds welcomes the travelers

Question: what are living conditions like in this remote place?

Boat trip to Davis Inlet - Mark and John Newie, hosts

Christine Poker, counsellor at Healing Lodge in Natuashish

Sweat lodge - Mary-Jane talks about how cultural practice was taken from community

David and Mark perform the sweat

Question: what is the significance of the sweat lodge, and how are the travellers affected by it?



S02E02

-Part 1-

Thunder Bay, ON

Michelle Jordan, ED at Shelter House

Russell, from White Dog First Nation

Question: what factors contribute to homelessness among Indigenous peoples?

SOS van ride-along - Josie and Tessa, Shelter House volunteers

Fort William First Nation (Ojibwe, south of TB)

Ed Collins, Fort William Economic Developer

Len Pelletier, hosts the travellers

for a locally-sourced dinner

Stephanie McLaren and Mitch, hosts

Questions: what stereotypes are challenged?
What is learned about the Indian Act?

-Part 2-

Thunder Bay - day 3

(in Fort William)

Stephanie McLaren's comment: "Canada wants reconciliation without the truth... it's your job to find out the truth"

Question: what does it mean to be on the side of the oppressed?

Group heads to Southern Ontario

Woodland Cultural Centre (formerly Mowhawk institute - Canada's biggest IRS)

Kayley Reuben, Cultural Interpreter

Dawn and Roberta Hill, Larry Whiteye

Question: what are you learning about Indian Residential Schools?

Kayley - "You've been seeing through a colonial lens"

"We have to heal ourselves [money won't do it]"

Question: what do you think about the reflections the travellers have – considering their own kids, or the fact that they grew up so close to where atrocities happened?



S02E03

-Part 1-

Saskatoon

Indigenous populations in different regions:

-Toronto - less than 1%

-Saskatoon - about 10%

-Prince Albert - about 40%

Wanuskewin (Treaty 6, Atakakoop First Nation)

Becky Sasakamoose-Covner, cultural and diversity race relations coordinator

Question: what do you think of this definition of racism: the social construction of whiteness as being superior [to others who are non-white]?

Regan Ratness-Bowness,

Indigenous student council at U of S

North Battleford, SK

and Red Pheasant Cree Nation

-Eleanore SunChild - legal counsel for Boushie family

Mary Culbertson (SK Treaty Commissioner)

Debbie Baptist, Colten's mother

Sheldon Wutnee, formerly of Red Pheasant

Eleanore's comment: "behaviour is a symptom of the trauma"

Questions: can you imagine not trusting police? Is your idea of Canada changing?

Question: how does the justice system discriminate against Indigenous people?

-Part 2-

Red Pheasant First Nation (home of Colten Boushie)

Kelly Daniels, spiritual leader

Question: what do you think of the teepee, pipe ceremony and dancing?

Prince Albert - in the prisons, 76% of inmates are Indigenous

Corrections facility: PA Grand Council Healing Lodge

Elder Leonard Irmine

Question: what values are held up as important in Indigenous culture?

Elk hide and sweetgrass

Participants travel to Carcross Tagish First Nation in the Yukon (SE of Whitehorse)

-self-governing First Nation

Keith Wolf-Smarch, [totem] carver; Donna (Keith's wife) - picking traditional medicine

Final thoughts? What have you learned?



Gloria Dei
LUTHERAN CHURCH

A closing prayer:

Creator God,

We look at your world and praise you for the diversity all around us.

Thank you for the gift of relationships; our connection with people, animals and the land.

Help us, Lord, to see differences and diversity as strengths.

Help us to listen and understand; to meet one another with wonder and anticipation.

Help us to love as you love, without expectation.

Reveal to us your way of reconciliation and guide us into right relationships with all living things.

Lead us to understand how Indigenous peoples have been and continue to be profoundly harmed by settler people and institutions.

Lead us to repent when we as settlers deny Indigenous peoples respect, dignity and fullness of life.

Help us to listen compassionately, to speak humbly and to act justly.

Help us to seek the peace, justice and reconciliation you desire among all your children.

Thank you for your mercy and grace.

Amen.

Prayer by *Dianne Climenhage, MCC Atlantic Canada Regional Representative*

(<https://mccottawaoffice.wordpress.com/2019/06/19/prayer-for-national-indigenous-peoples-day/>)

FIRST CONTACT

Challenging perceptions. Changing lives.



Gloria Dei
LUTHERAN CHURCH