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Mission and the Cultural Other: In Search of the Pre-colonial Jesus

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Abstract
As an American, and a missionary of various shades among my own Native American peoples for 30 years, I have observed as much about Western (White) culture in North American missions as I have among the many Indigenous tribal cultures. This article is meant to provide an opportunity for a self-critique of Western missionary culture, particularly concerning some of the roots of colonial and neo-colonial practices of mission in the United States. In other words, I want to provide an opportunity for us to learn how those who have been the recipients of North American mission the longest may understand Western missionary culture. The most blatant contrast of Western missionary culture compared to Indigenous cultures is hierarchy as the structural norm. Hierarchical structures do not intuitively generate equality. Such structures require power to be used over the other in order to retain power and maintain homeostasis. By diminishing notions of dignity in the (subaltern) other, whether the other is such by ethnicity, gender, class, or simply by being considered a less important part of creation, we dehumanize them or desacralize them, robbing them of their dignity. Once a person, group, or another part of creation is identified as having less dignity or sacredness than ourselves we can, within a hierarchical norm, find rationalizations to use power over them. These rationalizations are then codified in societies and systemic structures to create the norm. Throughout the centuries, Christians have settled for hierarchical governance as the norm. In a very real sense, a significant root of slavery, patriarchy, racism, and classism involves accepting this hierarchical norm. Christian mission has not been immune to the same hegemonic tendencies and must be re-examined in order to resurface in a form worthy of the message of the pre-colonial Jesus.

Keywords
mission, hierarchy, hegemony, empire, pre-colonial, egalitarian

While it is true Jesus was born into colonialism, he is the stellar example of a decolonized mind. By this I mean his life and teachings appear to place him neither as one who understood himself to be a powerless victim of oppression or an oppressor. Instead, he sought to free oppressor and oppressed alike from the chains of colonial structures and thinking. The core of his thought was developed from the egalitarian based, Shalom–Sabbath–Jubilee system as often rightly understood by prophets such as Isaiah and Amos in Judaism.[1]

Missionaries, but more often to the point of corruption, mission-sending agencies, have tried to follow Jesus and at the same time cooperate with power. Christian mission has, on a grand scale, become subject to the influence and collusion of ungodly governments and nation-states. We have allowed our missionary practices to deface Christ by substituting a false reality of Christ embedded in hegemony. Today, we simply accept this faulty foundation and accept the false reality as "Christianity" and "Christian mission." Speaking of Christianity as a "strange religio-cultural hybrid," Catherine Keller rightfully states in *The Love of Postcolonialism: Theology in the Interstices of Empire*,

> When it opened its young mouth to speak, it spoke in the many tongues of empire-nations and languages colonized by Rome, and before that Greece, and before that Babylon, which had first dispersed the Jews into imperial space. That diaspora was positioned throughout the cities of empire, and its representatives circulated continuously back along Roman roads to Jerusalem. Yet even these visitors were aliens to one another, divided and conquered by difference. So the linguistic miracle of that day, the Pentecost of polyglossia, stunned the disciples (women and men, young and old, gentile and Jew) into mission. They believed, rapturously, with no naiveté as to the risk, that they could communicate beyond every boundary. That the community could keep its many selves in tune, while in motion. A global gambit: That love might not get lost in translation. (2004: 222)

The incredible significance of Jesus, once broadcasted via mission, was both irretrievable and newsworthy for the whole known world. But how could such a grand and imposing message be delivered by ordinary human beings? Culturally bound, the message was destined to always be a mixture of the good and the bad; the pure and the adulterated; the sacred and the mundane. Colonized Jewish and Gentile followers of the Jesus Way heard the message of a free, pre-colonial Jesus through their own culturally bound, colonized minds. Yet, rooted within the message, through the guidance of the imminent Spirit, survived the seeds of their own freedom from being both the imperial oppressor, or those who are hopelessly oppressed. A new "kingdom" was afoot that completely overshadowed the current kingdom of Rome. The new order, based on equality and dignity, made the current hierarchal patterns of governance seem illogical. The incarnation, life, death and resurrection of Jesus it seemed, was the great leveling factor for all creation. In this new order, the Jewish followers of Jesus believed true Jubilee had come and Gentile believers would borrow heavily from a Jubilee type construct.

Unfortunately, cultural choices were made over time by leaders who followed the Jesus Way,[2] to turn the Jesus Way into a hierarchical system that could then be co-opted by empire.[3] By choosing to operate on and through hierarchical principles, which matched Roman hierarchy, Christianity was easily assimilated into empire rather than demonstrating freedom from empire. Theologies eventually developed that were a

throwback to hierarchical thinking, creating stigmatized classes of people and the use of hegemony. Discussions concerning divine subordination and apostolic succession were viewed through a lens of hierarchy, not through the lens of a divine, yet earthly community, based on equality that Jesus said would bring freedom. The basis for freedom was simple equality for the whole community of creation.[4] Jesus revealed a "kingdom" that delegitimized power over others. A divine community on earth where prostitutes and tax-gathers could be seen as socially equal; where humans, like birds and flowers, need not worry about starvation and homelessness because everyone shared what they had with one another. What freedom did not resemble was the hierarchical Roman Church or its Reformation Protestant cousins. What freedom does not look like now is North American Evangelical Christianity.

Sadly, North American Christians, by default, must admit to a social location predominately within the theological and missiological trajectory of Christendom. For the purposes of this article I associate Christendom as inseparably linked to legitimized movements like Constantinian Christianity, the Doctrine of Discovery, and Manifest Destiny, that is, expressing a faith that has become comfortable with a ubiquitous theological and missiological framework that exerts power over others.[5]

Christian mission has become strangely comfortable with hegemony, which is at least partially a result of accepting hierarchy as amoral and as a foundational organizing principle. For example, we have overlaid a hierarchical lens over the Trinity resulting in titanic splits in Christ's body concerning subordination, which has resulted in modalism. A popular understanding of life in the Garden of Eden as hierarchy has resulted in various forms of patriarchy that have justified the subjugation of women for thousands of years. Like ancient Israel who was warned by YHWH that they needed no king, Jesus warned his disciples, and us, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. It is not this way among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant" (Matt. 20:26–27).

Regardless of the way power is wielded, hierarchy is a structure that is organized to afford one entity, person, or "thing" power over another. Servanthood is the complete opposite. Servanthood insists that any power one has that could be used over another is used to empower the other. In this way, those who have less power may achieve equality and dignity within the given system. Obviously, all of Christian mission has not been evil and we should always honor the commitment of past mission efforts. We all know individual examples of great servanthood through mission, but the missional enterprise itself has had at its core hierarchical thinking which too often resulted in hegemony as a foundation, not the servanthood to which Jesus called us. Having been a missionary of various degrees for three decades I have heard too many stories and I have seen too many instances of paternalism and hegemonic mission strategies, both foreign and domestic, to be convinced otherwise.

Modern mission has taken good people with good intentions, who are ready to sacrifice much of their own worldly comforts, and inserted them into a system that most often results in missional hegemony. Power over others may appear via gender, race, ethnicity, or class status but it must depend on and be sustained by the very system which Jesus gave us a direct warning to avoid, namely, lording over others. By accepting hierarchy as a normalized organizing principle we accept the resulting hegemony that accompanies it.

Native North Americans: A case study

The futility of Christian hegemony based on accepting hierarchy as a normalized organizing system can easily be seen in mission to Native Americans. Throughout the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries (roughly one hundred years), the residential boarding school era, missionaries worked in conjunction with US and Canadian governments in order to civilize North American Indigenous peoples through Christianity.[6] Part and parcel of the civilization process for Indian children was compulsory attendance at residential boarding schools. During the residential boarding school era coercing Indian children from their families and homes was considered sound mission practice.

Common tales of coercion to get Indian families to send their children to residential boarding schools include guilt and manipulation, the threat of cutting off food rations, arrest, and outright kidnapping of Indian children. Often these pressures came from the missionaries who were already present in the community and who were working in conjunction with their government to enroll residential boarding school students. I have personally heard stories that reinforce these themes, from many elders, including my own relatives, who were victims of the residential boarding school policies. While confined to literal North American prisons for children, the victims were starved, beaten, tortured, raped, and killed, all in the name of Jesus, mission, and American civilization.[7] The conventional wisdom at the time was that Indian boarding schools were the fastest track to civilization. This same system of assimilation was also used to civilize and Christianize Indigenous peoples all over the world, including, among others, the Aboriginals of Australia.

During the boarding school era missions were administered from a position of power and superiority to the supposed unlearned savage. The tragic history of US governmental civilization policies, such as during the residential boarding school era, is something akin to active genocide. An argument can be made that the Indian boarding school project was more like ethnocide than genocide, but when calculating the end result it makes little difference whether Indigenous lives or Indigenous cultures were destroyed because the two are so intricately intertwined. Don Trent Jacobs illustrates the point:

> A culture's destruction is not a trifling matter. A healthy culture is all-encompassing of human life, even to the point of determining their time and space orientation. If a people suddenly lose their "prime symbol," the base of culture, their lives lose meaning. They become disoriented with no hope. As social disorganization often follows such loss, they are often unable to ensure their own survival . . . The loss and human suffering for those whose culture has been healthy and is suddenly attacked and disintegrated are incalculable. (2006: 221)

Illegitimate conquest of land is a constant theme with empire, and as it has often gone, missionary endeavors have accompanied the plight to dispossess Native Americans of their land. For example, in the era of the 1830s to 1870s, the US Indian policy was removal and relocation. One cannot easily discount the influence of strong anti-Indian sentiment coming from the US and Canadian governments and their citizenry upon the missionary endeavor. The height of anti-Indian sentiment and its influence on Native mission in the early nineteenth century was unparalleled under the influence of US President Andrew Jackson who initiated the Indian Removal Act. After Jackson's election in

1828, the stage was set and the fate of the Eastern tribes was sealed. Often the missionaries looked at a policy advocating removal as a kinder option to annihilation as was commonly propagated by citizenry and government alike. For example, Henry Clay's treatise against Indians while he was US Secretary of State is descriptive and revealing of the political atmosphere in 1827 and beyond.

> It is impossible to civilize Indians. There was never a full-blooded Indian that ever took to civilization. It is not in their nature. They are a race destined for extinction . . . I do not think they are, as a race, worth preserving. I consider them as essentially inferior to the Anglo-Saxon race which is now quickly replacing them on this continent. They are not an improvable breed, and their disappearance from the human family will be no great loss to the world. In point of fact, they are rapidly disappearing and . . . in fifty years from this time there will not be any of them left. (McLoughlin, 1990: frontispiece)

All Christian denominations with missionaries in the Eastern American Indian fields around the time of Indian Removal supported the policies of the US govern-ment, though not without degrees of exception from their missionaries. A reasonable argument can be made that if the denominations had not fully endorsed the policies of Jackson they may not have had any remaining missionaries at all. In the end though, these denominations acquiesced to their government's removal policy, including perhaps the most well-known of all Indian removals, the Cherokee Removal. Even though individual missionaries resisted removal, all denominations active in Cherokee mission at some time supported a policy of removal.[8] As a result of the Indian Removal Act, many thousands of Native Americans lost their land, their liveli-hood, and their very lives.

Baptist missionary Isaac McCoy, credited with the invention of the American Indian Reservation System, was an example of well-intentioned hegemonic mission. In 1827 McCoy wrote a book endorsing Indian removal and colonization. McCoy's concept of an "Indian Canaan" was "heartily endorsed" by Andrew Jackson (119). In McCoy's mind he believed his solution to be a better choice than the options offered by many of the frontier politicians. Still, the lands of the Cherokee and other Indian tribes vacated through Indian removal policy were readily obtained by the citizens of American Empire in order to build their homes and churches. McCoy never challenged the indignity of Indian removal.

Deep-seated racism exhibited through normalized white supremacy, such as expressed by Henry Clay, was the impetus for the majority of the mistreatment Native Americans received whether by the US government or through missionary endeavors. The ever-present agenda in such looming endeavors was land theft. Government-sponsored land grants and patents for white citizens, like the Land Act of 1804, the Military Tract of 1812, the Georgia Land Lottery, the Preemption Act of 1841, the Donation Land Claim Act of 1850, the Homestead Act and the Boomer/Sooner Oklahoma Land Run, found few notable objections from mission organizations. They too saw the Indian as a problem more often than understanding that they were people with dignity to be empowered.

Mission closer to our time

One day while surveying a pile of 25-cent books at a public library sale I found a 1952 handbook entitled, New Trails for Old: A Handbook for Workers among the American Indians giving practical advice to Christian missionaries who worked among American

Indians. The little Indian mission booklet was published by the National Council of Churches. The themes in the booklet advising Native North American mission reveal the common lack of concern, or at hopeful best, naïveté at the time, concerning any possibility of doing mission utilizing Native values or concerns. Even the most basic cultural values of language were discouraged. "Do not spend too much time trying to learn the language . . . If the Indians among whom you are to work do not speak English, they will soon do so" (Lindquist, 1952: 33).

We would like to think that modern mission has abolished the hegemony of cultural assimilation. We would like to believe that somehow we, as moderns, have corrected the hegemony of the past through better mission methods, and yet the goals of Christian mission in the mid-twentieth century still reflected the US government's goals of assimilation based on the outdated race theory of Social Darwinism: "Naturally a church organization . . . paves the way for the final assimilation and absorption of the Indian citizenry into our body politic. This is the climax and consumption of the hoped-for development of the Indian church" (Lindquist, 1952: 55).

In the past two centuries of Western[9] mission, Euro-centric ideas based on various hierarchies have normalized white privilege/supremacy.[10] White supremacy has been accepted as part and parcel of the driving force of mission for so long that it has become a part of the Western psyche. Missional hegemony became ingrained at many levels in the Western psyche not only as it was applied to Indigenous peoples but because Indigenous peoples were often the aim of mission, influencing all of mission. For this reason I refer to all victims of missional hegemony as the cultural other.

Translating similar hegemonic values in mission to the 1960s and 1970s Jesus Movement, Wheaton New Testament professor Gene Green recalls his experience:

> With long hair and large Bibles, we loaded into cars and vans and headed for college campuses. Once there we engaged in "spiritual warfare" through prayer since we knew that areas we were to evangelize were under the sway of demonic forces. These powers were territorial and had to be overcome. When talking with those who were not followers of Jesus we sought to out argue them, using skills acquired in philosophy classes which were our domain before conversion. We could mount an argument that would best any other. Somehow or other we, the youngest and most zealous of Christians, embraced a militant faith whose notion of mission was deeply embedded in the concept of conquest of spiritual and intellectual forces. If we could not overcome someone through argument, we knew we could knock them down through Scripture. And if our arguments and Scripture were not enough to turn them around, we would spend our time in prayerful vigil, knowing that Christ could conquer where we could not. This was our mission, our calling. The mission sometimes degenerated into face-to-face yelling matches against the "pagans" who had the audacity to push back against us (no exaggeration here). Where did these notions of "mission" come from? How had militancy and faith in Christ become joined together? (Green, forthcoming)

How Indeed? My own experience as a new follower of Jesus in the mid 1970s, as well as the experiences of most of the Evangelical Christians I know, was formed out of a similar ethos. The ethos of conquest as expressed in missional hegemony has become normalized in our times through the language of conquest. We go on "evangelistic

crusades." We are taught to "win" others for Christ. We "make" a disciple. The Western worldview understands the binary choices in very clear and strategic terms. They (the cultural other) are lost and we are saved. The choices are either heaven or hell. One either loves God or loves the devil. Such terms add to thinking that aids us in our conquest over the other. In such a process we innately objectify the cultural other and place ourselves in a morally superior position. The theological roots of supposed Christian moral superiority run deep in Western white culture.

Many people have argued that Christians have, over the years, made bad choices concerning their loyalties. While it is true that there have been plenty of theologians throughout the ages who have argued for nonviolence over violence or over ethnic and political loyalties, I am making the argument that the theology of conquest has been a major influence in our missional thinking; a thinking that too easily aligns itself with hierarchy and results in hegemony. Rather than continuing in the position that Christianity has both a good and a morbid history I am attempting to reframe the paradigm from a poor use of hierarchy to a fatefully missing egalitarianism.

A paradigm shift is needed

Influence from the dominant strain of Western Euro-American Christianity has pre-scribed that mission to others, particularly the cultural other, be done from a place of Euro-American values, including feigned superiority. Contemporary practitioners may be tempted to view ourselves as immune from the sense of entitlement and superiority that their historical counterparts exhibited. Western people tend to look at the past as moving from less civilized to more civilized; especially if they are the ones writing the new history. Perhaps this is part of the myth of civilization. Says John Mohawk,

> For the most part, contemporary historians have proceeded from the presumption that modern people are different from and superior to those who came before—especially those designated as "primitives." Distortions and incomplete and even dishonest renderings of the past are found in many modern accounts of ancient peoples and contemporary "primitive" peoples; these accounts serve to reinforce the sense of difference and to distance moderns from unflattering legacies of the past. (2000: 260)

Unfortunately, these Western utopian ideas were often couched in Christianity's missional intentions. Colonialism and colonial missions have introduced and rein-forced systemic changes among colonized peoples that replaced their traditional values without regarding whether or not their traditional values align with Christ and his teachings and by assuming they could not make foundational decisions such as structural organization for themselves. This supplanting has occurred at the most basic levels of mission. This is certainly characteristic of the history of mission among Indigenous North Americans. Yet, all is not lost. Even the very worst experiences in mission, such as the missional examples presented among Native Americans, and in spite of such bereaved histories of marginalization, the cultural other, often possess a residual of values that are a repository of true wealth (Sanneh, 2003; Woodley, 2010). These values, if utilized properly, may have the potential to produce mission models resulting in true well-being for everyone. For such a model to find footing a missional paradigm shift must occur.

While today's mission models clearly are a more humane approach than in the past, they do not make enough room for the possibility that those different from us are people who are gifted by God and have something to teach the dominant Western society. Past missional methods and models embedded in hegemony have not worked well. For example, after thousands of years of active mission efforts, including untold millions of dollars invested and untold human hours sacrificed, a consistent model of an empowered Indigenous church in North America or perhaps anywhere else in the world is still lacking.

Hierarchical structures naturally lend themselves too often to inequality. Hegemony is a colonial fixture of the mind that is always present, begging for entrance in our lives and our social structures. Christianity and Christian mission have been fueled by hierarchical reasoning that lent itself to both outright and subtle forms of hegemony. Born in the atmosphere of colonialism, the choice to follow the Jesus Way has always been difficult. The subtle messages coming from our colonial regimes emerge in our minds and demand our adherence to those hegemonic systems most comfortable to us. Slavery, patriarchy, and classism were well established in most first-century societies and each would have to answer to the Spirit of the reality of Jesus and his promise of freedom from such inequitable bondages. Unfortunately, the most ubiquitous and perhaps most damaging of these banes on humanity was all but ignored by the latter followers of the Jesus Way, namely, hierarchy. The uncritical examination of hierarchy by the church opened the gate to find justifications to welcome back all sorts of hegemonic cultural fixtures, eventually resulting in the marriage of church and state through Constantinian Christianity and the rise of Christendom that we are still experiencing.

At various times in history, Christianity has tried to distance itself from the restraints and bloody horrors of Christendom, while at other times the Christian faith has embraced the heterodoxy of Christ and hierarchical norms leading to subjugation of the other:

> We maintain, that the principle declared in the fifteenth century as the law of Christendom, that discovery gave title to assume sovereignty over, and to govern the unconverted natives of Africa, Asia, and North and South America, has been recognized as a part of the national law [Law of Nations], for nearly four centuries, and that it is now so recognized by every Christian power, in its political department and its judicial. (Judge John Catron for the Supreme Court of Tennessee in the case State v. Foreman)[11]

Exerting power over others in mission, regardless of intention, is not simply an undesirable missional strain but it has subtly become the foundational approach to mission. Christian mission has become a primary purveyor of the message of good news while delivering oppression. Today, Americans send thousands of missionaries and hundreds of thousands of short-term mission volunteers around the world each year in order to share what we feel we have with others. In other words, we feel we have the answer to their problems prior to even knowing their questions. In reality, we are under the delusion that our privilege, coming from our colonial reality, perceives us as less needy than those we seek to evangelize. In truth, the message and Spirit of the pre-colonial Jesus can free us from such hubris and open us up to those who could be our teachers. In other words, we are the Pharisees in many of Jesus' parables and experiences—and the poor, the

non-Christian, the woman, the brown man, the other, all are meant to be our teachers and even channels of our own salvation.

Ironically, the founder of the Jesus Way was born into a marginal nation. At the time of his birth his homeland was occupied by the world's greatest military power. He had little sociopolitical power over others within his own Jewish systems. And whatever social and political power he had, he used to empower others who were more marginalized in the system than he. Today, Western Christians, particularly North American Christians, face the dilemma of doing mission de facto from a position of dominance, finding their places as representatives of world imperialism rather than using that place of power to empower the other.

The earliest followers of the Jesus Way were at first seen as another sect of Judaism. As the Jesus Way became more popular and more organized, it was differentiated from Judaism both from within and without. Eventually, and particularly, the Western model of Christianity developed a keen association with social and political power, so much so that often the church and state were indistinguishable. It is important for us to consider the fact that Jesus never became a Christian; nor did he ever sanction any one religion. I do not believe the vision of Jesus he shared with those around him meant for them to develop a religion. Most often his call was simply "follow me." Within his own religion, Judaism, following Jesus' life and example is first and foremost, restoring shalom (Woodley, 2012). The message is universal because God's original intention for all creation is the restoration of harmony or shalom.

We recognize the fact that human limitedness through mission has often failed in achieving what has often been our best intentions. We must also recognize our widespread failure in becoming those who primarily empower the cultural other. We must re-examine our missional thinking. Our rationale goes something like this: Christianity was corrupted in the fourth century when it was married to empire and we have struggled ever since. I would like to offer an alternative scenario. Is it possible that Christianity was so easily corrupted because it was never meant to be? Perhaps Christianity, as an organized religion, is not what Jesus had hoped for when he said "come follow me." And, the relevant question here is, If Christianity was a faulty by-product of Jesus' life and teachings, then what is mission?

Mission, that is, the mission of Jesus, by its very nature must at minimum insist on a sense of equality for all. Jesus came to all humanity, emptying himself of his claims of superiority over us, while at the same time becoming one of us. As stated earlier, Jesus made it clear that we are not to lord over others. Jacques Ellul illustrates Jesus' point:

> Note that he makes no distinction or reservation. All national rulers, no matter what the nation or the political regime, lord it over their subjects. There can be no political power without tyranny. This is plain and certain for Jesus. When there are rulers and great leaders, there can be no such thing as good political power. Here again power is called into question. Power corrupts. We catch an echo of the verse that we quoted above from Ecclesiastes. But we note also that Jesus does not advocate revolt or material conflict with these kings and great ones. He reverses the question, and as so often challenges his interlocutors: "But you . . . it must not be the same among you." In other words, do not be so concerned about fighting kings. Let them be. Set up a marginal society which will not be interested in such things, in which there will be no power, authority, or hierarchy. Do not do things as they are

usually done in society, which you cannot change. Create another society on another foundation. (1991: 61–62)

I hope the philosophical basis over the validity of hierarchy as a system can (and hopefully will) be debated for decades. In the long run this may affect our status as missionaries in the world by garnering a new era of humility and mutual submission toward those to whom we are sent. In the short term, I would like to propose some simple guidelines that may help us mitigate the kind of missional hegemony that is embedded within hierarchical systems of which we are a part.

Ten basic guidelines for mission

1. There is no place we can go where Jesus is not already present and active. Jesus is eventually recognized by many of the writers of the New Testament as Creator. The efficacy of Christ in creation as Creator (Jn 1:1–4, 10–14; Col. 1:15–20; 1 Cor. 8:6; Heb. 1:1); the fact that God has always had covenantal relationship with all peoples (Amos 9:7); the fact that Jesus is the truth, meaning all truth points to him and he fulfills all truth, these point to the inescapable reality that Jesus is everywhere present.
2. Since Jesus is present and active everywhere, the first responsibility of mission among any culture is not to teach, speak, or exert privilege but to discover what Jesus is doing in that culture (Jn 5:19).
3. Realize God expects two conversions out of every missional encounter: (1) our conversion to the truths in their culture, and (2) their conversion to the truth we bring to the encounter (Lk. 7:36–50; 10:25–37).
4. Our humility as servants of Jesus should naturally lead us to convert first to the truths in their culture everywhere we see Jesus is at work (Acts 10:23–48).
5. Through the work of culture guides (people of that culture), earnest study, prayer, and experiential failures, it is our responsibility to first adapt to and then embrace their culture, and as much as possible, their worldview (Acts 17).
6. Realize that conversion is both instantaneous and a process and think through those implications as we begin to consider our timelines. Then, throw out our timelines (Rom. 13:11).
7. During this time, also read, study, discuss with others ways that you can continue to deconstruct your own worldview and culture. This is a long, painful, and yet freeing process (Eph. 4:23; Rom. 12:2).
8. Our own process of conversion may take years, so be patient with yourself and with God (Gal. 2:12).
9. When and if, they invite us to share the gospel they have noticed us living out, then the process formally known as cultural contextualization should occur (1 Cor. 9:20).
10. Their process of conversion may take years, so be patient (Eph. 4:2).

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Notes

1. The interpretations of the history of Israel are complex but Jesus often challenged ethno-centric interpretations and corrected them with more egalitarian interpretations expressing God's love and interaction with all humanity (i.e., Lk. 3:8; 4:14–28).
2. The early followers of Jesus were dubbed "Christians" only once in Scripture but the term The Way is used more often (Acts 9:2; 22:4; 24:14, 22). In this tradition, and signifying Christ followers who, prior to the birth of Christianity as a religion, may be considered pre-colonial Christians or not Christian, and for those who chose to follow Jesus but not identify with Christianity as a religion, I use the term Jesus Way.
3. Edward Schillebeeckx, in his book The Church with a Human Face, points out that the original Jesus movement was egalitarian and most likely similar in form to a loose congregationalism governed (at least by 100 AD or so) by egalitarian groups: episcopoi, presbyterio but never without leadership—originally apostolic and later connected by evangelists and prophets—and always organized at some level. Schillebeeckx points out that by 100–120 AD Ignatius of Antioch had contextualized church structure around the military organization of imperial Roman occupied lands that organized administration around diocese and parishes—with the bishop equaling the field general. But in Alexandria, clear up until the early third century, the church was ruled by co-equal boards (a council of elders as well as a council of youngers) in a generally democratic format—so there were actually at least two completely different forms of organization. It was under Cyprian (late 300s) that the church took its more-or-less Western form that has been accepted as the norm in Western Christianity. Like so many other forms of contextualization, it was their idea of contextualization in their own context, but they normalized and universalized their context to fit the whole world. These conclusions formed through discussions with colleague Greg Leffel.
4. Meaning all creation is equal but each has a different function or role. For more on the community of creation see my book Shalom and the Community of Creation: An Indigenous Vision (2012).
5. For an introduction to early Roman Christendom see Rieger, 2007 and Horsley, 2003. For an introduction to Christendom and related to the "Age of Discovery" see the Ninth Session Report of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues of the United Nations entitled "Impact on Indigenous Peoples of the International Legal Construct known as the Doctrine of Discovery, which has served as the Foundation of the Violation of their Human Rights," available at www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/E%20C.19%202010%2013.DOC (accessed August 5, 2014). Also see www.doctrineofdiscovery.org (accessed August 5, 2014). For an introduction to Manifest Destiny see the two essays, Hawk and Twiss, 2014 and Cuellar and Woodley, 2014.
6. In Canada the schools were directly run by Christian denominations.
7. For an introduction to this era in America see the Boarding School Healing Project Report at http://www.boardingschoolhealingproject.org/resources.html ("Indigenous People's and Boarding Schools") (accessed November 5, 2014). Of note, just prior to the boarding school era was the establishment of the Indian Office by the Department of War (1824) and the Indian Removal Act (1830). These actions

resulted in the forced relocation of Indian tribes of the Eastern United States to territories west of the Mississippi River and the opening of Indian lands for colonization. Indian titles to land were extinguished and Indians became wards of federal government as domestic dependent nations. This policy meant that the federal government assumed trusteeship of all Indian lands, resources, and affairs, including the implementation of Indian boarding schools.

8. In the "11th hour" American Baptist missionary Evan Jones was able to convince his denomination to resend their former position advocating Cherokee removal.
9. I realize "Western" can mean many things. Here, I am referring to Christianity that developed predominately from Rome, then Western Europe and then North America.
10. For an Introduction into how white Supremacy developed throughout the world see Painter, 2010.
11. Available at: www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/E%20C.19%202010%2013.DOC (accessed August 5, 2014). See a further discussion of how Judge Catron's ruling pertains to this study at pars. 6–18.

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