**Dr. Ted Hildebrandt, John Eliot, Apostle to the Indians, Session 2, Wabon’s Wigwam to Natick Village
Resources from NotebookLM**

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide, and 5) FAQs

**1. Abstract of Hildebrandt, John Eliot, Session 2, Wabon’s Wigwam to Natick Village, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL**

This audio transcript captures a lecture by Dr. Ted Hildebrandt, the second session in a series about John Eliot, a 17th-century Puritan missionary known as the Apostle to the Indians. The session details Eliot's efforts starting in 1646 with his initial preaching at Waban's wigwam in Nonantum (present-day Newton, Massachusetts) and traces the development of the first praying Indian village at Natick by 1650. It further explains the expansion of this work to encompass fourteen praying Indian villages by 1674, highlighting Eliot's methods of learning the Algonquin language, engaging in question-and-answer sessions with the Native Americans, and the significant support he received from individuals in both America and England for his mission, including the translation of the Bible into the Algonquin language.

**2. 15 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of
Dr. Hildebrandt, John Eliot, Session 2 – Double click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link there (Church History 🡪 John Eliot).**



**3. Briefing Document: Hildebrandt, John Eliot, Session 2, Wabon’s Wigwam to Natick Village**

Top of Form

Briefing Document: John Eliot and the Praying Indian Villages (1646-1674)

**Overview:** This document summarizes the main themes and important developments in John Eliot's missionary work among the Native American populations of Massachusetts between 1646 and 1674, as presented in Session 2 of Dr. Ted Hildebrandt's teaching. This period marks a significant expansion of Eliot's efforts, moving from his initial preaching at Waban's wigwam to the establishment of 14 "Praying Indian Villages" and the translation of the Bible into the Algonquin language. The briefing will highlight key events, challenges, and the underlying principles driving Eliot's mission.

**Main Themes and Important Ideas/Facts:**

**1. Early Encounters and Language Acquisition (1646):**

* **First Sermon at Waban's Wigwam (October 28, 1646):** Eliot preached his first sermon in the Algonquin language in Newton (then Nonantum) at the wigwam of Waban, a respected Native American leader. He was accompanied by influential figures like Daniel Gookin, Thomas Shepard, and John Wilson.
* **Language Learning:** Eliot spent several years learning the Algonquin language, with the help of an individual named Coconel who lived in his home. Hildebrandt emphasizes the difficulty of this undertaking, noting Eliot was around 39-40 years old at the time.
* **Sermon Content and Initial Reaction:** Eliot's first sermon at Waban's wigwam focused on the Ten Commandments and Ezekiel 37:9 ("Prophesy unto the wind"). The serendipitous connection of Waban's name meaning "wind" made a significant impact.
* **Emphasis on Question and Answer:** A crucial aspect of Eliot's approach was the extensive question-and-answer periods following his sermons, sometimes lasting up to three hours. This demonstrated his respect for the Indians and their inquiries.
* Example questions included: "How may we come to know Jesus Christ?" and "Does the white man's God hear Indian prayers?"
* Eliot recognized the need for a Bible in their language as a direct response to their questions about knowing Christ.

**2. Growth and Establishment of Praying Indian Villages (1650-1674):**

* **Natick: The First Praying Indian Village (1650):** Recognizing the need for land ownership for the Native American converts, Eliot facilitated the establishment of the first praying Indian village at Natick ("place of the hills") along the Charles River. 6000 acres were approved for this purpose.
* **Self-Governance in Natick:** Eliot encouraged self-governance based on biblical principles, drawing from Exodus 18 (rulers of ten, fifty, and hundred). The community also developed its own covenant, emphasizing God's rule and guidance through the Bible.
* Quote from the covenant: **“God shall rule over us… His book that shall guide us and direct us in the way.”**
* **Expansion to 14 Villages:** Following the Natick model, the movement expanded to encompass 14 praying Indian villages by 1674. These villages represented a significant number of Native American converts.
* **Social and Cultural Changes:** Christianity brought about social changes within the communities, including the outlawing of wife beating and a move away from polygamy.
* Waban's rules for the community included fines for wife beating, highlighting the shift in cultural norms.
* Testimonies from Native American women indicated positive changes in their husbands' behavior after their conversion.

**3. Support and Opposition:**

* **Key Supporters:** Eliot's work was significantly supported by individuals in both New England and England.
* **Mentors:** Thomas Hooker, Thomas Mayhew, Thomas Weld.
* **Companions:** Thomas Shepherd, Richard Gookin, John Wilson.
* **Supporters in England:** Edward Winslow, Robert Boyle, Richard Baxter.
* **Financial and Logistical Support from England:** Edward Winslow played a crucial role in publicizing Eliot's work in England, leading to the formation of "The President and Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in New England" (SPG). This society provided significant financial support, including an annual stipend for Eliot and funds for schoolmasters and the printing of the Bible.
* **Philosophical Approach to Mission:** Eliot believed that spiritual welfare needed to be accompanied by "civilization and social improvement." This included providing tools for farming and education.
* **Opposition:** While not detailed extensively in this session, the lecture hints at potential opposition from both Native American traditional leaders (Sachems and Powwows) who were losing power and potentially some English settlers.

**4. Personal Dedication and Challenges:**

* **Eliot's Character:** Hildebrandt emphasizes Eliot's friendliness, kindness, love, respect, and the trust he built with the Native Americans. His willingness to engage in lengthy question-and-answer sessions was key to this relationship.
* **Anecdotal Stories:** The lecture includes anecdotes illustrating the challenges and complexities of cultural and religious conversion, such as the incident with Waban violating his own Sabbath rules and the troubling story of Totherswamp's interpreter getting his son drunk, which deeply affected Eliot.
* Eliot's reflection on the latter incident: **"I began to doubt about our intended work. I knew not what to do."** This quote reveals his honesty and the weight of responsibility he felt.
* **Physical Hardship:** Eliot undertook arduous journeys on horseback to visit the various villages, despite being lame in one leg due to sciatica.
* **Personal Loss:** Eliot faced significant personal tragedy, outliving four of his six children.

**5. Translation of the Bible:**

* **Spurred by the Need for Understanding:** The Indians' questions about knowing Jesus Christ highlighted the critical need for scripture in their own language.
* **New Testament (1661) and Complete Bible (1663):** Eliot translated the entire Bible into the Algonquin language, a monumental achievement. This was the first Bible printed in America, done so at the Indian College at Harvard University.
* **Linguistic Challenges:** The lecture provides an example of the translation challenges, such as finding an equivalent for "lattice," which Eliot ultimately coined as "lattice-ot."

**6. Impending Conflict:**

* **Visit to the 14 Villages (1674):** In 1674, just before King Philip's War, Gookin and Eliot visited all 14 praying Indian villages, indicating the peak of their organized missionary efforts.
* **Foreshadowing King Philip's War (1675):** The session concludes by noting that the following year would see the outbreak of King Philip's War, a devastating conflict that would significantly impact the Praying Indian Villages and necessitate Eliot starting his work anew in many respects.

**Conclusion:**

The period between 1646 and 1674 represents a remarkable chapter in the history of missionary work in America, largely driven by the tireless efforts and deep commitment of John Eliot. His dedication to learning the Algonquin language, his respectful engagement with the Native American people, his focus on both spiritual and social transformation, and the monumental achievement of translating the Bible laid the foundation for the Praying Indian Villages. However, the looming shadow of King Philip's War foreshadows the challenges and setbacks that lay ahead for this ambitious endeavor.

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**4.** **Study Guide: Hildebrandt, John Eliot, Session 2, Wabon’s Wigwam to Natick Village**

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John Eliot: Apostle to the Indians (Session 2 Study Guide)

**Key Topics:**

* John Eliot's early missionary efforts and language acquisition.
* The significance of Waban's wigwam meeting and the initial Indian responses.
* The development of the first Praying Indian village at Natick.
* The support network for Eliot's work, both in New England and England.
* The social and cultural impacts of Eliot's mission on the Native American communities.
* The growth of Praying Indian villages leading up to 1674.

**Quiz:**

1. Where did John Eliot preach his first sermon in the Algonquin language, and what was the initial reception?
2. Describe the significance of the first meeting at Waban's wigwam in 1646, including the location and some of the key questions asked by the Native Americans.
3. What was the cosmological argument Eliot used in response to Waban's question about believing in what cannot be seen?
4. Explain the concept of the "fortnight" in the context of Eliot's early missionary journeys.
5. Identify and briefly describe two of the "little things" and two of the "great mercies" that Eliot used to answer the question about the benefits of praying to God.
6. How did the conversion of Native Americans potentially impact the power dynamics between sachems/powwows and their communities?
7. Describe one way in which the social customs of the Praying Indians changed as a result of their conversion to Christianity, as mentioned in the lecture.
8. What were the key provisions for the Praying Indian village established at Natick in 1650?
9. Name two of John Eliot's mentors and two of his supporters in England who were crucial to his missionary work.
10. What was the significance of the year 1674 in relation to the Praying Indian villages, and what major event was to follow in 1675?

**Answer Key:**

1. Eliot's first Algonquin sermon was in the Dorchester Mill area, and it was not well-received, essentially "bombing" with no real response from the Indians. However, it was where Kutshamikan became his first Christian convert.
2. The first meeting at Waban's wigwam took place in Nonantum (present-day Newton) on October 28, 1646. Key questions included how to know Jesus Christ and whether the white man's God understood Indian prayers.
3. Eliot used the example of Waban's wigwam, arguing that just as the wigwam had a maker even if unseen, the intricate design of the world implied a creator, who is God. This is a form of the cosmological argument.
4. The "fortnight" referred to Eliot's practice of alternating weeks between preaching to the Native Americans in Nonantum/Newton and preaching at his home church in Roxbury. He would travel back and forth every other week.
5. "Little things" included clothes, food, houses, and pleasures. "Great mercies" included wisdom, knowledge of God, Christ, eternal life, repentance, and faith, which Eliot considered the more significant blessings.
6. As Native Americans converted, the traditional authority of the sachems (chiefs) and powwows (priests) was challenged, leading to opposition to Eliot's work as their power and customary revenues diminished.
7. One significant social change was the outlawing of wife-beating, which was reportedly common in Indian culture before the arrival of Christianity. Additionally, the movement moved away from the practice of polygamy.
8. The Praying Indian village at Natick received 6,000 acres of land and was established along the Charles River. The community built a footbridge and developed their own town governance based on Exodus 18.
9. Two of Eliot's mentors were Thomas Hooker, who influenced his early Puritan beliefs, and Thomas Mayhew, who successfully conducted missionary work on Martha's Vineyard. Two of his English supporters were Edward Winslow, who publicized his work, and Robert Boyle, head of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in New England.
10. In 1674, Gookin and Eliot visited all 14 Praying Indian villages, marking a peak in their development. The following year, 1675, saw the outbreak of King Philip's War, which had a devastating impact on these communities.

 **Essay Format Questions:**

1. Analyze the key factors that contributed to the initial success of John Eliot's missionary efforts among the Native Americans between 1646 and 1674.
2. Discuss the significance of Eliot's translation of the Bible into the Algonquin language. What challenges did he face, and why was this such a crucial aspect of his mission?
3. Evaluate the role and impact of the support network, both in New England and England, on the progress and sustainability of John Eliot's missionary work.
4. Explore the ways in which the introduction of Christianity influenced the social and cultural lives of the Native American converts in the Praying Indian villages. Consider both positive and negative changes.
5. Considering the events discussed in the lecture, what were some of the major obstacles and challenges that John Eliot faced in his mission to convert the Native Americans, and how did he attempt to overcome them?

**Glossary of Key Terms:**

* **Wigwam:** A dome-shaped hut or tent traditionally used by some Native American tribes, particularly in the Northeast.
* **Nonantum:** The original Native American name for the area that is now part of Newton, Massachusetts, where Waban's wigwam was located.
* **Algonquin Language:** A large family of Native American languages spoken by numerous tribes across eastern Canada and the northeastern United States. Eliot translated the Bible into one of these languages.
* **Praying Indians:** Native Americans in colonial New England who converted to Christianity and lived in organized villages, adopting some English customs alongside their faith.
* **Natick:** The first and most significant of the Praying Indian villages, established in 1650. The name means "place of the hills."
* **Sachem:** A chief or leader in some Native American societies.
* **Powwow:** Traditionally, a spiritual leader or healer in some Native American cultures. In the context of the lecture, it also refers to traditional religious practices that conflicted with Christianity.
* **Catechizing:** Teaching the principles of Christian doctrine by means of questions and answers, a method heavily employed by Eliot with the Native American children.
* **Fortnight:** A period of two weeks, used in the lecture to describe Eliot's regular travel schedule between his church in Roxbury and the Native American communities.
* **The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in New England:** An English organization established to raise funds and support missionary work, including John Eliot's efforts.
* **King Philip's War (1675-1676):** A major conflict between the English colonists and Native American tribes in New England, led by Metacomet (King Philip), which significantly impacted the Praying Indian villages.

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**5. FAQs on Hildebrandt, John Eliot, Session 2, Wabon’s Wigwam to Natick Village, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)**
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Frequently Asked Questions about John Eliot's Missionary Work (1646-1674)

1. **What was the initial catalyst for John Eliot's missionary efforts among the Native Americans?** In 1646, John Eliot preached his first sermon in the Algonquin language at the wigwam of Waban in Nonantum (present-day Newton, Massachusetts). A key moment occurred during the question-and-answer session following this sermon. When the Indians asked how they could come to know Jesus Christ, Eliot realized the crucial need for the Bible to be available in their own language. This realization spurred his commitment to learning the Algonquin language and eventually translating the entire Bible into it.
2. **How did John Eliot approach learning the Algonquin language and beginning his ministry?** Eliot enlisted the help of a Native American man named Coconel, who lived in his home and taught him the Algonquin language. Despite the difficulty of learning a new language as an adult (around age 39 or 40), Eliot persevered. His early attempts at preaching in Algonquin, such as the first sermon in the Dorchester Mill area, were not successful. However, he continued, and his meeting with Waban marked a significant turning point. He preached in Algonquin for an hour and fifteen minutes and then engaged in extensive three-hour question-and-answer sessions, demonstrating his respect for the Indians and their inquiries.
3. **What were some of the key questions the Native Americans asked John Eliot during their early interactions, and how did he respond?** The Native Americans posed profound questions, including: "How may we come to know Jesus Christ?" (leading to Eliot's Bible translation), "Does the white man's God hear Indian prayers?" (Eliot affirmed God's universal understanding), and "How can we believe what our eyes cannot see?" (Eliot used a cosmological argument based on the creation of a wigwam). They also asked about the nature of good and evil, the fate of children who die young, and the apparent delay in the English teaching them about God. Eliot addressed these questions with theological explanations, parables, and analogies relevant to their understanding.
4. **What were the significant developments and milestones in Eliot's missionary work between 1646 and 1674?** Following the initial meetings, Eliot established a pattern of alternating weeks preaching in Nonantum and at his church in Roxbury. His work led to the conversion of many Native Americans, and by 1674, there were 14 "praying Indian villages" with around a thousand converts. A major milestone was the establishment of the first praying Indian village at Natick in 1650, where they were granted 6,000 acres of land. Natick served as a model for subsequent villages, with its own governance based on biblical principles (Exodus 18) and a church established in 1660.
5. **How did John Eliot foster community and social change within the praying Indian villages?** Eliot's vision extended beyond spiritual conversion to include social improvement and civilization. In the villages like Natick, he encouraged the adoption of English customs, such as settled living, agriculture, and specific rules of conduct. Waban, a respected leader, played a role in establishing these rules, which included prohibitions against wife-beating. Eliot also emphasized education and sought support from England to fund schoolmasters and schoolmistresses for the Indian children. The establishment of town governance based on biblical principles further structured their communities.
6. **What role did individuals and organizations in England play in supporting John Eliot's missionary work?** Eliot's work received significant support from England. Edward Winslow publicized Eliot's and Thomas Mayhew's efforts, raising awareness and funds. This led to the incorporation of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in New England in 1649, which provided crucial financial support, including an annual stipend for Eliot. Robert Boyle, a prominent intellectual, became the head of this society and championed Eliot's vision. Richard Baxter, a Puritan writer, also supported the cause. This English support facilitated the provision of farming tools, the salaries of teachers, and most significantly, the printing of Eliot's Algonquin Bible in 1663.
7. **What were some of the challenges and internal dynamics within the praying Indian communities?** Despite the successes, Eliot faced challenges. The authority of traditional leaders (Sachems) and religious figures (Powwows) diminished with the rise of Christianity, leading to some opposition. Issues such as alcohol abuse and adherence to the Sabbath also presented difficulties. The story of Totherswamp's response to his son and others getting drunk highlights the community's struggle with these issues and their commitment to their new Christian values, even in difficult circumstances. Eliot himself experienced moments of doubt and questioning when confronted with the sins of his converts, including his own interpreter.
8. **What was the significance of the year 1674 in the context of John Eliot's ministry to the Native Americans?** The year 1674 marked a high point in John Eliot's missionary efforts, with 14 established praying Indian villages. In that year, Eliot and Daniel Gookin visited all these villages, indicating a period of relative stability and growth. However, this success was tragically followed by the outbreak of King Philip's War in 1675, which had a devastating impact on the praying Indian communities and forced Eliot to essentially restart his work in its aftermath. Nevertheless, by 1674, Eliot's dedicated work had resulted in a significant number of Native American conversions and the establishment of a unique Christian indigenous presence in New England.

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