


4-2010

# "The Harmony Way:" Integrating Indigenous Values Within Native North American Theology and Mission

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## Recommended Citation

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## ABSTRACT

### “THE HARMONY WAY:” INTEGRATING INDIGENOUS VALUES WITHIN NATIVE NORTH AMERICAN THEOLOGY AND MISSION

by

Randy Stephen Woodley

Given that Western models of mission have failed among Native Americans and that colonial practices have devastated native communities, this research sought a better way of pursuing Christian mission among Native Americans by asking two questions: (1) Do Native American have a generally shared set of values that could guide the construction of new models for mission in North American Native communities, and, if so, to what degree are these values shared among Native American communities? and, (2). What resources (particularly values) are available within the Native American communities themselves for developing appropriate models of mission and could such resources be developed into authentic, integral mission models?

I began the project with a three-pronged framework from a biblical/theological construction of *shalom*, a contextually based anthropologically-informed missiology and an indigenous construction of decolonization and indigenization. A framework for studying values emerged based on literature from the fields of counseling, sociology, anthropology, education, missiology, history, and religion. The values themselves emerged from conversations with seven elders/spiritual leaders who participated in extensive interviews, and one hundred self-selected Native Americans who answered a

ten-question survey. Responses were analyzed using grounded theory as a way to discover and organize a system of values.

I linked responses with literature regarding Native American value studies, discourse, and experiences as the value categories emerged. I was able to establish among Native Americans, a widely spread construct I call the “Harmony Way.” I was then able to isolate and examine ten commonly held core values that exist within the framework of the Native American Harmony Way.

The research raised questions about current approaches to Native American mission and about the dangers of formulating mission models that are not based on Native American values and not within the framework of a Native American concept of “wellbeing” or what I will refer to as the “Native American Harmony Way.” The research contributes to the practice of disrupting systems of oppression, even in the mission movement, and encourages the formation of alliances to promote Native American mission models that are empowering and liberating.

DISSERTATION APPROVAL SHEET


This dissertation, entitled  
“The Harmony Way:” Integrating Indigenous Values  
within Native North American Theology and Mission

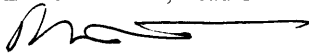
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and submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy in Intercultural Studies  
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April 12, 2010

“The Harmony Way:” Integrating Indigenous Values  
within Native North American Theology and Mission

A Dissertation

Presented to the Faculty of  
Asbury Theological Seminary  
Wilmore, Kentucky

In Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree  
Doctor of Philosophy in Intercultural Studies

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April 12, 2010

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## **DEDICATION**

This project is dedicated to every indigenous person in the world, past and present, who has encountered Christianity in a colonial form. May our future change for the better. May Jesus be indigenous to us all.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Thanks to Darrell Whiteman and the faculty of the E. Stanley Jones School of World Mission at Asbury Seminary for the invitation to study, for their hospitality and for the patience to endure me. Special thanks to my committee: my mentor Michael A. Rynkiewich for his dedication to tough scholarship and justice; to Eunice Irwin for her gracious hospitality and her many unsettling questions; to Russell West for his keen savvy and his confidence in my work. Thanks to my wife Edith for her encouragement from start to finish and to my children Leanna, Skye, Young and Redbird for their patience and grace. Thanks to my Native American class colleagues: Terry LeBlanc, Ray Aldred and Richard Twiss, without whom this effort would have been impossible. Thanks to Jesus Christ—a real indigene.

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION: THE PROBLEM AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

I struggled personally whether this project should have been attempted or even written down. Granted, this statement is an awkward point from which to begin a doctoral dissertation. Native scholar William Baldrige warns, “When Indians theologize they must place one foot into the Euro-American culture; and if they are not careful they will soon have both feet outside their own culture” (1989, 228). The dilemma comes from attempting to offer a perspective that represents my own personal postcolonial<sup>1</sup> critique while utilizing the structure and framework of colonial mechanisms and structure. In addition, the project relates to Christian mission, which, as Chapter 2 demonstrates, has almost always been the bane of North American indigenous communities.<sup>2</sup> This academic project provided me a great deal of cultural conflict.

This research is particularly about Native American values. Personal experience dictates that among the values of traditional indigenous people is a conviction that life should be *lived* communally and *reflected upon* for the most part, in private. By taking

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<sup>1</sup> R. S. Sugirtharajah in his book *Postcolonial Reconfigurations* (2003) points out the necessity of postcolonial expressions in exposing the link between idea and power and their relationship to Western theories and learning. What I mean by postcolonialism in this context is to expose the colonial thinking in the fabric of Native American mission as it relates to Western thinking, pedagogy, and actions.

<sup>2</sup> The faults of the Western missionary project are well established. It is not my intention to make a treatise against colonial forms of mission here, but merely to show its relevance to Native Americans. Given my statement, I offer one simple definition of colonial missions: “It is a process in which the ‘savages’ of colonialism are ushered, by earnest Protestant evangelists, into the revelation of their own misery, are promised salvation through self-discovery and civilization, and are drawn into a conversation with modern capitalism—only to find themselves enmeshed, willingly or not, in its order of signs and values, interests and passions, wants and needs” (Comaroff and Comaroff 1991: xii).



the Western pedagogical path of embarking on this dissertation, I have already turned aside from some of those traditional Native American values. Discovery, for Indian people, is made in the whole of living life, not through creating extrinsic categories foreign to our cultures from which to ponder and expound. However, this process is common in Western research, which places primary importance upon the written word. Nevertheless, story can also be a very powerful medium.

Native Americans tend to value oral cultural practices over the written word. We have an indigenous belief that words have inherent power and especially that they should not be used to deceive others. As is often the case among indigenous peoples, when words are put into written form, many believe those words lack power because they are without context and taken from outside the vision and *heart* of the speaker. Ronald Niezen in his book *Spirit Wars* states,

There is a tension between written forms of experience and the persistence of oral and nonverbal expression in contemporary Native spirituality. If the spoken word is fraught with unpredictable power, writing can be seen as an even greater source of spiritual compromise. (2000, 208)

Native American values teach that each moment is sacred and organic, and recording those sacred moments outside the sacred space from which they took place could be viewed as presumptuous. Indian people tend to take life as it comes, giving each moment its due as it occurs. This project concerns Native American values that are ancient and still very deeply rooted among Native Americans. Regretfully, I must transgress my own Indian cultural values in order to transcend toward examining some of modernity's negative influences upon Native American people. Perhaps my transgression may eventually be forgiven by those who take offense if my efforts can inform others and help to create a better missiology in the future of America's indigenes—my people.

Given the devastating history between Christian mission and Native Americans, I pose the question of how Christians can attempt to formulate culturally contextual models of mission among America's First Nations without repeating the mistakes of the past. In the past, attempts to contextualize missions culturally among American Indians have been hotly contested, especially by Native American Christians who have absorbed Western values.<sup>3</sup> Because of its controversial nature, and for other reasons, deeply cultural contextual mission among Native North Americans remains largely ignored by most Western mission agencies and denominations.

Like many people, Native Americans believe that *happiness* and *well-being* are worthwhile goals. Based upon data presented later in this document, the current state of well-being among Native American people is dire and the need for better models is critical. In order for better mission models to develop, such models should be based upon Native North American values and not upon the values of the dominant Western society.

Taken as a whole, no standard mission practice among Native North Americans is capable of producing an enduring sense of happiness or well-being. Two hundred years ago, *Tenskwatawa*, brother to famous Shawnee Indian chief *Tecumseh* and referred to as "The Prophet," referenced a sense of happiness or well-being among Native Americans that was in rapid decline.

In order for Native American people to find a restored sense of well-being, we may need to recover our declining values. Additionally, we need deep and direct engagement, not through Western culture but between Native American culture and the Scriptures. Through such engagement an overarching theme could surface as a means for

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<sup>3</sup> Materials have been produced that are highly critical of contextualization efforts among Native Americans (e.g., Craig Smith, *Boundary Lines*, CHIEF Ministries Web site). The critics represent a very conservative evangelical ideological perspective.

producing holistic culturally sensitive contextual community-based mission models that are rooted in indigenous values and that produce a sense of well-being.

In my twenty-three years of ministry among dozens of Native American nations, I have been exposed to the phenomenon of Native concepts of happiness or well-being.<sup>4</sup> Most often I have interpreted these concepts through the lens of “harmony” or “balance” in life, because that is a Cherokee perspective. When I began this project, I suspected that there might be a set of indigenous values associated with these concepts of well-being that is shared more broadly among Native Americans. I also wondered if this way of living and being in harmony might contribute, along with a biblical understanding of values, to a theological foundation for mission. Furthermore, I speculated that from these values a broad-based contextual model of mission might be developed among Native North Americans.

I then set out to explore the possibility that the core values of most Native North Americans might be centered in indigenous concepts of well-being. For this exploration to occur, I needed to identify the core indigenous values of various tribes found within their own well-being concepts and then attempt to determine whether or not the core indigenous values could be synthesized easily into one broad concept. I needed to discover whether or not these concepts were more similar or dissimilar to one another before I could attempt to link them to a broad scriptural/theological theme.

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<sup>4</sup> I am a legal descendent of the United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians of Oklahoma. I have been exposed to the teachings of all the federally recognized Cherokee tribes and many of those not recognized. In addition, I have varying degrees of familiarity with the following tribal peoples: Kiowa, Comanche, various Apache tribes, Wichita, Delaware, Southern Cheyenne, Arapaho, Eastern Shoshone, Choctaw, Creek, Seminole, Shawnee, Ojibway, Crow, Hopi, Navajo, Lakota, Dakota, Washoe, Paiute, Western Shoshone, Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde, Inuit, Yupik and Aleut. In addition, I have spent meaningful time learning from other indigenes including Hawaiians, Maori, Samoans, Australian Aborigines, and Saami.

As evidenced by his speech, *Tenskwatawa* was searching for something similar. He was trying to find a way for the host people of America to recover our naturally endowed values while confronting acculturation in the form of American modernity. The same problem identified by *Tenskwatawa* in his day applies to present-day indigenous communities. Many people seem to be lost somewhere between our ancient traditions and modernity—unable to find just the right instruments needed to navigate successfully the waters existing between both worlds. I hope my research can add to those who have gone before me by finding new possibilities to old questions.

### **Narrative**

These words of the Shawnee leader *Tenskwatawa* were recorded in 1805. They bear directly on the discussion concerning Native Americans values today:

Our Creator put us on this wide, rich land, and told us we were free to go where the game was, where the soil was good for planting. That was our state of true happiness. We did not have to beg for anything. Our Creator had taught us how to find and make everything we needed, from trees and plants and animals and stone. We lived in bark, and we wore only the skins of animals. Our Creator taught us how to use fire, in living, and in sacred ceremonies. He taught us how to heal with barks and roots, and how to make sweet foods with berries and fruits, with papaws and the water of the maple tree. Our Creator gave us tobacco, and said, "Send your prayers up to me on its fragrant smoke." Our Creator taught us how to enjoy loving our mates, and gave us laws to live by, so that we would not bother each other, but help each other. Our Creator sang to us in the wind and the running water, in the bird songs, in children's laughter, and taught us music. And we listened, and our stomachs were never dirty and never troubled us.

Thus were we created. Thus we lived for a long time, proud and happy. We had never eaten pig meat, nor tasted the poison called whiskey, nor worn wool from sheep, nor struck fire or dug earth with steel, nor cooked in iron, nor hunted and fought with loud guns, nor ever had diseases which soured our blood or rotted our organs. We were pure, so we were strong and happy.

But, beyond the Great Sunrise Water, there lived a people who had iron, and those dirty and unnatural things, who seethed with diseases, who fought to death over the names of their gods! They had so crowded and befouled their own island that they fled from it, because excrement and carrion were up to their knees. They came to our island. Our Singers had warned us that a pale people would come

across the Great Water and try to destroy us, but we forgot. We did not know they were evil, so we welcomed them and fed them. We taught them much of what Our Grandmother had taught us, how to hunt, grow corn and tobacco, and find good things in the forest. They saw how much room we had, and wanted it. They brought iron and pigs and wool and rum and disease. They came farther and drove us over the mountains. Then when they had filled up and dirtied our old lands by the sea, they looked over the mountains and saw this Middle Ground, and we are old enough to remember when they started rushing into it. We remember our villages on fire every year and the crops slashed every fall and the children hungry every winter. All this you know.

For many years we traded furs to the English or the French, for wool blankets and guns and iron things, for steel awls and needles and axes, for mirrors, for pretty things made of beads and silver, and for liquor. This was foolish, but we did not know it. We shut our ears to the Great Good Spirit. We did not want to hear that we were being foolish.

But now those things of the white men have corrupted us, and made us weak and needful. Our men forgot how to hunt without noisy guns. Our women don't want to make fire without steel, or cook without iron, or sew without metal awls and needles, or fish without steel hooks. Some look in those mirrors all the time, and no longer teach their daughters to make leather or render bear oil. We learned to need the white men's goods, and so now a People who never had to beg for anything must beg for everything!

Some of our women married white men, and made half-breeds. Many of us now crave liquor. He whose filthy name I will not speak, he who was I before, was one of the worst of those drunkards. There are drunkards in almost every family. You know how bad this is.

And so you see what has happened to us. We were fools to take all these things that weakened us. We did not need them then, but we believe we need them now. We turned our backs on the old ways. Instead of thanking Weshemoneto for all we used to have, we turned to the white men and asked them for more. So now we depend upon the very people who destroy us! This is our weakness! Our corruption! Our Creator scolded me, "If you had lived the way I taught you, the white men could never have got you under their foot!"

*(Tenskwatawa)*

*Tenskwatawa's* observations are as poignant today as they were over two centuries ago.

He notes that Indian people were given our land by the Creator prior to European contact.

He acknowledges that we were happy and self-sustaining, free and spiritual people. The

Prophet views white people as being diseased, dirty, in religious turmoil, evil, covetous,

and polluting. Similar testimony by other past and present Native American leaders is

easily found, but perhaps none give as much detail as *Tenskwatawa*. His view is clear:

Native peoples have lost something that once held us together, and we will continue our deficit until we reclaim our lost values.

I chose *Tenskwatawa* as a starting point for this research for several other reasons, as well. He and his brother, *Tecumseh*, were leaders in an intertribal movement that, if successful, might have changed the terms of how power was negotiated in the early Western frontier. *Tecumseh* and *Tenskwatawa* tried to unite all the Indian nations they could influence in order to withhold the advancement of the Americans to a place east of the Appalachian Mountains. Indeed, Indian history and culture might have taken a very different route if these insightful leaders had been able to form a more successful alliance of the Eastern and Southern tribes.

Another reason that I begin with *Tenskwatawa* is that he personally recovered from being a victim of colonialism's vices. In *Tenskwatawa's* early years he became addicted to alcohol. Like so many of our Indian people in our time, he had to reach his lowest point in life in order to see a way back up to the path that his Creator intended for him to live. Experiencing his near destruction from the vices accompanying the colonial oppressors gave him a unique vantage point. His perspective is not so much as a victim but as one who was empowered to lead others because of his former unfortunate circumstances.

At first glance, a reader from the dominant culture may be tempted to view *Tenskwatawa's* observations as simplistic and even ethnocentric. They are not. He is not simply saying, "Indian always equals good, white always equals bad"; rather, he speaks from his personal experiences and observations. He specifically shares what was very good about Native American life and what he sees is wrong with white society, at least

from how they have affected Native Americans. Furthermore, *Tenskwatawa* is also critical of the situation among Native Americans in his own time.

Readers can gain some understanding of how far those Native Americans in *Tenskwatawa's* time had drifted by observing his standard of happiness. *Tenskwatawa* does not hesitate to place the blame upon his own people for allowing these negative values and practices to creep into the everyday life of the Indian. He calls his own people “foolish” and “weak,” while reporting the bad news that the Creator also holds them to be responsible. Through *Tenskwatawa's* eyes, readers are able to get an idea of how disruptive the values of white society really were upon Indian societies at a crucial time of modernity's influence on large numbers of Native Americans.

Finally, *Tenskwatawa* sets forth a vision. He envisions the path that they (and Native Americans today) must find again in order to be whole. That path, I argue, is deeply rooted in Native North American values, which have always been considerably different than many of the values of the dominant Euro-Americans. That path of well-being is what I refer to in this dissertation as “The Harmony Way.”

“The Harmony Way,” I will argue, is a way of living that undergirds all of Native American history, religion, traditions, ceremonies, story, social interaction, and philosophy. It is a particular worldview that encompasses both being and doing life according to a set of values that are symbiotic and that construct a meaningful whole. Jerry Gill (2002) understands harmony and balance as two related concepts, but I have found no significant distinguishing characteristics in my own research and understanding:

The two basic concepts that underlie nearly every Native American worldview are harmony and balance. It is the responsibility of the entire community to see to it that a proper harmony is maintained among the various aspects of the complex processes by which the world is woven together.... The order and dynamic of

reality are continuously renewed through harmonious participation in these patterns and processes. The success of an individual results from the quality of his or her desire and ability to maintain a proper balance on the path of life... The main resources available in this endeavor, in addition to parental guidance and example, are traditional beliefs and teachings. When a person fails to achieve or maintain this desired balance, straying or falling from the prescribed path, he or she is said to have become "sick." (141-42)

Understanding the loss of harmony as sickness seems to parallel both Tenskwatawa's concerns and my own. Like Tenskwatawa, I, too, am looking to traditional values for a Native American concept or a way of living and being in harmony and balance. Such a concept can help Native Americans make sense of the ubiquitous culture of colonization in which American Indian people now reside. My research has led me to believe that at least part of the answer to this question lies in Native American people rediscovering "The Harmony Way" concept that contains so many core values.

### **Presuppositions and Perspective**

To be candid I must first declare that I am writing from a perspective that intentionally reveals my own bias. I write as an indigene having been involved in mission among a variety of indigenous people groups for more than two decades and as one who has struggled personally through the decolonization process. During some of these years, I held colonized perspectives and used shameful means of ministry that I have since abandoned. I only hope that over the years I have gained a greater viewpoint and a more sensitive humanity.

I also write as a member of the academic community, particularly one that seeks understanding about mission in cultural context (e.g., Bevans and Schroeder 2004). My status as a legal descendent of the United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians in Oklahoma, my own experiences as a missionary, and the shared experiences of other



missional colleagues who have been in mission among Native Americans during this same time provide me with a unique opportunity to tell the story of mission to Indians in light of the indigenous struggle against the influences of colonialism. When I bring the discussion into the academy, I fall under suspicion from traditional Native Americans and from those influenced by colonial mission practices; therefore, I begin this discussion with a disclosure of my thinking.

The dilemma of my position as a Native American presents a problem in the minds of most indigenes. Namely, after centuries of betrayal from within our own communities, they rightfully question where my loyalties lie. For this reason, I have avoided such terms as *they* and *their* when referring to First Nations. Those terms are a reminder of a presumed objective style that is all too familiar to indigenous people. Not only does the third person style feel unnatural to me, it invites unnecessary suspicion from the Native community that is one of the audiences for whom I write. Therefore, to be academically honest when referring to Native Americans and to be inclusive of myself, I am using terms such as *we* and *our*.

Using language identifying myself with other Native North Americans will hopefully embolden me to serve as an example of the principles of which I write. My identification with my fellow indigenes presents me as an active participant in the problem and as one who is trying to suggest how we might, as indigenes, participate in the solution (van Willigen 1993).

My critique of the colonial dilemma acknowledges the fault laid at the feet of the dominant colonial powers. I admit that I am critiquing from the inside—from those who have been colonized. I have chosen sides. Even so, I do not seek redress in this project. I

am not asking questions about where to place the blame for our demise as sovereign nations. I am stating an unfortunate fact of history. Instead, I seek answers to questions framed in broader categories, such as, how to find our own way back to vital renewal based on our past values and, if we can forge a decolonized indigenous form of Christian mission during this period of history.

My intention is neither to blame nor excuse the victim.<sup>5</sup> As an oppressed minority, we understand well the fact that we have been victimized through colonization and continue to be victimized through a neocolonial system, but we are not without agency. By finding our own solutions to our own problems, we do not remain helpless victims merely to be assimilated into the values of the dominant society. The American and Canadian colonial national constructions have molded us into a deep and unhealthy dependency through offering *their* solutions to *our* problems. These presumed solutions have taken the form of organization and reorganization of tribal governments, ethnic status categories, government grants, health service, welfare, and education, just to name a few. This dependency by design has stripped us of our dignity, and the consequences of this dependent system are catastrophic. However, all is not lost. As people with strength rooted in what may now just be the residue of traditional values, we still have our agency and we can still work to change our own future. Though we are suffering, we are not people who are powerless. Though such a fight will be difficult, the indomitable indigenous Indian spirit that has fought five hundred years of probable extinction will continue to guide us to find solutions to our own problems.

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<sup>5</sup> Several decades ago the social sciences focused on the dilemma of the victim. While much truth can be found in understanding the victim, this critique left a gap in the ability of the victim to find power or agency to resist victimization. Social scientists have now moved beyond victimization to seeing people as agents of change in their own right.

Consequently, I acknowledge that I write from a place of pain, not just as a human being but also as an indigenous person who, at least partially, identifies himself in relation to a reality based upon colonization. I, like many of my indigenous sojourners, am active in the process of decolonization in my own life. In this process I am reminded of the words of Albert Memmi:

The decolonized find fault in everyone but themselves: It is the fault of history, or of whites, but as long as the decolonized do not free themselves from such evasions they will be unable to correctly analyze their conditions and act accordingly. (1991, 19)

These “evasions” are interpreted by Memmi to mean exaggerated pain. While one is hardly able to exaggerate the pain in Native America, Memmi is correct in the sense that pain is freeing when it serves as a catalyst either to the colonized or the colonizers. When colonizers are confronted rightly with their egregious inhumanity, the pain is shared and doubled. In an instant, this pain naturally transforms itself into guilt. Both the pain of the colonized and the guilt of the colonizers can easily become retreats of inaction. I hope that by acknowledging my own pain, I am not retreating but taking a step towards right action.

Educators Myles Horton and Paulo Freire participated in a book where their dialogue was recorded. Freire addresses the posture of the effective educator by stating that “conflicts are the mid-wife of consciousness” (Bell, Gaventa, and Peters 1990, 187). Without the struggle against colonialism, I might take for granted that sense of identity for which I now find myself searching, so, like strange bedfellows, I find myself owing a debt to colonialism. This elusive identity, part premodern, part modern and part postmodern, is a loss that is ever present and profound in myself and among other

indigenes. When speaking of Native American identity, the reality of internal conflict is presupposed.

Freire and Horton's thesis concerning neutrality in education (or in any subject) is that teachers must not only know what they stand for, but they must also know what they stand against. The two educators agree that the pretense of neutrality hides choice. Their opinion is that dialectic is not for the purpose of forcing an opinion on anyone but clarifies the ideas and roles of the teacher and student. Because being for and against something is not abstract or theoretical, action may easily follow. In the case of Native North Americans, action is desperately required. To be neutral in the case of our own decolonization is to agree with the status quo and leave our future in the colonizers' hands. Following the status quo eventually will result in our cultural extinction.

I have pursued this subject matter primarily because I want a better place for the future for my wife, my children, my family, and my extended family—my indigenous people and even the non-indigene, for it is our indigenous view that we are all related. For any people to survive, they must have hope. For our discovery to be meaningful, we must journey back to the past and provide a way to live in a better future. Our hope rests in the ways that have shaped our identity. Using the biblical narrative of Abraham and the Canaanites, Norman C. Habel contends that the host people of the land have an inherent right to “own, share, sell, and negotiate the use of the land in the host country” (1995, 132). He explains further:

The immigrant ideology of the Abraham narratives has a totally different perspective on land entitlement in relation to the Canaanites. The locus of political power lies with the Canaanite people who share their land with the immigrant family of Abraham. They are the host peoples, and Canaan is the host country. In none of Abraham's dealings with these people is their right to possess the land in question. Nor are they, as a totally, regularly depicted as enemies or

unbelievers who deserve to be expunged from the land. Abraham even tries to rescue the sinful Sodomites and pays a tithe to the priest-king of Salem. Abraham respects the Canaanites, their culture, their god, and their territories. Where land is in dispute he negotiates peaceful settlements. When the land is attacked, he fights for the people of the land. When he needs a burial site for Sarah, he buys land in accordance with the local laws of land purchase. Abraham is a peaceful immigrant who willingly recognizes the entitlements of the peoples of the host country. Even the promise to Abraham about future possession of the land focuses on Abraham mediating blessings to other families of the land, rather than on the annihilation of his hosts. In these narratives the peoples of the land are blessed through contact with Abraham. Melchizedek, in turn, calls down the blessing of *El Elyon*, the god of Salem, upon Abraham. Thus Abraham, the head of the first ancestral household and family, becomes a model of responsible power in peaceful negotiations and legal acquisitions of land (1995, 132-133)

In Habel's view, the Abraham narrative shows that the true authority of the land, without question, rests within the hands of the Host People of the land. The Apostle Paul affirms the sovereignty of original host nation status by stating that, concerning all nations, God "determined their boundaries" (Acts 17:26, NLT). Abraham was simply respecting the national boundaries of the Canaanites.

Native Americans are the original or host people of the land we call "Turtle Island." We have lived on the land for dozens of millennia prior to the advent of the Europeans' arrival. We have adapted to many changes, including climactic change, wars, and attempted genocide. We will adapt to the present crisis of American and Canadian colonialism, modernity, and postmodernity. We will survive these challenges without being assimilated by them, and we will thrive once again. Perhaps my project can, in some small way, lead us back to a better future.

### **Statement of the Problem**

I am making the claim that no current American model of mission, known to me, is using primarily Native North American values in mission among Native Americans.

Given that Western models of mission have failed among Native Americans and that colonial practices have devastated Native communities, we have to ask whether or not we can find a better way of pursuing Christian mission among Native Americans.

Specifically, we need a generally shared Native American concept or a set of Native American values that could guide the construction of various models for mission in Native American communities.

The framework for the research must first be set by looking at several foundational issues. First, we must consider what resources (particularly a concept or values) are available within the Native American communities themselves for developing appropriate models of mission. Then we must determine to what degree this concept or these values are shared among Native American communities. Such resources might be developed into authentic, integral mission models. Finally, we can seek the establishment of a context for the development of new mission models based on Native American values or a shared concept among the appropriate tribes.

### **Finding Native American Contexts for Mission**

In considering the responsibilities of this engagement, I suspected that common themes could surface as a means for producing holistic, culturally contextual, community based models of ministry that are founded on indigenous values. As mentioned, in the past I have been exposed to the phenomenon of Native concepts of harmony. As I went deeper into my research, memories of stories and experiences continually flooded my mind and were brought into focus. I suspected the presence of common indigenous values found within these concepts of harmony.

I also wondered if my findings would be credible in both Native American and missiological communities. In other words, I sought to find whether or not this way of living and being in harmony and balance could contribute to a biblical and theological foundation for mission while still being consistent with core indigenous values. Furthermore, I speculated that a broad-based contextual model of mission that would be appropriate among at least some Native North American communities might be developed.

In my reading I explored and confirmed the possibility that Native North American core values may be found in indigenous concepts of harmony. I attempted to identify the core indigenous values of prior models and then tried to determine whether or not these indigenous values could be synthesized into one broad harmony concept. As for the missiological significance, my research points to the possibilities that new more effective indigenous mission models may be formed, but others will be left to discover exactly how new mission models among indigenous North Americans will be constructed.

I have chosen the English term “The Harmony Way” as a useful category for referencing the many different phrases and names associated with indigenous concepts of living and being in harmony/balance. Each tribe seems to have a word, several words, or a phrase endemic to their own understanding of “The Harmony Way,” but within the concept is found a holistic approach to life using core Native American values.

Among my own *Keetoowah* people, *Eloheh* (ay-luh-hay) is a Cherokee word describing the concept that I am trying to understand on a broader level. Although *Eloheh* is a concept that is expressed less and less these days, as a Cherokee, I have some

familiarity with the use of *Eloheh* and the corresponding values associated with the concept. In this research process, I was able to discover more about *Eloheh* and its possible connection to similar concepts used by other Native North Americans, which will be shared later in this paper. This study explores the possibility that a restoration of “The Harmony Way” might be a source of healing for indigenous peoples and might even be a concept that would provide hope for Euro-Americans who lead a fractured life (Talakai 2007).

### **Research Strategy**

This research had four general sources of data. These included (1) books and other documents relevant to the study, (2) interviews conducted with Native American elders/spiritual leaders, (3) a survey of Native Americans conducted over the Internet, and (4) my own recollections of conversations and observations while living in various Indian communities.

First, I conducted a literature review of values and well-being concepts among Native North American communities and persons. Upon my findings of the well-being/value literature, I found some works defining and developing these concepts, especially in the mental health, education, and anthropological realms. The field of missiology had a stark absence of material. For this reason I chose to interview those elders/spiritual leaders who have lived a traditional life in their communities but were also very familiar with the work of Christian mission.

I conducted eight interviews from current spiritual leaders/elders from various North American indigenous nations. The purpose of the interviews was to verify the historic evidence for Harmony Way concepts among a variety of Native North American



peoples. I also wanted to discover more about these concepts and discover the values associated with them and how they are used in speech and practice. Our elders and spiritual leaders are the most reliable repository for this type of information. These interviews were videotaped and then reviewed in search of common threads and differences among their statements. This process allowed certain categories to emerge that added to the literature review.

The interviews involved meeting with some individuals at several Native gatherings and with some in their homes on their respective reservations. The interviewees represented various geographic regions of North American Native communities. All of the interviewees were people respected in their own communities and several of the interviewees would be considered national figures or experts, although this type category does not really exist in the minds of most Native Americans.<sup>6</sup> The closest one gets to being an expert in the North American Native community is a respected elder and/or spiritual leader. All persons interviewed would fit in one or both of these categories.

During the same phase of research, I also conducted an online survey from among self-identified Native North Americans. The survey was sent as a link in an e-mail I sent to several Native American *Listserve*s with the encouragement to pass it along to other Native Americans. I was able to obtain one hundred anonymous surveys although some were only partially completed. From the survey I was able to gather a large quantity of data, including whether or not individuals were familiar with their own tribe's concept of harmony and/or concepts of harmony in other tribes, names of these concepts, what

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<sup>6</sup> An adage often heard in Native American communities is that anyone who claims to be an expert or spiritual leader is not.

values they associate with the conception of their own tribes and how they associated the concept with other tribes, how important they felt the concept is to themselves personally, their tribe, and to other tribes, and further comments on the subject.

Finally, I compiled and compared the readings, the interviews, and the surveys to form my research conclusions. The majority of effort in my initial research was spent trying to determine the possibility of values common to Native Americans. I obtained this data from the literature review. Using the values that emerged from the literature as a base, I was able to construct the survey to obtain a view of popular values and compare them with those from the literature research I had done. During this time I had also begun the interviews and continued researching existing literature. I did not need to have a list of values prior to the interviews because they were conducted without any mention of values and only with the mention of the harmony concept in order to see if they had a similar concept.

Finally, after I compared the values associated with the harmony concept in the literature and in the surveys, I was able to compare those values with the values mentioned in the interviews. I believe I can state that my supposition was correct, namely, that a set of core Native American values can be expressed within the Native American concepts of harmony and that the concepts are more similar in nature than dissimilar.

In order to make the missiological connection, I sought out a biblical framework as a basis for mission models. The obvious parallel concept to “The Harmony Way” is *shalom*. I then proceeded to read *shalom* literature and compare the characteristics of biblical *shalom* with the indigenous concept of harmony, which is demonstrated in

Chapter 5. Again, I found that my hunch was correct and that both *shalom* and harmony concepts were adequate in capturing much of the diversity found among many Native American communities. I believe this connection will shed much light on the ways in which future mission models may be developed among Native Americans.

Finally, I reviewed, evaluated, and integrated various perspectives, including indigenous scholars on the literature concerning indigenization and decolonization. I also researched indigenous methodology and historiography in an effort to try to avoid past traps when writing scholarly material about Native Americans.

### **Delimitations**

Native American cultures are numerous and no single approach will fit all of them. Keeping this fact in mind, they still have much commonality among them.

### **Defining Core Native North American Values**

The list of indigenous values presented here is not exhaustive for Native North American values. Many capable people in various fields have compiled lists of indigenous values. Most lists use other value sets although some commonality exists among many of the lists. I focused my list on the Native North American values, particularly reflecting a contrasting worldview from the dominant society, and compiled a list with the broadest possible view. My final list represents both the Native and non-Native research, drawing from several disciplines including education, mental health, and anthropology.

## **The Geopolitical Limitations of the United States and Canada**

I limited my study primarily to the United States and not Canada because more Native American cultures are in the United States than this project could encompass, let alone Canada. Although I have worked among Canadian First Nations, my understanding of their history is superficial. Someone who has a better grasp of Canadian history and the current situations could apply my work specifically to the Canadian indigenes in order for my findings to apply more authentically to aboriginal Canadians.

### **Definition of Key Terms**

This research offers several key terms with which the reader should be familiar. These include the following.

#### **Native North American and Its Synonyms**

Many names are associated with the indigenous inhabitants of North America. For the purposes of this paper, I intend these names to reflect the original inhabitants of what is now called the United States of America and Canada. Depending upon one's source, any one of these names could be considered either a poor choice or a better choice. I take the broad path. Any of the following terms will reference the original inhabitants of the aforementioned geographic location. These may include Native American, Native North American, Aboriginal American, American Indian, American Indigene, Indigenous American, Indian, Native, America's Host People, and any combination of those mentioned. One author I quote uses the Mohawk term *Onkwehonwe* to mean the real and original people (Alfred 2005).

## Well-Being Concepts

Well-being concepts are known globally and can be very broadly interpreted. The concept of “well-being” and its synonyms include, for the purposes of this project, those that fit within “The Harmony Way” parameters and within the Biblical concept of *shalom*.

Generally, in academic circles, this concept is used to represent people’s physical and/or mental health. In the case of Native Americans for this project, “well-being” implies a particular concept, from a particular worldview, that goes far beyond physical or mental health. The concept is deeply integrated and cannot be separated into physical, mental and/or spiritual categories. In a Native worldview everything is spiritual and maintaining this harmony is an exercise of the concept of well-being. This definition may include anything from a personal act of worship, such as burning sage, or a corporate ceremony such as the Sun Dance. It could also include personal reflection by a river, taking an herb drink for a disease, or teaching one’s child to weave a basket.

In trying to describe this concept from a Western worldview, I reference several phenomonologists. Joachim Wach comes close to describing this indigenous concept from a Western worldview:

[W]e must now consider the development of a special set of ideas which link the various phenomena. I refer to the idea of a cosmic order. The well-organized comprehensive system of mythology which we find among many “primitive peoples” usually includes already a normative element which transcends the purely speculative realm. The great idea of a universal, cosmic, moral, and ritual order, to which we shall henceforth refer frequently, imposes a binding obligation on those who acknowledge it. Rules of conduct and morals, though they may appear incoherent to the systematic modern mind, are the expressions of an urge to “realize” the divine order, to adapt reality to it, and thereby to secure the functioning of an order upon which depends the existence and well-being of mankind or of a particular group of [humans]. (1970, 49)

All of what Wach describes and more can be expressed in American indigenous concepts of well-being. Native American concepts of well-being seem to include a view of the land, the people, all animal and plant life, in fact, every part of God's creation, to reflect a sense that all things are related to one another and should be held in balance or harmony with one another, not unlike the Hebrew worldview and concept that is referred to as *shalom*.

In the biblical account of creation, God calls everything he created "good." God has an obvious relationship between himself and humanity, the animals, birds, plants, waters, and so on, and it is all considered "good" by God. To continue this thread into the New Testament writings, the earth was considered at least good for instructive purposes by the Apostle Paul in the book of Romans chapter one. Likewise, Jesus considered creation "good," (actually "sacred") when he walked the earth on two legs. "But I tell you, do not swear at all: either by heaven, for it is God's throne; or by the earth, for it is his footstool" (Matt. 5:34-35a, NIV).

The North American indigenous view and the Hebraic worldview, as represented in the Bible, find agreement that creation is good, instructive and sacred. To the indigenous peoples of North America, our land and all it contains, is *the Holy Land*. The land is sacred (holy) because it was given to us in a trust relationship by the Creator. With the advent of the Euro-American people, our land and our world have become profaned. The sacred circle or sacred hoop as some call it, has been broken.

The Christ of past mission models, as presented to our people, has not been able to mend the hoop. The gospel, as it has most often been preached to Native Americans, does not promise a restored balance, or harmony. Actually, too often, what it has offered

us is quite to the contrary. If Native Americans succumb to the modernistic gospel demands as presented by our missionary friends, then we will actually become circle breakers, not circle keepers. For this reason new models for mission, based on Native American values, must be developed.

From on my own experience among the Cherokee (my own tribe), the concept of well-being is represented best in the word *Eloheh*. The English equivalent of *Eloheh* is invariably considered to be “The Harmony Way,” but the actual translation is a very sacred word *eloh’*, with the added *eh* at the end of the word making it a place. *Eloh’* is used to refer to Cherokee religion but it is a much broader concept including our land, history, law, and culture (Weaver 1997, Preface). To an agrarian society, this concept invokes images of peace, stability, life, growth, and a place where all the needs of a people are met. Dangers such as war, pestilence, drought, and attacks from wild beast are absent. This concept resembles the images that the Older Testament prophets paint with the *shalom* concept.

And I will make a covenant of peace [*shalom*] with them and eliminate harmful beasts from the land, so that they may live securely in the wilderness and sleep in the woods. And I will make them and the places around My hill a blessing. And I will cause showers to come down in their season; they will be showers of blessing. Also the tree of the field will yield its fruit, and the earth will yield its increase, and they will be secure on their land. Then they will know that I am the LORD, when I have broken the bars of their yoke and have delivered them from the hand of those who enslaved them. And they will no longer be a prey to the nations, and the beasts of the earth will not devour them; but they will live securely, and no one will make them afraid. And I will establish for them a renowned planting place, and they will not again be victims of famine in the land, and they will not endure the insults of the nations anymore. (Ezek. 34:25-29 NASB)

To the Christian these concepts should conjure up images of the Garden of Eden, a place where everything was the way it was intended to be by the Creator. In this sense the Cherokee word *Eloheh* is used.

In Cherokee, “The Harmony Way” is also said to be a way of *duyukta*, which means *justice* or *righteousness*. Sometimes it is just referred to as the Way. In the Eastern Cherokee concept *duyukta* tends to be the verb and *Eloheh* the noun. In other words, wherever *duyukta* is lived out, it is considered a place of *Eloheh*. Among the Oklahoma Cherokee, *Eloheh* is more likely to be used as both a way of life and a place. The concept is described by an Eastern Cherokee elder:

The Cherokee believe that stories, along with ceremonies, arts and crafts, and other traditions, help the individual and the culture to “stay in balance.” The Cherokee attribute their survival as a people, a unique culture, to their closeness to the land and their adherence to *Duykta*. *Duykta* is a moral code that might be roughly translated as “the right way,” “the right path,” or “the path of being in balance....” It is the traditional Cherokee way of living: placing importance on the good of the whole more than the individual; having freedom but taking responsibility for yourself; staying close to the earth and all our relations. And how does one do this? By taking time to dream; by understanding our nature and our needs and taking care of them; by doing ceremonies that keep us in balance like going to water and using the sweat lodge; by listening and praying; by recognizing our dark and light sides; by having the support of the family, extended family, clan and tribe. The medicine people say it requires understanding ourselves and our place in the world around us. (Duncan 1998, 25)

From my experience, other tribes also use the harmony concept as their foundation for living. Some speak of a way of balance; some refer to the concept as “the beauty way;” and, others may talk of a “good way” or “good road” or “a good path.” Others speak of “the blessing way.” The majority of Native American people tend to recognize the concept in their own tribes and in other tribes.



## Contextualization

In the simplest of terms, contextualization of the Christian good news to another culture may be thought of as beginning with the Trinity. The divine community created a place or *context* (John 1:3) for human beings in which to live and then sent one to become human himself (John 1:14) in order to make an authentic invitation that allows humans to participate in the divine community. Jesus' Incarnation is the prime example of contextualization because he came from the outside but stayed to learn the language, learn the culture, develop social relationships, identify with the oppressed, and suffer the consequences.

Various other examples in the Bible show that “the concern of contextualization is ancient—going back to the early church as it struggled to break loose from its Jewish cultural trappings and enter the Greco-Roman world of the Gentiles” (Whiteman 1997, 2; see Flemming 2005). Whiteman identifies three distinct functions that thoughtful contextualization should achieve in the process of communicating the gospel into local contexts.

1. Contextualization attempts to communicate the Gospel in word and deed and to establish the church in ways that makes sense to people within their local cultural context, presenting Christianity in such a way that it meets people's deepest needs and penetrates their worldview, thus allowing them to follow Christ and remain within their own culture.
2. Another function of contextualization in mission is to offend—but only for the right reasons, not the wrong ones. Good contextualization offends people for the right reasons. Unfortunately, when Christianity is not contextualized or is contextualized poorly, then people are culturally offended, turned off to inquiring more about who Jesus is, or view missionaries and their small band of converts with suspicion as cultural misfits and aliens. When people are offended for the wrong reason, the garment of Christianity gets stamped with the label “Made in America and Proud of It.”
3. Contextualization in mission is to develop contextualized expressions of the Gospel so that the Gospel itself will be understood in ways the universal

church has neither experienced nor understood before, thus expanding our understanding of the kingdom of God. (Whiteman 1997, 2-4)

Whiteman's definition of contextualization encompasses most of what I mean except for the deeply theological aspects he does not name that concern our observations of where God is already at work in that culture. It is from this theological premise that I believe we can enter into the work of contextual mission.

*Mission* is the eternal posture of a caring Creator. In its relationship to the *missio Dei*, David J. Bosch states, "To participate in mission is to participate in the movement of God's love toward people, since God is a fountain of sending love" (1991, 390). The *missio Dei* concept is a good reference point for understanding mission. From within the Trinity, God creates the world or context for mission, and God creates human beings to be partakers of the goodness that God created. Human beings are invited by God to join in that holy community. Mission occurs among humans when they show and tell others the way to join in this holy community.

## **Kingdom**

The idea of the biblical *kingdom* is a difficult one to convey. Howard A. Snyder states,

The Bible is full of God's kingdom. This is most clear, of course, in passages, which speak directly of God's kingly rule. But kingdom surprises appear if we look at Scripture through a broader lens. We learn more about the kingdom when we view all of Scripture as the history of God's "economy" or plan to restore a fallen creation, bringing all God has made—woman, man and their total environment—to the fulfillment of his purposes under his sovereign reign. (1985, 17)

I agree with Snyder that the concept is surprisingly ubiquitous throughout the Scriptures and that kingdom is an overarching theme. Still, I would go further to state that the

kingdom (including its intended king) is *the* primary overarching theme of the Scriptures. This theme is often voiced as *shalom* and *jubilee* in the Older Testament whereas Jesus speaks directly of a kingdom. The term kingdom has always had a military association, but as yet I have not found other words that can convey the radical intent. My injunction is for the reader to read *kingdom of harmony* when they see the word kingdom. The kingdom is the intended way of living and being desired by the Creator. In this sense it is closely associated with harmony.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The broad theoretical framework of this research rests on the Native American religious concept of a primal worldview of harmony related to God through creation with an inseparable link among all living things. “The Harmony Way” worldview appears to lend itself to a set of commonly held values. Native American spirituality is closely tied to the idea that creation is good and one way the Creator is revealed is through the creation. Christianity has a similar idea closely linked to “natural revelation.” This theological construct always begs the question concerning how far along God’s intended purposes natural revelation can take individuals towards salvation. The following concepts provide a background for a discussion surrounding the possibilities for choosing theological frameworks for “The Harmony Way.”

### **The Sacred Space and the Holiness of God**

The research of several phenomenologists aided my thinking with the conceptualization that I am claiming as it is related to Native American views of well-being. As mentioned earlier, Wach’s idea of a “cosmic order” reveal that much about the

Creator and the creation cannot be reduced to mere words and concepts. We can experience the Creator in every sense, including the cognitive, the emotive, the physical, and the intuitive realms. A part of the realm of experiences and feelings is the concept described by Rudolf Otto as *Mysterium Tremendum* (1963, 12), meaning that it includes an element of “awefulness” (1963, 13), “overpoweringness” or majesty (19), and “urgency” (23) uniquely associated with the divine being.

Otto describes this *a priori* sense as a deep reverence felt towards the deity. Otto’s thoughts appear to align with the Native American idea of the deity as the “Great Mystery,” which may mean that we have much more to wonder about the deity than we are able to know.

### **Religion as a Symbol System**

Clifford Geertz (1973) aids one’s understanding of the role of symbolism in culture and the pervasiveness of religion. Geertz describes religion as something that is understood as a social, not an individual venture. Although religion happens to serve the individual, it also ends up serving society.<sup>7</sup> Analogous to Geertz’s understanding, Native American spirituality relies heavily on symbolism, with everything being sacred but still accessible to the community. In Geertz’s view, people come to accept the worldview presented via religion by participating in religious rituals. Often western religion is expressed in beliefs. To Native Americans, practices are beliefs. In other words, one comes to believe something because one does it.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Sociologist Peter Berger in *The Sacred Canopy* makes a similar point when he argues that religion is a sacred, awful but unseen cover and protection over society (Berger 1990)

<sup>8</sup> In *The Nature of Doctrine*, theologian George Lindbeck argues that doctrinal theology is much more holistic than a set of cognitive propositions (1984, 64).

Mircea Eliade (1987) may shed light on the many facets of Native American spirituality in his discussion of concepts such as the cosmogonic value of ritual (12), *imago mundi* (43), and *homo religious* (44). Our Native American rituals bring order in the world out of chaos. We do, in a sense, re-create the sacredness of creation in our ceremonies and we are *a priori* religious beings. Although all of the phenomenologists mentioned share descriptions and observations concerning aspects analogous to indigenous spiritual views, none can describe what, to us, is indescribable.

The Hebrews had a similar problem. While passages such as Psalm 8 provide poetry and insight, they still do not capture the great mystery of the Creator and how human spirituality, including humanity's relatedness to all things and responsibility to keep things in harmony, come together to make sense:

O Lord, our Lord, your majestic name fills the earth!  
 Your glory is higher than the heavens.  
 You have taught children and infants to tell of your strength,  
 silencing your enemies and all who oppose you.  
 When I look at the night sky and see the work of your fingers—the moon and the stars you set in place—what are mere mortals that you should think about them, human beings that you should care for them? Yet you made them only a little lower than God and crowned them with glory and honor. You gave them charge of everything you made, putting all things under their authority—the flocks and the herds and all the wild animals, birds in the sky, the fish in the sea, and everything that swims the ocean currents.  
 O Lord, our Lord, your majestic name fills the earth! (NLT)

It is one thing to be inspired by creation and quite another to see ourselves as an integral part of creation. People throughout the centuries have been inspired by creation but they may continue to view it in a utilitarian fashion. People may view creation as good and useful to humanity but unlike those from a Native American worldview, others may not see themselves basically as one connected part of the creation. Though difficult to describe, such a worldview sees creation as having the purpose to serve humanity in

some way. The relationship in the utilitarian worldview I described has less reciprocity between humanity and creation.

One of the preeminent symbols used among Native Americans to express this concept of interconnectedness is the circle. The circle, sometimes referred to as the “sacred hoop,” is a representation of the earth or cosmos.

The circle is a key symbol for self-understanding in these [Native American] tribes, representing the whole of the universe and our part in it. We see ourselves as co-equal participants in the circle standing neither above nor below anything else in God’s creation. There is no hierarchy in our cultural context, even of species, because the circle has no beginning nor ending. Hence all the created participate together, each in their own way, to preserve the wholeness of the circle. (Kidwell, Noley, and Tinker 2003, 50)

The circle, as described above, is used in many Native American ceremonies, thus creating a sacred space from which we focus and create a place from which we view ourselves.

In many ways, the simple participation in Native American spirituality is easier than describing it. Below is a description of the possible meaning for Native Americans who gather into a sacred circle:

When a group of Indians forms a circle to pray, all know that the prayers have already begun with the representation of the circle. No words have yet been spoken and in some ceremonies no words need be spoken, but the intentional physicality of our formation has already expressed our prayer and deep concern for all of God’s creation. (Kidwell, Noley, and Tinker 2003, 50)

Native Americans do not differentiate between a circle as a theological concept and entering the circle for the purpose of prayer and being a living prayer

## Indigenization: Taiaiake Alfred<sup>9</sup>

Taiaiake Alfred is a Native American thinker, which helps explain why his theory of indigenization is not categorized in the same way as other more Western-oriented writers, but I will do my best to summarize the path he is advocating, especially concerning indigenization. Alfred (1999) has an absence of a demarcation as he moves beyond the awakening of decolonization and into indigenization.<sup>10</sup> While the process of decolonization and indigenization are closely linked, for Alfred, decolonization is a way of awaking one's self to the ubiquitous lies of the colonial power. Indigenization, which he often refers to as "freedom," appears to be the action one takes, based upon one's new consciousness. This idea is reminiscent of the story Jesus told in Matthew 12:43-45. An evil spirit leaves the man and he cleans his home. Seven more spirits come back to occupy because the home (host) was not filled with anything better and the latter state is worse than the former.

In Alfred's work, decolonization and indigenization are closely related, but one cannot really be done without the other if one is to make positive change. Action is needed to "fill the home" once the cleansing (decolonization) takes place. Both are addressed by Alfred and included in his four principles of action. Alfred says, "First, undermine the intellectual premise of colonialism. Second, act on the moral imperative

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<sup>9</sup> Gerald Taiaiake Alfred is an educator, author and activist. He was born in Montreal in 1964. Alfred is an internationally recognized intellectual, political advisor and he is currently a professor at the University of Victoria. Alfred grew up in Kahnawake and received a B.A. in History from Concordia University, an M.A. and a Ph.D. from Cornell. He served in the US Marine Corps in the 1980s. Alfred currently serves as director of the Indigenous Governance Program. He was awarded a Canada Research Chair 2003-2007. In addition he has gained a National Aboriginal Achievement Award in education.

<sup>10</sup> Among decolonization theorists, Alfred fits closest to Memmi in that he believes the colonizer is as much caught in a trap as the colonized, and both must be liberated. He sees no point in violent revolution, such as is advocated by Frantz Fanon, because it reduces the colonized to the same level as the colonizer. To Alfred, indigenization is the action of freedom that moves one out of victimization.

for change. Third, do not cooperate with colonialism. Fourth and last, resist further injustice” (1999, 145).

One of the ploys of colonization is to lead indigenous people towards inaction. In our seemingly hopeless dilemma, we blame the colonial government and we rarely use our own power to make the changes that we desire. Alfred makes this distinction clear by referring to decolonization and then freedom (which I am referencing as indigenization):

Decolonization ... is a process of discovering the truth in a world created out of lies. It is thinking through what we think we know to what is actually true but is obscured by knowledge derived from our experiences as colonized peoples. The truth is the main struggle, and the struggle is manifest mainly inside our own heads. From there, it goes to our families and our communities and reverberates outward into the larger society, beginning to shape our relationship with it. In a colonized reality, our struggle is with all existing forms of political power, and to this fight, we bring our only real weapon: the power of truth....

Freedom is deliverance from the imperialism of the lies that kept us tied to realities that we despise and rebel against in self-destructive ways. It takes an absolute commitment and unwavering dedication to follow the struggle on this principle. Failure to do so has always led to failure to achieve any meaningful change in relations between *Onkwehonwe* existences and the lies of the empire. (2005, 280-81)

The road to indigenization is to stop believing the lies about ourselves and replacing self-hatred with the historic and hopeful truth about ourselves as indigenous people.

In the following quote Alfred clearly states that we are the answer to our own dilemma:

I am saying that the real reason most *Onkwehonwe* endure unhappy and unhealthy lives has nothing to do with governmental powers and money. The lack of these things only contributes to making a bad situation worse. The root of the problem is that we are living through a spiritual crisis, a time of darkness that descended upon our people when we became disconnected with our lands and from our traditional ways of life. We are divided amongst ourselves and confused in our own minds as to who we are and what kind of life we should be living. We depend on others to feed us and to teach us how to look, feel, live. We still turn to white men for the answers to our problems; worse yet, we have started to trust them.... For a long time now, we have been on a quest for governmental power and money; somewhere along the journey from the past to the future, we forgot



that our goal was to reconnect with our lands and to preserve our harmonious cultures and respectful way of life. (2005, 31)

According to Alfred, the influences of colonialism are deep but the struggle is more within ourselves as indigenes. He recognizes that our crisis is spiritual. An important point for this project is his stated goal in the belief that a return to normalcy for us as indigenous people is to do the following:

1. Reconnect with the land, and
2. Preserve our ways of well-being/harmony.

The land issue, as Alfred proposes it, is dealt with primarily through corporate action and government relationship, although he in no way discounts the connection of the individual to the land. Alfred's proposal includes four basic objectives that empower the indigene concerning land:

1. Structural Reform: which includes the legitimacy of Native governments.
2. Reintegration of Native languages: including making the community's Native language the official language—which leaders speak, governments are conducted and in which all documents are written.
3. Economic self-sufficiency: Including the expansion of Native land bases, gaining control of economic activities in Native territories, training Natives in business and technical fields.
4. Nation to Nation relations with the state: Rejecting the claimed authority of the state, asserting the right to self-governance of Native land and people, and acting on that right as much as capacity allows. (1999, 136-37)

Since land means identity to indigenous peoples, this structured approach must be considered even though accomplishing such tasks are far beyond my own capacity to enact and beyond the purposes of this paper.

For the purposes of this paper, I defer to Alfred's suggestions meant primarily to impact non-governmental agency and that is why I list a number of traditional Ojibwa

and Mohawk virtues that Alfred promotes. By applying these virtues, it may lead to authentic indigenous leaders who can accomplish the corporate goals mentioned:

- To be wise is to cherish knowledge.... (Humans must reflect, acknowledge, seek guidance, know and practice wisdom).
- To know love is to know peace.... (Care, kindness, hope, harmony, and cooperation are fundamental values).
- Respect is honouring all of creation.
- Bravery is to face challenges with honesty and integrity.
- Humility is to know yourself as a sacred part of creation.... (Other beings should be approached with modesty and sensitivity, and our goal should be to listen and learn from them).
- The truth is to know all these things. (1999, 134)

He continues, sharing a word from an elder concerning the subject of traditionalism:

Traditionalism is the way you live your life. It means having a clean body and mind. Traditionalism isn't only ceremonies and art, but government as well. Many people don't realize the distinction between ceremonial traditionalism and government in a traditional way. Governing people according to the principles of tradition is what's really important. (1999, 134-35)

In this statement Alfred has linked the personal and broader government concepts together.

Alfred puts forward a concept called "Self-conscious Traditionalism" that he teaches to indigenous communities who want to be on a path of recovery through indigenization. These principles embody the practices that will make up strong indigenous communities of the future. They are

- Wholeness with diversity
- Shared culture
- Communication
- Respect and trust
- Group maintenance
- Participatory and consensus-based government
- Youth empowerment
- Strong links to the outside world. (1999, 82)

It is interesting to note that Alfred is not an isolationist. His philosophy encompasses a shared existence of the indigene with the colonizer.

Alfred also lists the myths that Native people must recognize and reject. The greatest of these is the idea that indigenous people can find justice within the colonial legal system. He points out that history proves this myth to be a lie. "The myth is designed to induce tranquility even in the face of blatant injustice" (1999, 83). He encourages the indigene to "force turmoil, force the law to change, create new parameters, and make indigenous goals an integral part of the new reality" (1999, 83).

Concerning the question of what constitutes indigenous identity, Alfred cites the language as a strong indicator but moves beyond language by stating,

Colonialism sought to destroy us by erasing our languages, and in so doing deculture our people and destroy the worldviews and value systems that were the foundations of our distinct ways of life; thus, language is the *prima facie* evidence of indigenaity. It is a compelling argument, until one considers the facts.

First, ways of seeing the world and of constructing value systems are not contained only in verbal languages. Songs, pictures, ceremony, and many varied art and cultural forms contain knowledge and can be read for insight, knowledge and guidance on how to be indigenous. Second, languages are constantly changing. *Onkwehonwe* languages held as sacred repositories of culture today are very different than the languages spoken by our ancestors, who were the originators of the ceremonies, clans, and stories that are the substance of traditional culture that we are seeking to preserve and reinvigorate. And thirdly, If language is the essential characteristic of an *Onkwehonwe* mentality, how do we explain that the men who signed treaties, surrendering millions of square miles of our ancestral homeland, who waged war upon Brothers and Sisters, and who worked with the colonizer to decimate the earth for profit, were all mother-tongue, uni-lingual, indigenous language speakers? (2005, 245)

I do not believe Alfred would say the language is unimportant but it is obvious that his emphasis goes beyond language, to the view that symbols and ceremonies are more significant.

Alfred encourages the use of Native language to express cultural beliefs and values along with stories, rituals, and ceremony (2005, 249). All these processes are considered to be important to the indigene but the awakening is primary on one's quest toward indigenization. Decolonization is the awakening process—that is, to stop believing the lies of the colonizer. He says vigilant consciousness is the process of becoming whole again (2005, 257):

The overall challenge for all of us is to cause a mental awakening, beginning inside ourselves, to give people knowledge of themselves and of the world, thereby restoring the memory of who we truly are as *Onkwehonwe*. We need to make our people and our movement courageous again, by reinstilling the emotional fortitude that comes from being rooted in a strong community and supported by strong families. We need to heal and strengthen our bodies through discipline, hard work, and rejection of the junk food and trash culture of the mainstream society. And we need to reconnect with our indigenous spirituality, the foundations of our cultures and guarantors of psychological health. If we can work together toward accomplishing these things—liberation from domination, freedom from fear, a decolonized diet, a warrior ethic, and reconnection to indigenous cultures—then we will be free from the cage of colonialism and know once again what it is to be *Onkwehonwe* on this land. We will be independent, self-reliant, respectful, sharing, spiritual, and adaptable. And, we will be powerful in peaceful coexistence with those who live among and next to us as neighbors and friends. This is all that human beings have a right to ask for. (2005, 282)

For Alfred, the land is critical and it must be given back, restored and maintained through the original peoples of the land.

### ***Shalom*: Walter Brueggemann**

*Shalom* is a very broad theological construct. Once this theological construct is understood, one can go back through the Scriptures and find *shalom* references from Genesis to Revelation. Brueggemann has probably done the most thoughtful job of creating an understanding of the broad concept. Brueggemann's understanding of *shalom* and the Native American concepts of harmony appear to have several points in common.

Brueggemann states, “The central vision of world history in the Bible is that all of creation is one, every creature in community with every other, living in harmony and security toward the joy and well-being of every other creature” (2001, 13). This intimate view of *shalom* seems to be consistent with many Native concepts of well-being that see all of creation related to one another. Brueggemann goes on to say,

That persistent vision of joy, well-being, harmony and prosperity is not captured in any single word or idea in the Bible; a cluster of words is required to express its many dimensions and subtle nuances: love, loyalty, truth, grace, salvation, justice, blessings, righteousness. But the term that in recent discussions that has been used to summarize that controlling vision is *shalom*. Both in such discussion and in the Bible itself, it bears tremendous freight—the freight of a dream of God that resists all our tendencies to division, hostility, fear, drivenness, and misery. *Shalom* is the substance of the biblical vision of one community embracing all creation. It refers to all those resources and factors that make communal harmony joyous and effective. (2001, 14)

Brueggemann’s observation that all people are children of God, suggests that all creation bears the image of their creator. Likewise, along with creation, humans, share in the same hope of restoration. This parallelism is illustrated in Scripture in Romans chapter 8:19-27. This distinction between these views of creation is the difference between creation fulfilling a utilitarian role (however noble), *for* humanity, and one that views humanity as intricately interconnected *with* creation and involved in a reciprocal relationship with creation.

For Brueggemann the biblical vision of *shalom* is of one community together, including and embracing all creation. The journey is of relationships filled with hope, moving consistently into the reality of *shalom*. I examine the *shalom* concept of the Bible, a set of interrelated concepts about well-being, alongside Native American concepts of well-being with the goal of developing a biblical theology of well-being as a basis for Native American mission.

In Brueggemann's view, *shalom* is an all encompassing preference that God has set before humanity. The same appears to be true for Native harmony concepts of well-being. Our indigenous communities are broken and fragmented. We are in desperate need of a concept of healing and wholeness that includes a real partnership with creation. I wondered if these two concepts, working in tandem, could serve the purpose of restoration. We are a people in need of a vision. Anything less than this vision, according to Brueggemann, is broken *shalom*. "The consequences of justice and righteousness is *shalom*, an enduring Sabbath of joy and well-being. But the alternative is injustice and oppression, which lead inevitably to turmoil and anxiety, with no chance of well-being" (2001, 18). This is incredibly similar to Native American concepts of broken harmony. Brueggemann continues to show the practicality of *shalom*:

The Bible is not romantic about its vision. It never assumes *shalom* will come naturally or automatically. Indeed, there are many ways of compromising God's will for *shalom*. One way the community can say no to the vision and live without *shalom* is to deceive itself into thinking that its private arrangements of injustice and exploitations are suitable ways of living.... The prophetic vision of *shalom* stands against all private arrangements, all "separate peaces," all ghettos that pretend the others are not there (compare Luke 16:19-31). Religious legitimacy in the service of self-deceiving well-being is a form of chaos. *Shalom* is never the private property of the few. (2001, 19-20)

In Brueggemann's understanding of the Scriptures, the whole community must have *shalom* or no one has *shalom*. This is also close to a Native American view, which is more communal than individualistic.

*Shalom*, according to Brueggemann, is also an active concept. One does not wait on *shalom* but actually sets about the task of *shalom*. In other words, people need to be going about the business of making *shalom*. This active persistent effort takes place at every level, from personal relationships to societal and structural transformation. "The

doing of righteousness and justice results in the building of viable community, that is, *shalom*, in which the oppressed and disenfranchised have dignity and power” (2001, 7). For Native Americans finding harmony is also practical and accomplished through direct involvement in ways such as ceremonies.

The connection of the individual to the community and the individual to societal structure has been diminished in modern Western society. This shift can be explained in many ways, but the correct exegesis of the Bible still remains—*shalom* produces change. If Jesus is properly understood as *shalom* (Luke 4:18-21), and understood in light of God’s mission of *shalom* to the world, then it should be understandable why I am disparaging of the message that has been brought to Native Americans thus far. The gospel that has been preached by the missionaries in Native America did not produce positive social changes, nor did it reflect justice in the most grave of circumstances. Any new mission model developed among Native Americans would do well to take the *shalom* concept seriously. As such, the gospel that was preached is an example of Paul’s “other gospel” (Gal. 1:8-9).

The transformational aspects of *shalom* are apparent in the divine model. In Scripture, God is active through creation, in personal relationships, in covenant relationships, in the Incarnation, and in redemption; consequently, *shalom* is reflected in all God’s activity. *Shalom*, therefore, is not detached from the reality of everyday life in the world nor is it in any sense *super-spiritual* or *otherworldly*; rather, it exemplifies how seriously God takes the world that was spoken into existence. Again, Brueggeman aids in understanding *shalom*:

It is well-being that exists in the very midst of threats—from sword and drought and wild animals. It is well-being of material, physical, historical kind, not idyllic

“pie in the sky,” but “salvation” in the midst of trees and crops and enemies—in the very places where people always have to cope with anxiety, to struggle for survival, and to deal with temptation. (2001, 15)

Again, this understanding emphasizes the very practical aspects of the value of *shalom* in everyday life.

Undoubtedly, the most widespread understanding and use of the word *shalom* is the idea of *peace* but *shalom* is not just the absence of conflict. As mentioned prior, sometimes *shalom* must come through the active creation of conflict. For example, where injustice exists, *shalom* dictates that the structure perpetuating the injustice be transformed. Where marginalization is present, *shalom* demands that someone challenge the oppressive system and lift up those who are being oppressed. Wherever *shalom* is broken, sin demands Christ’s restoration, particularly if it be found in those who bear Christ’s name. “God is for *shalom* and, therefore, against sin. In fact, we may safely describe evil as any spoiling of *shalom*, whether physically (e.g., by disease), morally, spiritually, or otherwise” (Plantinga 1995, 14). Sin, therefore, could simply be defined as the absence of *shalom*.

As a result of *shalom*’s practicality, sin is neither ignored nor relegated to the private, more personal areas of life. *Shalom* makers clearly need to be active in God’s world, influencing it towards the vision of the Trinitarian community on earth because God desires everyone to dwell in *shalom*. Sin is brokenness and an alienating force that works against God’s vision, but *shalom* does not assert unattainable utopian dreams without prescribing the means to a “peaceable kingdom” (Isa. 9:7; Rom. 14:17).

At this point the Native American understanding of balance and harmony can be most helpful. Our role on earth as those who restore harmony is very practical. Our



indigenous ceremonies often require not only symbolic acts but also practical restitution and full restoration. For example, the ancient Cherokee Cementation Ceremony occurred annually during October. At that time anyone with grievance against a fellow Cherokee was required to participate in the ceremony.

A fire was made and prayers spoken by the Holy Person. Then, the families and friends on each side of the rift would face each other with the lead persons (those with whom the division originated) at the head of the line. Each would give an account of the offense. Then the persons would go to the Fire to pray for the strength to forgive. The two would then strip naked and exchange clothes. Following, they spoke words of forgiveness and vowed never to bring the issue up again. The pipe was passed back and forth down the line for everyone to smoke. Finally, gifts were exchanged and a feast was given by both parties for the community. The result was both ceremonial and practical. I have had to draw from other sources besides Brueggemann to inform the restitution related aspects of *shalom*.

Making peace, *shalom* peace, is attainable but costly. For example, the benefactors of colonialism would surely need to make restitution to those from whom they robbed in order to have *shalom* in America. Christians need to be educated that *shalom* is directly related to ideas of restitution:

In the tribal period the word *shillem* (a close linguistic cousin of *shalom*) was used to denote requital or payment or compensation. The ancient Semitic tribes stressed the necessity of compensatory acts to make up for property loss, murder, or death in battle. This making up [of the loss] is a type of peacemaking in that it attempts to restore the whole. *Shillem* restores *shalom*. (Powers 1973, 15)

The ramifications of restitution are incredible when one considers how much wrong has actually been done in the world. Still, such a huge task should reveal the

simple reality that *shalom* has been ignored, causing the world to be in such a mess. Only by practicing *shalom* can humanity restore the Creator's intentions for the fragmented world. Wherever relationships are fragmented, *shalom* will bring wholeness.

Individualism has caused people to feel lonely and alienated; *shalom* will bring authentic relationship and community. When greed and injustice marginalize and destroy, *shalom* restores dignity. *Shalom* is the very idea needed in order to understand God and to make sense of the Christ who died for the world. Only when humans grasp that idea will God's power begin working through them. Jesus, the *shalom* Christ, who brings a *shalom* kingdom, is God's final answer to a broken and fragmented world as Breuggemann so aptly states:

*Shalom* is the end of coercion. *Shalom* is the end of fragmentation. *Shalom* is the freedom to rejoice. *Shalom* is the courage to live an integrated life in a community of coherence. These are not simply neat values to be added on. They are massive protest against the central values by which our world operates. The world depends on coercion. The world depends on fragmented loyalties. The world as presently ordered depends on these very conditions against which the gospel protects and to which it provides alternatives. (2001, 51)

As human need increases on this earth, the concept of *shalom* offers a holistic, creation centered, alternative for the church. Though rooted in the Ancient Hebrew community, the essence of *shalom* has been understood by Native Americans for millennia.

### **Anthropological Mission Model**

The work of mission theorists Paul G. Hiebert, Stephen B. Bevans and Robert J. Schreiter are oriented somewhere within the broad spectrum of an anthropological approach to mission. While no one of these three offers a complete picture for contextualization among Native North Americans, all of them contribute partial understandings to a more complete model. Bevans says,

The strength of the anthropological model comes from the fact that it regards human reality with utmost seriousness. It attests to the goodness of all creation and to the lovability of the world into which God sent God's only son (Jn 3:16).... Revelation is not essentially a message, but the result of an encounter with God's loving and healing power in the midst of the ordinariness of life. Its understanding of scripture and tradition as a "series of local theologies" is much more faithful to contemporary scholarship than the view that these theological sources are only accidentally culturally conditioned. (1992, 59)

A common Native American prayer contains the words, "I am just a human being." For Native Americans, being human is good, sacred, and enough. Humans are viewed as part of the larger circle of life, but all other creation is also sacred. A mission model that affirms this worldview has already crossed many former barriers. To understand our indigenous stories in light of revelation is also to take Native people and cultures seriously.

Bevans goes on to state that within the anthropological model "Christianity is not automatically the importation of foreign ideas.... To be Christian is to be fully human" (1992, 60). This news is certainly good for Native Americans who have had European Christianity forced upon them for centuries. The anthropological model "starts where people are, with people's real questions and interests, rather than by imposing questions asked out of other contexts" (1992, 60). Again, Native Americans have suffered for years under a paternalistic mission system.

We must consider to how to use a mission model with a highly anthropological component among Native Americans remembering, "At its most basic level, theology is any thinking, reflecting or contemplating on the reality of God—even the question of God" (Grenz and Olson 1996, 14). In the case of Native Americans, thinking about the Creator is pervasive. Based on this definition, an argument can be made that theology is actually practiced by everyone. Additionally, I agree with Bevans' perspective on

contextual theology. Bevans believes that *all* theology is contextual. He calls contextual theology a “theological imperative” (1992, 15), meaning no theology is without a specific context and that local people understand that they can do theology from their perspective. However, one finds a division: Contextual theology can be developed irresponsibly, or it can be developed conscientiously. The question is not whether or not one teaches contextual theology in mission because only contextual theology is available. For example, traditional systematic theology is largely contextual theology from and in Europe. Perhaps the most crucial question about contextual theology is more about:

1. How to approach the task of understanding, and
2. Who actually takes part in the process.

Concerning the first point, one should first understand the cultures in which the gospel was given. This understanding includes the history of how the gospel has emerged and how it is presently understood in a particular culture. One should also understand one’s own culture(s) well, being mindful of one’s own emotional difficulties. Hiebert’s process of critical contextualization can be helpful.

Hiebert’s critical contextualization is a theoretical tool that can allow others to attempt to integrate an indigenous harmony concept into Christian mission. Hiebert’s model first examines the local culture phenomenologically in order to understand their beliefs. By studying the culture, one may come to understand the categories, assumptions, and logic that the people use to construct their worldview (Hiebert, Shaw, and Tiénou 1999, 21). Hiebert’s critical contextualization process contains five steps:

1. Phenomenological Analysis.
2. Ontological Reflections
3. Critical Evaluation
4. Missiological Transformations

## 5. Results: Critical Contextualization. (22)

According to Hiebert, missionaries should adopt a more holistic approach to both culture and theology. They should seek to interpret the gospel from within a cultural framework. Hiebert attempts to avoid the past mistakes of uncritically accepting everything in the culture as good or overly critically rejected everything in culture as evil. The very idea of mission (being sent) usually involves a cross-cultural experience to some degree. Therefore, one of our first obligations to Christ is to understand the culture of the people. Most of the early missionaries sent to Native North America did contextualization poorly. Bevans states, “A theology that is not somehow reflective of our times, our culture, and our current concerns—and so contextual—is also a false theology” (5). According to Bevans, *context* involves personal/communal experience, social location, social change, and culture (6-7).

A critical examination of the gospel and culture promotes a positive opportunity for an enduring *local theology*. In the case of Native American mission, this step is extremely important because a local theology will help us avoid the continuance of the paternalistic history in which outsiders, not familiar with the local culture, make decisions about cultural adaptation and decide what would be best for the local culture. Developing a local theology also means that we can find Christ *in* the culture rather than the idea of trying to bring Christ *to* the culture (Schreiter 1985, 39).<sup>11</sup> In the Hebrew

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<sup>11</sup> One way this has been worked out in theory is that God does not leave Himself without a witness in any culture, and thus one may find the God in culture to be the God of revelation (as Abram did by linking YHWH with El Elyon and El Shaddai). However, missiologists usually say that the Good news of God’s love in Jesus Christ is new information for most peoples, thus preserving the missiological imperative. That way, both the indigenous culture and the Good News/gospel are respected and needed in the missionary situation. Thus, to “find Christ in culture” is to find the truth and presence of Christ, but not the story of the historic Jesus. In this sense, to “find God in culture” and “Christ in culture” still points to the need for the story of the historic Jesus to be shared.

Scriptures, the universality of the message is a theme shown by Yahweh in numerous passages such as Isaiah 65:1 where the Creator states,

I revealed myself to those who did not ask for me;  
 I was found by those who did not seek me.  
 To a nation that did not call on my name,  
 I said, "Here am I, here am I." (NIV)

Isaiah makes the point that regardless of a nation's disposition towards God, God nonetheless, provides ways in which God may be discovered in all cultures.

Hiebert's model looks at the culture as much as possible, without judging it, then tests the truth claims of the culture in light of the Scriptures and the cultures. The model evaluates the response to the existing beliefs in light of their new biblical understanding, using the community as a judge, and finally it accepts, rejects, or reformulate the cultural practice to give it Christian meaning. The critique may help balance the romanticism often associated with the anthropological model. The following is one simple summary of Hiebert's model:

- Studying the culture inductively and critically, gathering every bit of evidence relevant to the issue under investigation
- Studying Scripture inductively, focusing upon those passages that seem relevant to the issue under investigation
- Deciding what should be done with the issue under investigation

Options within the model are the following:

- If the phenomenon or issue is not unbiblical it could be used as is.
- If the phenomenon or issue is unscriptural it could be rejected.
- It could be modified to yield explicit Christian meaning.
- A functional substitute from another source could replace it.
- The community could create a new functional equivalent. (Irwin 2007)<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> 1987. *International Bulletin of Missionary Research, Critical Contextualization*, 11,

Again, this list is a type of basic guidelines that focus on the very practical aspects of contextualizing cultural forms and functions. Theologically, we must ask in what ways God is already active in the culture?

Within creation theology is found the idea of a natural process of revelation to which many passages in the Bible attest:

The heavens tell of the glory of God. The skies display his marvelous craftsmanship. Day after day they continue to speak; night after night they make him known. They speak without a sound or a word; their voice is silent in the skies; yet their message has gone out to all the earth, and their words to all the world. The sun lives in the heavens where God placed it. (Ps. 19:1-4, NLT)

For the truth about God is known to them instinctively. God has put this knowledge in their hearts. From the time the world was created, people have seen the earth and sky and all that God made. They can clearly see his invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature. So they have no excuse whatsoever for not knowing God. (Rom. 1:19-20 NLT)

Through the work of the Holy Spirit, every culture can apply the gospel to itself. One reason that Native Americans have been banned from this opportunity may be, in part, that former shared mission models were limited in their understanding of Native Americans. Past mission models were often based on the presupposition that the indigenous understanding of the Creator and the creation was without merit, which may be related to the fact that many of the early missionaries did not believe God had spoken to Native Americans prior to their arrival and that we had no adequate theology. Certainly no serious adherence was given to local Native American theology.

Bevens makes a distinction between a *creation-based* missiology and a *redemption-based* missiology. A redemption-based approach “is characterized by the conviction that culture and human experience are either in need of a radical

transformation or in need of total replacement” (1992, 21). According to Bevans, in the redemption-based model, grace replaces creation because creation is corrupt. One important consideration is that Native Americans will not relate well to a theology that views the creation as evil.

Native American values include an already present relationship with the Creator. Schreiter is helpful in his recognition of the idea that Christ is already present in the culture. Schreiter presents four questions to discern Christ’s presence:

1. How do we listen in order to hear how Christ is already present in the culture?
2. How does an outsider learn to understand a culture without forcing their culture into outside categories?
3. How does an indigenous person learn to think more objectively about their own culture, especially if they have never had another culture with which to make a contrast?
4. How does a community become the “fertile ground” out of which a local theology grows? (1985, 40)

When missionaries fail to ask such questions, whole cultures and their values can be demeaned and destroyed. To Western missionaries, this failure to ask crucial questions usually meant that they believed the host people of this land had no stories worth hearing. In most cases, the missionaries did not want to hear about our relationship with the Creator. From the missionary perspective, if Indigene had no stories of value, then the only story worth telling was their own missionary biased story of Christ in their culture. They failed to realize that Native Americans already possessed a strong creation-based theology. The prevalent, redemption-based emphasis of the Euro-centric missionaries may have diminished our own Native capacity to develop a contextual theology.

All cultures, at least in part, consist of truths that come from God, either denied or accepted. In this sense, culture is a God-given gift and is part of creation. A creation-based approach must, therefore, include a serious examination of culture. However, if a



redemption-based approach is emphasized, then any given culture can be replaced, or as some would say, *redeemed* (a euphemism often used in the past for *replaced*, as in replacing Native American culture), by another culture. In reality, such an act is nothing less than religious imperialism. Because of the emphasis the Europeans, especially the Reformers, placed on redemption and the fallen nature of human beings, those who followed this line of reasoning believed that they could justify replacing our Native cultures with their own so-called Christian culture.

The focus of Evangelical missions in America almost always emphasized the sinfulness and inadequacy of human beings, along with the power of the cross. They were not completely wrong. Humans are inadequate in providing personal salvation but not inadequate in cooperating with the Creator in the process. These cooperative efforts lead to the discovery of the Creator in creation, in cultures, in each other, and in the marginal places. A creation-based approach can theologially go to these places because the general belief is that life is good and Creator can be found in these places.

Culture can be a hindrance or a help to the gospel. The gospel says both *yes* and *no* to cultures. It points to the importance of both redemption and creation. In other words, just understanding one's own culture cannot lead one effectively to Jesus. Just understanding redemption cannot lead one effectively to salvation because, as I stated, theology always has a context and that context is specific to its location.

For Native Americans, a redemption-based approach to theology and mission has discredited our own theological stories of God working among us in the past. It has nullified the values we hold dear concerning egalitarianism and the strong sense of the local community. It has stripped from us the importance of a theology of the land, and it

has tried to replace our own local theology with European-based concepts. If we are to take contextualization seriously, it behooves us to understand how the colonizer has stripped us of our natural birthright by limiting us to a redemption-based approach to the gospel. Hiebert's approach, with help from Bevans and Schreiter, is simple and straightforward, and it allows for a local theology to develop.

Schreiter offers the idea that the community is the theologian. He points out four key entities necessary in forming any local theology that include:

1. the community
2. local prophets and poets
3. the professional theologians
4. often outsiders. (1985, 16)

Schreiter contends that when these key players all contribute their part, local theology has a chance to be expressed. Of course, he does not rule out the Spirit's role in the process, saying, "All of these, guided by the presence of the Spirit within the community, need to come together for the Good News to be truly alive in the community" (1985, 20). My observation is that most mission efforts in Indian country have been done while neglecting the local community and discounting the power of the Holy Spirit to work in the local community. Schreiter's categories are one tool that can be used to think about this problem and correct it. In our Native communities, we have all four entities present when we include outside missiologists.

Because past mission efforts have not included the whole of the Native American community, they tend to produce isolationism. In Native North America, the church/mission often becomes a hiding place for missionaries. These people predominately spend their time in the "mission compound," and they encourage the local Natives to do the same. This attitude fractures the community and makes the church

irrelevant to the needs in the community. Such a false division could be mended using Shreiter's concept of local theology. One might wonder how, then, under such conditions, the church can partner with the community in the process of theology.

The *how*, *when*, *where*, and *by whom* questions must be asked in the mission process. Bevans, (in a sense, interpreting Schreiter), agrees with his scrutiny of those working in local theology. He too, questions who executes local theology. Bevans explains that theology should be seen as a

constant dialogue between the people—who are the subjects of culture and cultural change and so have a preeminent place in the enterprise of seeking to understand Christian faith in a particular context—and the professional theologian who articulates, deepens, and broadens the people's faith expression with his or her wider knowledge of the Christian tradition and, perhaps, the articulation of faith in other contexts. (1992, 18)

This type of theologizing becomes a sort of dance between the main stakeholders and the outside professionals.

Another important question in the contextualization process is the relationship of local culture to change. In one sense, whatever culture may be, it does not remain in the same form for long. Cultures are fluid and because of globalization, even to the smallest degree, all cultures, for better or for worse, are in contact with outside cultures that are influencing them. Therefore, my research focused on contextual theology in the context of fluid local cultures in Native North America.

Sometimes Natives doing contextual mission, such as myself, have received criticism from the dominant culture, and even by our own people, for trying to *play Indian*. They say, "Those days are gone. We live in a modern world now." Even Bevans reflects this view slightly when he states, "If theology is really to be in context, therefore, it cannot simply deal with a culture that no longer exists (2002, 25). From a modern point

of view, this point seems valid, yet in dealing with premodern cultures, using a Western view of reality for judging effective cultural context may not be the best tool. Reality, in Western thought, observes that every culture is changing; therefore, methods of contextualization must change with the present reality. However, the Western view may very well be missing the whole area of premodern ceremony and its relationship to tradition (Eliade 1987; Geertz 1973; Otto 1963).

In cultures with strong ties to premodernism, such as many Native American cultures, the very point of ceremony and tradition is to draw us back not only to unchanging truth but to the unchanging ways of expressing truth. This would not deny the effect of colonialism and Westernization on these cultures. We do recognize that our cultures have changed, but many of our ceremonies serve not only as a form of personal worship practices, but also for the added purpose of combating unwanted cultural changes. As a result, the ceremonies and traditions become, in essence, the most sacred of all our faith expressions. Our involvement in ceremony also is active participation in the decolonization process. These ancient ways are often all that is left to hold onto in changing times. As a result, their sacredness takes on an importance and a life of their own. Modern Western views of reality, although acknowledged, take a back seat in such cases to intended meaning. I believe that Schreier may be explaining this situation when he states,

That spirituality, lived out over a period of time, provides itself a kind of history or heritage, which helps to orient the community. The remembering of God's favor and judgment helps the community, like the ancient Israelites, to make its decisions in the current situation. (1985, 24)

In premodern mission, interpreting culture could be easier than one thinks. Because the community maintains the meaning of ceremony and tradition, contextualization becomes

the link between the commonly held meaning of the symbols, ceremonies and traditions, and the Scriptures. One might wrongly overlook this point and try to contextualize along the lines of modern reality. This view would be missing the point of the community's choice to construct reality according to congruent symbols, ceremonies, and tradition or whatever lines they choose to follow.

### **Qualitative Field Research**

I began my project with some hunches based on my past experiences.<sup>13</sup> I then set out to do literature research that would show my original hunches to be either correct or false. Then I designed tools that would allow me to find the specific data needed to answer my research problem.

### **Data Collection within a Framework of Grounded Theory**

Anselm Strauss and Juliet Corbin propose grounded theory as “theory that was derived from data, systematically gathered and analyzed through the research process” (Strauss and Corbin 1998, 12). In this process, “the researcher begins with an area of study and allows the theory to emerge from the data” (12). Grounded theory involves a process of collection, coding, and analysis of data to identify the emerging themes and categories that form the basic building blocks of a theory. Grounded theory is a process of working from the data up to theory by identifying emerging categories and linking the categories to theory, which allows the data to set the agenda.

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<sup>13</sup> Exploratory and confirmatory research necessitates a constant conversation between deductive and inductive approaches (see Strauss and Corbin). “Exploration and inductive reasoning are important to science, in part because deductive logic alone can never uncover new ideas and observations” (Given 2008:328). My “hunches” concerned my exposure to my own limited and unscientific exposure to harmony way concepts among Cherokees and other tribal groups. Initially, my observations of a harmony way were not verifiable or systematic but as the project progressed I was able to move from a qualitative-exploratory process to a qualitative-confirmatory process. My process became more heavily deductive as it progressed and, as it was based on the emerging data and theoretical framework of this project.

Strauss and Corbin maintain that “creativity of research also is an essential ingredient” (1998, 12), noting, “qualitative evaluation inquiry draws on both critical and creative thinking—both the science and the art of analysis” (1998, 13). They suggest the following:

- a) being open to multiple possibilities
- b) generating a list of options
- c) exploring various possibilities before choosing any one
- d) making use of multiple avenues of expression such as art music, and metaphors to stimulate thinking
- e) using nonlinear forms of thinking and working, such as going back and forth and circumventing around a subject to get a fresh perspective
- f) diverging from one’s usual ways of thinking and working, again to get a fresh perspective
- g) trusting the process and not holding back
- h) not taking shortcuts but rather putting energy and effort into the work
- i) having fun while doing it. (1998, 434-35)

By observing and participating in the process of the emerging data I tried to keep from pre-judging the outcome so I did not inadvertently influence it. Strauss and Corbin offer several key evaluative criteria that aided in this process:

1. How was the original sample selected? What Grounds?
2. What major categories emerged?
3. What were some of the events, incidents, actions, and so on (indicators) that pointed to some of the major categories?
4. On the basis of what categories did theoretical sampling proceed? That is, how did theoretical formulations guide some of the data collection?
5. What were some of the hypotheses pertain to conceptual relations (that is, among categories, and on what grounds were they formulated and tested?
6. Were there instances when hypothesis did not hold up against what was actually seen? How were these discrepancies accounted for? How did they affect the hypothesis?
7. How and why was the core category selected? Was this collection sudden or gradual, difficult or easy? On what grounds were the final analytic decisions made? (1998, 253)

Concerning the interviews, Creswell emphasizes integrity and ethics. “A core idea of action/participatory research is that the inquirer will not further marginalize or

disempower the study participants” (Creswell 2003, 63). My concern here was for the integrity of my relationship with the interviewees. Creswell notes, “other procedures during data collection involve gaining the permission of individuals in authority to provide access to study participants at research sites” (2003, 65). All volunteer interviewees understood that I was engaged in research for my Ph.D. and that that research would be available through my dissertation to the public. I asked permission either to quote them verbatim, or in paraphrase, or not directly, according to their preference. I asked permission to videotape the interviews, and whether or not the video could be viewed by others. Beyond this effort there was another, deeper issue.

When an Indian elder agrees to help, it is a matter of sacred trust. No other reasons need to be mentioned, nor does any justification need to be made. In fact, the general rule is, the more said, the less trustworthy one becomes. The unspoken agreement is that he or she will share open and honestly from the heart and that I will use what has been said in a good way.

Indigenous protocol calls for a certain process while interviewing First Nations elders and spiritual leaders. First of all, when asking each elder to partake in the event, I presented them with tobacco and a gift of \$25.00 and a Wal-Mart gift card worth \$25.00. Upon their agreement to help me, I did not interrupt them. At the very end of the interviews, I asked clarifying questions—but not too many. Even the way the question was asked was crucial.

In Native American culture one must ask an elder a question that will not bring shame to the situation. It is best not to ask such a person too direct a question. Instead, I began the interview by mentioning the well-being concept in my own tribe and ask if

he/she knew anything similar in his/her tribe. Immediately, in every interview, they knew what I was talking about. Additionally, the fact that the elder allowed the interview was the only permission granted. To ask them to sign something (a process that Indians distrust) is viewed as an insult. In the Indian world, trust is shown through the sharing of one's words verbally. To ask anything beyond those words is a breach of a sacred trust and covenant. From these interviews categories emerged that I could test in light of the survey and literature.

### **Significance of the Research**

The results of this research may provide possibilities for new paradigms for doing mission among indigenous peoples. It will enhance the existing body of literature regarding indigenous contextual efforts in North America from a values-based approach. It will inform the possibilities of mission models using well being concepts as a foundation. It may provide impetus to the paradigm shift that is now occurring where the agenda for mission is set by Native North Americans. The work could have even broader implications for Native empowerment in other areas such as development and education. Basing mission on indigenous values creates a space where Native followers of Jesus might find a place of trust among non-Christian Native North Americans. The local church might also be trusted for the first time in Native communities.



## **CHAPTER 2**

### **BACKGROUND TO THE PROBLEM**

This narrative style is used to present the background to a historically long and complex problem.

#### **Narrative of Mission Problems**

The results of both the U.S. Government and missionary efforts to advance Native North Americans, whether through health, education, or religion, are bleak and demoralizing both to the non-Native and the Native—causing a loss of confidence in the power of any Government or religious agency or program they attempt. The mission efforts of various denominations included the propagation of the good news of Jesus among Native Americans for centuries. The message that was commonly shared with nonbelieving Indians was that the gospel would bring happiness and a better life. As the gospel penetrated Indian country, not only were the host people unhappy, but our physical health deteriorated as well. Christian mission and physical health care have had a longstanding partnership in mission. One wonders, then, why the numbers of Native Americans having poor health today is so disproportionate to the rest of society?

The following data reveals that, according to the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services, Native American health fares much worse than the rest of society:

**Health:** It is significant to note that American Indians/Alaska Natives frequently

contend with issues that prevent them from receiving quality medical care. These issues include cultural barriers, geographic isolation, inadequate sewage disposal, and low income.

Some of the leading diseases and causes of death among AI/AN are heart disease, cancer, unintentional injuries (accidents), diabetes, and stroke. American Indians/Alaska Natives also have a high prevalence and risk factors for mental health and suicide, obesity, substance abuse, Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), teenage pregnancy, liver disease, and hepatitis.

Other Health Concerns: American Indians and Alaska Natives have an infant death rate almost double the rate for Caucasians. AI/ANs are twice more likely to have diabetes than Caucasians. An example is the Pima of Arizona, who have one of the highest diabetes rates in the world. AI/ANs also have disproportionately high death rates from unintentional injuries and suicide. In 2007, the tuberculosis rate for AI/NAs was 5.9, as compared to 1.1 for the White population.

The report continues by listing several bulleted facts concerning Native health:

#### Cancer

- From 2001-2005, American Indian/Alaska Native men are twice as likely to have liver & IBD cancer as non-Hispanic White men.
- American Indian/Alaska Native men are 1.8 times as likely to have stomach cancer as non-Hispanic White men, and are over twice as likely to die from the same disease.
- American Indian/Alaska Native women are 2.4 times more likely to have, and to die from, liver & IBD cancer, as compared to non-Hispanic White women.
- American Indian/Alaska Native women are 40% more likely to have kidney/renal pelvis cancer as non-Hispanic White women.

#### Diabetes

- American Indian/Alaska Native adults were 2.3 times as likely as white adults to be diagnosed with diabetes.
- American Indians/Alaska Natives were twice as likely as non-Hispanic whites to die from diabetes in 2005.
- American Indian/Alaska Native adults were 1.6 times as likely as White adults to be obese.
- American Indian/Alaska Native adults were 1.3 times as likely as White adults to have high blood pressure.

#### Heart Disease

- American Indian/Alaska Native adults are 1.2 times as likely as White adults to have heart disease.
- American Indian/Alaska Native adults are 1.4 times as likely as White adults to be current cigarette smokers.
- American Indian/Alaska Native adults are 1.6 times as likely as White adults

to be obese.

- American Indian/Alaska Native adults are 1.3 times as likely as White adults to have high blood pressure.

#### HIV/AIDS

- American Indian/Alaska Natives have a 30% higher AIDS rates than non-Hispanic white counterparts.
- American Indian/Alaska Native men have a 20% higher AIDS rate compared to non-Hispanic white men.
- American Indian/Alaska Native women have twice the AIDS rate of non-Hispanic white women.

#### Infant Mortality

- American Indian/Alaska Natives have 1.4 times the infant mortality rate as non-Hispanic whites.
- American Indian/Alaska Native babies are twice times as likely as non-Hispanic white babies to die from sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS), and they are 1.3 times as likely to die from complications related to low birthweight or congenital malformations compared to non-Hispanic whites babies.
- American Indian/Alaska Native infants are 3.6 times as likely as non-Hispanic white infants to have mothers who began prenatal care in the 3rd trimester or did not receive prenatal care at all.

#### Stroke

- In general, American Indian/Alaska Native adults are 60% more likely to have a stroke than their White adult counterparts.
- American Indian/Alaska Native women have twice the rate of stroke than White women.
- American Indian/Alaska Native adults are more likely to be obese than White adults and they are more likely to have high blood pressure, compared to White adults (American Indian/Alaska Native).

Given the higher health status enjoyed by most Americans, the lingering health disparities of American Indians and Alaska Natives are troubling. While mission organizations often care for the soul of the Indian, often our physical state of health and happiness is overlooked. This issue is particularly disturbing because Native Americans barely make a distinction between physical and spiritual well-being. In fact, most indigenous people tend to view physical and spiritual problems closely related to each

other.

The lack of mission models that result in improved health among Native Americans has only served as a catalyst to reinforce colonialism in missions, which, in and of itself, is a threat to Native American health and well-being:

Colonization is the greatest health risk to indigenous peoples as individuals and communities. It produces the anomie—the absence of values and sense of group purpose and identity - that underlies the deadly automobile accidents triggered by alcohol abuse. It creates the conditions of inappropriate diet which lead to an epidemic of degenerative diseases, and the moral anarchy that leads to child abuse and spousal abuse. Becoming colonized was the worst thing that could happen five centuries ago, and being colonized is the worst thing that can happen now. (Mohawk *Indian Country Today*, 2004)

While some mission groups have done a better job than others, the reality appears to be that none have really done a good job. I will demonstrate the patterns of cultural prejudices and pressures, which directly and indirectly affect today's mission efforts among Native Americans.

### **The Disconnect between Mission and Conquest**

Although the stated intent of some of the earliest European settlers in American was to do missionary work among the indigenous peoples, the usual pattern was first to establish military superiority over the inhabitants and then to try to share Christ. Such was the case in the two earliest American colonies, even though their charters clearly stated they would perform Christian mission among the indigenous inhabitants, along with bestowing what they considered to be human civility. The First Charter of Virginia, dated April 10, 1601 states,

We, greatly commending, and graciously accepting of, their Desires for the Furtherance of so noble a Work, which may, by the Providence of Almighty God, hereafter tend to the Glory of his Divine Majesty, in propagating of Christian Religion to such People, as yet live in Darkness and miserable Ignorance of the

true Knowledge and Worship of God, and may in time bring the Infidels and Savages, living in those parts, to human Civility, and to a settled and quiet Government: DO, by these our Letters Patents, graciously accept of, and agree to, their humble and well-intended Desires. (The Avalon Project)

The Charter of the Massachusetts Bay Colony states,

[W]hereby our said People, Inhabitants there, may be soe religiously, peaceable, and civilly governed, as their good Life and orderlie Conversacon, maie wynn and incite the Natives of Country, to the KnowIedg and Obedience of the onlie true God and Saulor of Mankinde, and the Christian Fayth. (The Avalon Project)

Words in the Virginia Charter such as, “Such people, as yet live in Darkness and miserable Ignorance of the true Knowledge and Worship of God,” show a prejudice that the settlers held towards Native North American spiritual matters. In their opinion, the culture and values of the inhabitants of the land had little or no significance. The outcome of the manufactured superiority of the Pilgrims ensured that the European concept of civility was at odds with effective mission.

Shortly after the time when the colonists arrived, disease, introduced by foreigners in the land, began to spread at unimaginable rates, leaving the indigenous civilizations in ruin. “The main killers were Old World germs to which Indians had never been exposed, and against which they therefore had neither immune nor genetic resistance. Smallpox, measles, influenza, and typhus rank top among the killers” (Diamond 2005, 212). Most of the colonists were immune to the European diseases but the effect upon Native Americans was cataclysmic:

Throughout the Americas, diseases introduced with Europeans spread from tribe to tribe far in advance of the Europeans themselves, killing an estimated 95 percent of the pre-Columbian Native American population. The most populous and highly organized Native societies of North America, the Mississippian chiefdoms, disappeared in that way between 1492 and the late 1600’s, even before Europeans themselves made their first settlement on the Mississippi River. (Diamond 2005, 78)

At first contact, formerly Native civilizations consisting of mounded cities and recognizable structures were already decaying to dust, this due to disuse from generations of population loss. The infectious diseases actually preceded the Europeans into the interior. “As for the most advanced Native societies of North America, those of the U. S. Southeast and the Mississippi River system, their destruction was accomplished largely by germs alone, introduced by early European explorers and advancing ahead of them” (Diamond 2005, 374). The sight of distraught indigenous people must have re-enforced early prejudice among the settlers.

Given the substantial Native American population loss, the colonists’ disposition becomes even more dubious, since the Christian Scriptures declare a specific obligation to help the poor and the distraught. Part and parcel of the gospel message is good news to the poor (Luke 4:18b; Gal. 2:10).

### **Christian Mission as a Colonizing Strategy**

The early Euro-American settlers attempted genocide, physical force, coercion and the imposition of colonial structures to establish dominance over Native North Americans. Christian mission often included an attempt to assimilate the indigenous peoples into the mainstream society.

The settler assumed that Native spirituality was evil. For example, Jonas Michaelius was an early missionary among the Natives of what is now Manhattan, New York.

As to the Natives of this country, I find them entirely savage and wild, strangers to all decency, yea, uncivil and stupid as garden poles, proficient in all wickedness and godlessness; devilish men, who serve nobody but the Devil, that is, the spirit which in their language they call Menetto; under which they compile everything that is subtle and crafty beyond human skill and power. (Gaustad

1982, 83)

Although he views the Natives as “stupid,” in fact, Michaelius’ own ignorance caused him to attribute the worship of God, Great Spirit, as he calls him, “Manetto,” to the Devil.

Representations in historical literature abound that attest to the early European immigrants’ belief that Native North American values were inferior to European values. Such was the case with William Bradford’s infamous statement: “The good hand of God ... favored our beginnings, sweeping away great multitudes of the Natives ... that he might make room for us” (qtd. in Mann 2005, 56). Bradford was a Puritan Separatist of Mayflower fame and second Governor of the Plymouth Colony. Charles C. Mann notes that “[M]ore than fifty of the first colonial villages in New England were located on Indian villages emptied by disease” (2005, 56). Historian Howard Zinn confirms the depth of religious condescension found among the Pilgrims:

The early American Christians’ values were evident to the indigene by the settler’s disregard for human life. This supposed Christian witness was evident in their reactions when they arrived on the eastern part of this continent and found that epidemics had wiped out several nations. The devout Pilgrims did not weep for the lost Wampanoag, Patuxet and Massachusett civilizations. Instead, one of their leaders, John Winthrop, made a legal declaration annulling any Native claims to the land. “The Indians, he said, had not ‘subdued’ the land, and therefore had only a ‘natural’ right to it, but not a ‘civil right.’ A ‘natural right’ did not have legal standing. (2003, 14)

One example of Puritan disregard for the rights of the indigene occurred in 1637 as unsuspecting residents of a Pequot village on the Mystic River ran to its banks to greet a raiding party of English Christians with the words of greeting, “What cheer, Englishmen,... what do you come for?” The English burned the village and slaughtered its inhabitants. William Bradford describes the massacre in the following way:

Those that escaped the fire were slaine with the sword; some hewed to peeces, others run through with their rapiers.... It was a fearful sight to see them thus

frying in the fryer and the streams of blood quenching the same, and horrible was the stincke and scent thereof, but the victory seemed a sweet sacrifice, and they gave the prayers thereof to God, who had wrought so wonderfully for them, thus to inclose their enemies in their hands. (qtd. in Zinn 2003, 15)

The settlers displayed similar values in the name of Christ, by disregarding the humanity of the American indigene in subsequent centuries: “What Columbus did to the Arawaks of the Bahamas, Cortez did to the Aztecs of Mexico, Pizarro did to the Incas of Peru, and the English settlers of Virginia and Massachusetts to the Powahatans and Pequots” (Zinn 2003, 11).

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries neither the killing of indigenous people nor the disregard for Native values had ceased. As noted by a North Carolinian physician in 1755, “The savages daily saw themselves cheated, their women debauched, and their young men corrupted” (Milling 1969, 37). Of course, one notes some exceptions to the rule.

A minority of the newcomers displayed varying levels of respect for North America’s indigenes. People such as Bartolome De Las Casas among the Caribbean Natives, the Mayhews among the Wamponoags, Roger Williams among the Delaware, Evan Jones among the Cherokee, and Isabel Crawford among the Kiowa are noteworthy exceptions to the majority of missionary efforts. Such people always stand out as points of light compared to those who employed the conventional attitudes of their day. Conversely, these examples forward a great indictment to the body politic that they represented and, who more often than not, persecuted them for their pro-Native tendencies. One shining example of both a religious and political leader promoting Native welfare was the Quaker William Penn. Penn’s words even seem to reflect shared values with the indigene:



My Friends, There is a great God and power that hath made the world, and all things therein, to whom you and I, and all people owe their being and wellbeing, and to whom you and I must one day give an account for all that we do in the world. This great God hath written his law in our hearts, by which we are taught and commanded to love, and help, and do good to one another. Now this great God hath been pleased to make me concerned in your part of the world... but I desire to enjoy it with your love and consent, that we may always live together as neighbors and friends; else what would the great God do to us, who hath made us, not to devour and destroy one another, but to live soberly and kindly together in the world? William Penn October 18, 1681 London. (Fields 2000, 123)

Unfortunately for the Delaware, Penn spent most of his time in England and his best intentions were not carried out in the colony.

### Colonial Values and Mission Policy

Missionaries, and especially mission sending agencies, have often been subject to the influence and collusion of federal governments. Throughout the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries (roughly one hundred years), the Boarding School era, the missionaries worked in conjunction with the Government in order to *civilize* the Indian people. In Canada the schools were directly run by Christian denominations. Part and parcel of the *civilization* process for Indian children was compulsory attendance at residential boarding schools

Common tales of Boarding School coercion include spiritual manipulation, the threat of cutting off food rations to the families who would not send their children away and outright kidnapping. Most often there was pressure from the missionaries who worked in conjunction with the government.<sup>14</sup>

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

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<sup>14</sup> I have heard many elders who are victims of the Boarding School policies reinforce these same themes.

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.

In the era of the 1820s-1840s, the U. S. Indian policy was removal and relocation. One cannot easily discount the influence of strong anti-Indian sentiment coming from the American 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 U. S. 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. Even by this time the frontier sentiment for Indian removal had found justification in the minds of Christian denominations and their missionaries to Native Americans. Baptist missionary Rev. Isaac McCoy, who is credited with the invention of the Indian Reservation, was one example.

In 1827 McCoy wrote a book endorsing Indian removal and colonization. McCoy's concept of an "Indian Canaan" was "heartily endorsed" by Andrew Jackson (McLoughlin 1990, 119), which, in itself, is a notion that should have raised suspicion. In McCoy's mind, he believed his solution to be a better choice than the options offered by many of the frontier politicians. Henry Clay's treatise against Indians while he was U. S. Secretary of State is descriptive and revealing of the political atmosphere in 1827:

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. 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).

Deep seated racism, such as expressed by Henry Clay, was the impetus for the majority of mistreatment Native Americans received whether by the United States Government or through the missionary.

All Christian denominations with missionaries in the Indian field around the time of Indian Removal supported the policies of the U.S. Government, but not without degrees of exception. If the denominations had not fully endorsed the policies of Jackson and agreed with the sentiments of Clay, they may not have had any missionaries at all. In the end, though, these denominations acquiesced to government policy. Such is the case in perhaps the most well known of all Indian removals—the Cherokee Removal. Even though resistance was waged against Cherokee removal by individual missionaries, all denominations active in Cherokee mission supported a policy of removal. As a result of the Indian Removal Act, many thousands of Native Americans lost their land, their livelihood and their very lives.

With the opening of the Oregon Trail in 1847 the Indian Office shifted to the newly created Department of Interior in 1849. During this era, the forced settlement of Native Americans on to reservations was common practice. The government had systematically destroyed the buffalo as a strategic blow to the Plains Indians. Mass western migrations of settlers destroyed many food supplies of the Indians. These migrations also led to violence between settlers and Native Americans.

Another period of time in American history typifying the U. S. Government's disregard for Native American lives and values is the latter half of the nineteenth century. It is interesting to note that during this period was also the opening of Western mission among the American Indians, who had by then had largely been removed from the eastern and southern states. Those indigenous nations who were already located in the west were either removed from their traditional homelands or squeezed onto reservations on or near their original homelands. These reservations were merely a sliver of the size of their original boundaries.

The transition into the twentieth century in Native North America, (the lowest time of Native population in America) produced a small amount of Native American Christians. These indigenous believers were systematically forced to adopt the culture of the dominant society or else pay a heavy price of social torment, physical punishment, or even death. This was often the case in the government funded/mission administrated, Residential Boarding School system.

During this era, missions were administered from a position of power and superiority to the supposed unlearned savage. Native American theologian George Tinker<sup>15</sup> has suggested nothing less than genocide in reference to the Indian boarding school system. An argument can be made that the Indian boarding school project was more akin to ethnocide than genocide. When calculating the end result, Indians feel it makes little difference whether our lives or our 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,

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<sup>15</sup> See "Tinker, George" in Bibliography

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. (Jacobs 2006, 221)

The conventional wisdom at the time was that Indian boarding schools were the fastest track to civilization. The U. S. Government policies supporting Boarding Schools were universally endorsed by Christian mission sending organizations. For five generations almost half of all Native Americans attended Boarding Schools (Churchill 2004, xxiv).

The Indian boarding schools were an extreme attempt by the U. S. and Canadian political and socio/religious entities to force the Indian to give up any leaning towards communalism and shared resources. Laws were created which forced Indians into private land ownership without their consent. These laws were enacted under the ideal that all Indians should become civilized according to the standards of Western governments and religious societies. At the time, civilization and Christianization were often thought to be synonymous.

In time, what Indians discovered was that even when they accepted both Christianity and “civilization” in their own terms, it was not enough to satisfy the Western entities. For example, among my own people, the Cherokee concept of redistribution of wealth was in direct opposition to the individualistic materialism found in dominant American values. Remarkably, the Cherokees, even after removal from their homelands were able to retain their communal values. Noted by their critic, Senator Henry Dawes, after touring Indian Territory in 1887. Dawes described the Cherokees in the following way:

The head chief told us that there was not a family in the whole nation that had not a home of its own. There is not a pauper in that nation, and the nation does not owe a dollar. It built its own capitol ... and built its schools and hospitals. Yet the

defect of the system was apparent. They have got as far as they can go, because they hold their land in common.... There is no selfishness, which is at the bottom of civilization. Till these people will consent to give up their lands, and divide them among their citizens so that each can own the land he cultivates, they will not make much progress. (Malcomson 2000, 15)

This view was similar to other Native North American nations. The differences between Native American and Western worldviews concerning individualism and materialism were in stark contrast. Pre-colonial Native American patterns of thinking about the land developed over thousands of years and millions of experiences to create a sense of harmony between the people and the land. This balance maintained the health of both land and people until the onslaught of colonialism by the Europeans. Perhaps our Native values of sharing were more Christian than the Christians in the New Testament such as the views of the Apostle Paul in 2 Corinthians 8:15 when he wrote, “So that the one who has much, doesn’t have too much; and the one who has little, doesn’t have too little” (NLT).

An obvious difference in Native American and Euro-American worldviews may be seen by comparing how each group viewed the land. To most Western minds land was, and often still is, seen simply as inanimate space that is commodifiable in every sense. In the Western worldview land could be bought and sold by private persons without hesitation. To the Native American, land could not be bought or sold any more than one could buy or sell one’s own mother.<sup>16</sup>

Among the Cherokee, land was held in common because of a covenant with *Yowah*—the Creator. The Cherokee viewed the land as having life and spirit and it could not be owned. The water, the rocks, the earth, all the vegetation and wildlife are each part

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<sup>16</sup> A common idiom among Native Americans refers to the earth as our mother or grandmother.

of a harmonious circle that is co-dependent upon each doing its part. Our belief is that it is up to human beings to conduct ceremonies and festivals that ensure and repair this harmony when disrupted. This way of living is called by the Cherokee, *Duyukta* and closely related to the *Eloheh* concept. Understanding how “The Harmony Way” concept relates to the land may be difficult for the Western mind to grasp. Among most Native American worldviews there is symbiotic relationship between the earth, sky, animals, elements, people, and even our own history on the earth. This relationship will be explained more fully in Chapter 5.

Misconceptions about indigenous cultures and the forced imposition of Euro-American values guided mission policy to form common principles utilized by all Christian denominations. Advice to Christian missionaries from *New Trails for Old: A Handbook for Workers Among the American Indians* was published and distributed by the National Council of Churches in the 1950s. The themes in Native North American mission reveal the common lack of concern, or at least naïveté concerning any possibility of doing mission using Native values. Even the most basic cultural values of language were often 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).

While the injustices that occurred against Native Americans were acknowledged by the missionaries, there was no room for sentimentality or thought given to the possibility of justice concerning restitution. “The fact that Indians have been generally wronged, cheated, divested of initiative, belittled, subjected to constant oversight and direction, is not ample reason to be over sentimental about them” (Lindquist 1952, 51).

Ultimately, the goal of Christian mission in the mid-twentieth century still reflected the Government's goals of assimilation. "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 consummation of the hoped-for development of the Indian church" (Lindquist 1952, 55).

The post World War II era of 1945-1961 is marked by U.S. government policies known as *relocation* and *termination*. Based upon the Indian Land Claims Commission Act of 1946, the House Concurrent Resolution #108 which passed in 1953, and the Bureau of Indian Affairs Direct Employment Program, government policy sought to assimilate Native Americans into the mainstream of the dominant society. During this era special status, reservations, and public services were targeted and Congress terminated federal trusteeship over one-hundred tribes. Indian Reservations were opened for economic exploitation by private companies during these years and over 100,000 Native Americans were sent to urban areas away from reservations to job training and placement programs (Cornell American Indian Project).

These same values and principles, that both explicitly and implicitly promoted assimilation in the past, continue today among mission sending agencies to Native North America. The results of this entrenched missionary movement to Native North Americans have been what one might expect, namely; a paltry collection of Christian Indian converts representing nearly all denominations. Most of these converts have been obliged to abandon their own Native cultures and have been compelled to take on the extemporaneous dominant cultural values in order to be accepted by the wider Christian community.



The values of the dominant culture and the resultant methods that have been appropriated by mission agencies over the past centuries have proven to be ineffective. These values do not provide a means for our Indian people to find the joy and happiness in life that they so desire. Yet, the traditional strategies for reaching Native Americans, and the misguided notions about Native American culture that informed them, remain fixed with perhaps only a few exceptions. Particularly, church planting, the crux of mission among Native Americans, has changed very little among Evangelicals. Methods of innovation that attempt to match cultural values are sparse to non-existent. The problem is not new. The dominant society's disregard for indigenous values has always been present and is as pervasive in Christian mission as it is in Government policy and practice.

### **Contemporary Native American Mission Efforts**

A brief survey of the historical record shows the duplicity that existed in the dominant culture's past practices of undertaking Native American mission. Although individual missionaries did attempt to do mission in more humane ways, they, being a part of the dominant society and its influence, did mission primarily from a place of power and presumed superiority. Without regard for Native North Americans equality as human beings, there can be no appreciation for indigenous values. Consider the tenor of three statements Mann uses that span almost 150 years, concerning America's Host People.

Says, historian George Bancroft, in 1840 about America's indigene "... feeble barbarians, destitute of commerce and political connection...." Pulitzer Prize winner Samuel Elliot Morrison stated in 1974, 'They [Indians] lived short and brutish lives, void of any hope for a future....' Finally, [America before Columbus] "... empty of mankind and it's works." [European America] "... the

story of a civilization where none existed” ... excerpted from *American History: A Survey* ... standard High School text book, 1987. (Mann 2005, 14)

Mission, by its nature, demands a sense of equality for all. Jesus came to all humanity, emptying himself of his superiority over us, while he became one of us. The influence from the dominant Euro-American society has prescribed that mission among America's indigenous people be done from a place of Euro-American values. What values are reflected in today's mission policies? Author Jerry Mander confesses, “Our assumption of superiority does not come to us by accident. We have been trained in it. It is soaked into the fabric of Western religion, economic systems and technology. They reek of their greater virtues and capabilities” (Mander 1991, 209).

Contemporary practitioners may be tempted to view themselves as immune from the sense of entitlement and superiority that their historical counterparts exhibited. 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 for Native Americans, these Western utopian ideas were couched in the Christian Religion.

The fact remains that in the midst of continued centuries of harmful mission policy, Native North Americans are still fighting for our survival today. This is true physically concerning health and welfare, but it is also true in the realm of public

perception which, like in the past, still affect mission. Racism, stereotypes, mascots and hate crimes are just a few of the attitudinal pressures today that Native Americans continue to face. Indian mascots are just one example of prejudice by the dominant culture and Indians are victims of hate crimes at a rate that is out of proportion to our numbers (Grand Forks Herald).

The pattern of disregard for Native North American values by the dominant Euro-American society is evident.<sup>17</sup> As a result of these policies, mission practices among Native Americans continue to show little regard for indigenous values. Despite the long history of mission among Native Americans from a place of colonial values, our aboriginal cultures still reflect our core Native North American values. It is the loss and recovery of these values in Christian mission that are the focus of my research.

No one can deny that our cultures have been eroded and our languages lost, that most of our communities exist in a state of abject economic dependency, that our governments are weak, and that white encroachment on our lands continues. We can, of course, choose to ignore these realities and simply accede to the dissolution of our cultures and nations. Or we can commit ourselves to a different path, one that honours the memory of those who have sacrificed, fought and died to preserve the integrity of our nations. This path, the opposite of the one we are on now, leads to a renewed political life and social life based on our traditional values. (Alfred 1999, xii)

Colonialism and colonial missions have introduced and reinforced systemic changes among colonized peoples that replaced traditional Native American values. This supplanting has occurred at the most basic levels of Indian society. But caution is warranted for any proposal of renewal. Even when these systems are replaced with

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<sup>17</sup> An April 11, 2010 internet search of 11 major denominations under the broad subject of Native American mission and policy changes yielded no statements concerning methods of mission that included the incorporation of Native American core values. Policies were mostly justice oriented towards affirming Native rights, statements of repentance for wrongs done and statements of full acceptance of Natives into the mainstream of denominational life.

indigenous forms, as Alfred points out in referring to the system of education, they can remain laden with the values of the dominant society.

The machinery of indigenous education may simply replicate European systems. But, even if such education resemble traditional Native American systems on the surface, without strong and healthy leaders committed to traditional values and the preservation of our nationhood they are going to fail. Our children will judge them to have failed because an education that is not based on the traditional principles of respect and harmonious coexistence will inevitably tend to reflect the cold, calculating and coercive ways of the modern state. The whole of the decolonization process will have been for nothing if indigenous education has no meaningful indigenous character. Worse, if the new education does not embody a notion of power that is appropriate to indigenous cultures, the goals of the struggle will have been betrayed. Leaders who promote non-indigenous goals and embody non-indigenous values are simple tools used by the state to maintain its control (Alfred 1999, xiv).

In spite of our bereaved history, ill health, poor education, inadequate housing and marginalization, we Native Americans have a residual set of values that are a repository of true wealth. These values, if utilized properly, may have the potential to produce mission models resulting in true well-being for Native Americans. For such a model to find footing in Indian country, a missional paradigm shift must occur.

An old Indian joke describes the paradigm shift needed: One day Coyote (the Trickster) was asked to visit the President. The President and Coyote strolled along the Rose Garden together and finally the President asked Coyote if he could give him any advice on “the Indian problem.” “Sure,” Coyote said, “what’s the problem?”

The reality of the joke suggests that Indians are primarily viewed as a problem to be solved by the government, and I would add, by the modern American church. Indigenous people are not usually considered to be an asset by either agency. This prevailing attitude in America has a long history and is tied into the legacy of

colonialism. According to Maori author Linda Tuhiwai Smith, “Problematizing the Indigenous is a Western obsession” (1999, 91). Says Smith,

Concern about “the indigenous problem” began as an explicitly militaristic or policing concern.... Once indigenous peoples had been rounded up and put on reserves the “indigenous problem” became a policy discourse which reached out across all aspects of a government’s attempt to control the Natives.... Both “friends of the Natives” and those hostile to indigenous peoples conceptualized the issues of colonization and European encroachment on indigenous territories in terms of a problem of the Natives. The Natives were, according to this view, to blame for not accepting the terms of their colonization.... The belief in the ‘indigenous problem’ is still present in the western psyche. (1999, 91-92)

In summary, 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 Native Americans are people who are gifted by God and have something to teach the dominant society. The church continues this discussion on both a spiritual and pragmatic level. After over 400 years of active mission efforts, including untold millions of dollars invested, and untold human hours sacrificed, very few Native Americans claim to be a part of the Christian church.<sup>18</sup> Even more discouraging is the overall health of these few existing Indian churches.

One measure of a successful indigenous church credited to Rufus Anderson and Henry Venn is the idea of healthy churches as self-governing, self-supporting, and self-propagating. Later, David Bosch suggested that self-theologizing be added to the three-self concept. To utilize the four-self model as a valid measurement of Native American churches would find a gloomy incongruous reality. In my own experience our Native

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<sup>18</sup> It is difficult to determine how many Native people are Christians. In a personal conversation, Art Everett at the U.S. Center for World Missions (1996) told me he did a survey and determined that “5% of Native Americans attend church.” Everett’s project doesn’t say how many are Christians. In my experience I have found that many Natives, especially older people, are Christians but don’t attend colonial church and may not choose to be called a Christian in traditional Christian terms. Still, the theme holds true, Native people, whether Christian or not, do not feel welcome in colonial church structures.

churches are most often characterized in their respective denominations as being small in numbers, poor in giving, divisive, mixed in denominational loyalty, non-ministering, non-reproducing and embarrassingly dependent upon the denomination's funding, leadership and approval.

Perhaps the current ill state would correct itself if denominations and other mission sending agencies were to strategize mission efforts among Native Americans in mutual partnership with the Native communities and by using Native American core values as a basis for new models of mission.

## CHAPTER 3

### DISCOVERING CORE NATIVE NORTH AMERICAN VALUES

In this chapter I explain what I mean by “values,” and I explain my method for eliciting values.

#### Defining Values

The word *values* has many definitions. Likely none of them fully express the whole of defining what values are to culture so I will use several definitions from various perspectives in an attempt to show the broad picture. At a fundamental level, culture, as explained by my mentor includes—“the ideas, feelings and values of a people” (Rynkiewich 2006). He expands this definition:

Culture refers to the patterns of behavior and belief common to members of society. It is the rules for understanding and generating customary behavior. Culture includes beliefs, norms, values, assumptions, expectations, and plans for action. It is the framework within from which people see the world around them, interpret events and behavior, and react to their perceived reality. (Spradley and Rynkiewich 1975, 7)

The core values of most North American indigenous communities are drastically different than those of the dominant society. One Native American man’s experience resonates with many indigenes:

Whenever I travel back to Oklahoma...I struggle with my return to the city. As soon as I get back to New York, I feel as though a part of me has been left behind in those Osage hills...we live in two worlds. In the Native American world, our relatives surround us. We are related to everything. We walk upon Grandmother

Earth...and we address the sun as "Grandfather." We live where we bless ourselves everyday. Where everything we do has a meaning. We listen to our elders and sing the old songs. Our ceremonies take place throughout the year. Everything we do begins with a prayer to the Creator. We are always on Indian time and there is plenty of good Indian food to eat.

But we also have to exist in the non-Native world. A place where we have to dress a certain way, go by clock time, and always are serious at work. A place where money is all that counts along with how much we earn and how we earn it....People appear to always be in a hurry. Everyone seems to be a stranger. They pray once a week while in church and they pretend to have no relatives. (Moore 2003, 36)

## Literature

In Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck's classic *Values Orientation Study* that came to be informally known as the *Values Project*, they evaluate five communities in the southwest for their values orientation along with variations within and outside the groups.<sup>19</sup> Two of these groups included the Rim-Rock Navaho and the Zuni Indians. The study was helpful to my research in identifying the basic values orientations that have come to be categorized under such terms as the "unconscious system of meaning," "core culture," or "cultural themes" (1961, 3). Spradley and Rynkiewich add once again to the effort to define values and their relationship to worldview,

Values are conceptions of what is desirable. As assumptions about what is and what ought to be they shape every aspect of people's lives.... The sum total of a culture's values produces a particular worldview, a total framework which provides an integrated conception of reality. (Spradley and Rynkiewich 1975, 361)

The results of the Values Project most germane to my topic include their findings related to the Rim Rock Navajo and Zuni Pueblo sections. The work also offers a viable broad definition of values orientation. Namely, "...a generalized and organized principle

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<sup>19</sup> This study is dated anthropology when indigenous/emic categories were just coming to the fore, but Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck are still heavily invested in social science categories. It was necessary to deconstruct and reconstruct their work to get at Native concepts and values.



concerning basic human problems that pervasively and profoundly influences man's behavior" (Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck 1961, 341).

The study also recognized the effect of acculturation/modernization by noting differences in first and second order values orientation, first order values being those most natural and relied upon for centuries. The second order values are those most likely adapted recently through acculturation. According to the study, values orientation specifically are

complex but definitely patterned (rank order) principles resulting from the transactional interplay of three analytically distinguishable elements of the evaluative process—the cognitive, the affective, and the directive elements—which give order and direction to the ever-flowing stream of human acts and thoughts as these relate to the solution of "common human problems." (Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck 1961, 341)

The categories included Human Nature Orientation, which divided into the innate goodness or badness of human nature and questioned the innate goodness and badness in human nature as either Evil, Good-and-Evil or Good (11); Man-Nature (Super-nature) Orientation, which considered possibilities of Subjugation-to-Nature, Harmony-with-Nature, and Mastery-over-Nature (13); Time Orientation, which considered Past, Present and Future orientations (13); Activity Orientation, which considered Being, Being-in-Becoming and Doing (15); and Relational Orientation, which considered the Lineal, Collateral and Individualistic relational alternatives (17).

The study showed that the Zuni were a very culturally and historically complex people (for example, over the past century they have been reduced or compressed to a single pueblo). With the Zuni, the researchers were able to draw from the writings of anthropologist Frank Hamilton Cushing, who lived with the Zuni when they had a primarily first order existence (in the late 1800s), but on their own observations they

found the Zuni Activity Orientation to be inconclusive finding all categories, (Being, Being-in-Becoming and Doing) present (306). They also found their Man-Nature Orientation to be inconclusive although their observations leaned towards Harmony-with-Nature (306). Because of the enculturation process, they saw hints of Mastery-over-Nature (i.e., because of public water the young men no longer know how to use flood irrigation). Time Orientation showed a definite Present over Past over Future in that order (309). In terms of Relational Orientation, they ranked the Zuni as Collateral over Lineal over Individual, with Individual ranking last and gaining ground as a result of acculturation (309). Human Nature Orientation was not tested with the Zuni

The Rimrock Navajo were found by the team to have an Activity Orientation as Doing with some Being (338). Man-Nature Orientation showed a strong Man-with-Nature value (338).

Minimizing friction in human relations and maintaining harmony between man and supernaturals, between man and nature, and in the universe generally, are the basic goals toward which the Navajo is oriented. The aim is to maintain “balance” or “harmony” among various aspects of the universe. Disequilibrium may bring trouble such as human illness, drought, or social disruption. (331)

The Time Orientation of the Navajo was said to be difficult to test (Because they use linguistic markers to note whether or not the speaker was present at the event, but not to identify tenses like past, present and future in English)<sup>20</sup> but the dominant value orientation, akin to the Zuni, clearly being Present-with-Past and Past being “a source of knowledge and continuity that keeps the Present stable and the Future predictable” (325). Time was not viewed as a commodity (331). The results of the Navajo are like the Zuni

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20 Cf. “The Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis” -people who speak different languages do not live in the same world with different labels attached but actually live in different worlds, *Language, Thought, and Reality: Selected Writings of Benjamin Lee Whorf*, MIT Press, 1964, Ed. John B. Carroll; and Dorothy Lee in her famous article *Lineal and Non-lineal Codifications of Reality*, Bobbs-Merrill, 1950.

with their predominant orientation being Present over Past over Future (38).

Concerning Relational Orientation they found the Navajo, like the Zuni to be overwhelmingly Collateral over Lineal over individual (338). “The worst thing that can be said about a Navaho is to say, ‘He acts as if he has no relatives’” (320). Human Nature Orientation was shown to be “definitely as a mixture of Good and Evil,...invariably Good with an Evil side” (335).

The study shows that of the two tribes studied, the Zuni and the Rimrock Navajo, there are some differences but more similarities. It is hard to know how much those differences are based on second level value orientation as a result of modernization. I suspect that in their first order state there would still be some differences but they would be minimal. The finding of so many commonalities among these two tribes is surprising given the vast differences in their cultural and oral history.

The Navajo are *Na-Dene/Athapaskan* speakers (along with the Apache), meaning that they are newcomers to this area. The Zuni are a language isolate, i.e., no near relative languages, not even the nearby Hopi who are *Uto-Aztec* (Ethnologue). So, one would not expect the Zuni and the Navaho to have as much in common as the Navaho and the Apache, for example. Likewise, the origin and migration stories of the two tribes have no apparent similarities.

For my project, the real value of the study concerned the results showing that the two tribes had more continuity than discontinuity, with the concept of Harmony being very strong in both cultures. When compared with Euro-American values I suspect the two first level values orientation would be almost impossible to differentiate.

Arensberg and Niehoff paint a broad cultural landscape of American cultural

values by stating,

However, despite diversities origin, tradition, and economic level, there is surprisingly conformity in language, diet, hygiene, dress, basic skills, land use, community settlement, recreation and other activities. The people share a rather small range of moral, political, economic, and social attitudes, being divided in opinion chiefly by their denominational and occupational interest....

Some of the values shared by the Americans noted are

Material Well-Being:

The high value placed on such comforts has caused industries to be geared to produce ever greater quantities and improved versions. Americans seem to feel they have a "right" to such amenities....

Twofold Judgments:

A special characteristic of Western thinking, fully reflected in American ways, is that of making twofold judgments based on principle. The structure of the Indo-European languages seem to foster this kind of thinking and the action that follows. A situation is assigned to a category held high, thus providing a justification for positive effort, or to one held low, with justification for rejection, avoidance or other negative action. Two-fold judgments seem to be the rule in western and American life: moral-immoral, legal-illegal, right-wrong, sin-virtue, success-failure, clean-dirty, civilized-primitive, practical-impractical, introvert-extrovert, secular-religious, Christian-pagan. This kind of thinking tends to put the world of values into absolutes, and its arbitrary nature is indicated by the fact that modern science no longer uses opposite categories, in almost all instances preferring to use the concept of a range with degrees of difference separating the poles. (Arensberg and Niehoff 1971, 210-14)

The twofold judgment is, perhaps, the most striking cultural value difference compared with Native Americans and possibly the least understood by those seeking to assist Native Americans.

The very basis of post-Enlightenment Western Christianity is deeply rooted in this cultural value and in many ways it is the polar opposite of Native American values of tolerance and balance concerning religion and law:

This kind of thinking seems to force Americans into positions of exclusiveness. If one position is accepted, the other must be rejected. There is little possibility of keeping opposite or even parallel ideas in one's thinking pattern. This is not the case in other cultures. (Arensberg and Niehoff 1971, 214)

Sometimes the twofold judgment is described as an 'either/or' rather than a 'both/and'

kind of thinking. European thinking rooted in Greek categories tends toward 'either/or' categories, whereas Asian thinking rooted in Asian philosophies tends toward 'both/and' categories, though the other is not absent in either broad tradition. Indigenous have no difficulty holding two seemingly opposite concepts together with equal value.

Arensberg and Niehoff list several other American cultural values that seemingly flow out of the twofold judgment, including "Moralizing," which classifies all action as either good or bad. They note its strength and weakness:

Judging people and actions as absolutely right or wrong may have been a source of considerable strength in American history but it has also created pitfalls, particularly in the way it has influenced Americans in their relationship with other peoples...And the greatest difficulties will occur if the outsider assumes that other people's basis of judgment is the same as his, or even that proper conduct will be based on moral rather than other kinds of principles. (1971, 215)

While not specifically addressing Native Americans, the writers describe the root of some of the problems concerning the Euro-Americans and their failure to understand Native American values. They have equally shown one of the roots of the national narrative dealt with in chapter two. In essence, American expansion through imperialism needed justification, and this put indigenous beliefs and practices on the other side of moral judgments. Exploitation and colonization of the indigenous people and land was justified because the beliefs and practices of the natives were on the other side of the moral divide, they were "bad."

Arensberg and Niehoff continue, pointing out the dualism in American values between "Work and Play," how "Time is Money," the relationship expected between "Effort and Optimism," the propensity towards "Humanitarianism" and the moralizing operative of the "Equality of Men." One final value noted in the book, "Man and Nature," also requires attention in this assessment:

Up to now, American man has attempted to conquer nature. It has been something to overcome, to improve, to tear down and rebuild in a better way. He has tried to “break the soil,” to “harness” the natural resources, to treat the natural environment like a domestic animal. He has divided the plants and the animals into categories of useful and harmful. Harmful plants are weeds and harmful animals are “varmints”—the first to be uprooted or poisoned and the second to be trapped, shot, or poisoned...It must be admitted that many of the achievements of the Americans are due to this conquering attitude toward nature. The enormous agricultural productivity is one such achievement, although credit must also go to the fact that there were large expanses of fertile land available. (Arensberg and Niehoff 1971, 224)

The writers continue to note the high price on the environment that holding to this preeminent value has cost the Americans. Today, the activity and influence of America as a world power has not only cost the Americans the depletion of vital natural resources but has also taken a toll on the whole planet.

The verdict is still out concerning whether or not the great American experiment has crossed the brink of recovery or if the planet can ultimately be saved from total ruin. In addition to the relationship of moral and material dualism related to the Twofold Judgment, the writers describe what undergirds such action:

This conquering attitude toward nature appears to rest on at least three assumptions: that the universe is mechanistic, that man is the master, and that man is qualitatively different from all other forms of life. Specifically, American and Western man credits himself with a special inner consciousness, a soul, for which he does not give other creatures credit. (Arensberg and Niehoff 1971, 224)

Among Native Americans we understand that all creation has spirit or soul. We view ourselves in a connected relationship to all creation. As I read the Genesis accounts of creation I find it reflects our Native American values, not the American values mentioned.

Through an apt understanding of value differences one can see how mission among Native Americans by Americans was a result of extreme over confidence in a

morality based on the Twofold Judgment and followed by a conquest mentality. This may also explain why Native Americans, who are sovereign nations, are placed not under the U.S. State Department with the benefits of diplomats and dialogue, but rather we are categorized as part of the Department of Interior. Along with all forms of flora and fauna, America's First Nations are the only human species in the Department of Interior.

The gap between American indigenous cultures and the dominant American culture seems wide indeed. These cultural values are often diametrically opposed. Some of the differences between American and Native American cultures are noted by Jacobs in his book *Unlearning the Language of Conquest*.

### **The Jacobs Value Set**

Jacobs' list of indigenous values was particularly interesting because it is from a Native American writer and it offers a clear contrast with the values of the dominant society.

- The natural world is ultimately more about cooperation than it is about competition
- The concept of reciprocity can guide living systems toward balance
- Human decisions are best made from the heart as well as the mind
- Humans are entwined in and with Nature and the idea of "conquering" or being "in charge" of it rather than honoring the relationship is an aberration
- Children are sacred and possess inherent value
- A Great Mysterious Spirit is within all its creations
- Material possessions are less important than generosity and generosity is the highest form of courage
- Diversity gives strength and balance to the world
- Resolution of conflict should be about restoring harmony rather than enacting vengeance or punishment
- Cognitive dissonance is a human frailty is best met with humor and understanding followed by coercive resolution, not rationalization or denial
- Women are naturally wise and powerful and are thus vital for social harmony
- Prayer & ceremony can help one connect to an invisible world and have value in maintaining health and harmony
- Fear is a catalyst for practicing great virtue such as generosity, patience, courage honesty or fear

- Ultimately, the only true authority comes from personal reflection on experience in light of a spiritual awareness that all things are related
- Words are powerful entities and should never to be misused or used deceptively. (Jacobs 2006, 19)

The Native North American values listed by Jacobs, in contrast with the values of the dominant society, could serve as good news to a broken and fragmented world.

Within our broken American society, those who continue to be most marginalized are Native North Americans. With such noble values, still we indigenes are in such a ruinous state because we have lost our way—but perhaps not completely. While our indigenous communities are often extremely dysfunctional, we still are able to recognize the beauty in even the most disintegrated of our noble values and our spirituality. Deloria and Wildcat say,

Even the most severely eroded Indian community today still has a substantial fragment of the old ways left, and these ways are to be found in the Indian family. Even the badly shattered families preserve enough elements of kinship so that whatever the experiences of the young, there is a sense that life has some unifying principles that can be discerned through experience and that guide behavior. This feeling, and it is a strong emotional feeling toward the world that transcends beliefs and information, continues to gnaw at American Indians throughout their lives. (2001, 43)

These “unifying principles” may be recognized by most Native North Americans, but what are they and how are they identified? I have called these unifying principles ‘values’, but they are called many names by anthropologists including “focal themes” (Opler 1945).<sup>21</sup>

Morris Opler was an anthropologist who worked widely in the early to mid-twentieth century among the Apache people including the *Chiricahua*, *Mescalero*,

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<sup>21</sup> Opler contrasts his themes with Ruth Benedict’s dominant drives in that not all cultures are shaped by a dominant drive and with Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck’s value orientations in that values could imply positive and negative aspects associated with beliefs about right behaviors. I prefer Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck’s values orientation work because of the greater variety of differences between the Zuni and Navajo as opposed to the comparably minor distinctions between Apache groups.



*Jicarilla, Lipan and "Kiowa" Apache groups in Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, and Oklahoma.* According to Opler,

A theme, then, is an integrative principle, a mechanism for unifying the parts of a whole. It is translated into a conduct or belief through expressions in the activities, prohibitions of activities, or references which result from the acceptance or an affirmation of a theme in a society. (1945, 199)

Opler's definition is helpful, but for the purposes of this project I do not wish to separate themes from their resultant actions and values. Instead, I have chosen to rely on the term value to differentiate between the broadest concept of harmony and the values that make up the concept.

My intention in this portion of the dissertation is to correlate Native North American values presented by Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck, and four other studies to recognizable indigenous concepts of well-being. My first task was to discern the core Native North American values. Of the hundreds of sovereign Indian nations on Turtle Island, one could get hundreds of possible answers to this question, yet both insider and outsider views have been presented by scholars in a number of fields. Besides my examination of the *Values Project*, I studied four sources of Native North American core values in order to synthesize the core of these values into a list with which I believed would express how most indigenous Americans feel.

The first set of values is listed above by Jacobs. Jacobs is known within the Indian community of academic scholarship. He is currently a faculty member with Fielding Graduate Institute and the former Dean of Education at Ogallala Lakota College, a fully accredited four-year tribal college on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota. In addition to nearly one hundred articles in magazines and journals, Jacobs is the author of more than a dozen books.

## The Kelley Value Set

Another list of Native North American values I examined comes from the field of Psychology. Susan D. M. Kelley is an educator and psychologist who wrote an article in a peer reviewed journal concerning traditional Native American values as they pertain to the type services provided in the fields of social services such as rehabilitation. Kelley's list is one that was compiled using prior research from dozens of authors, primarily in the field of mental health. Her assessment of Native American values is as follows:

Individual and tribal differences notwithstanding, there are generalized values which permeate all Native American cultures. Anderson and Ellis (1988), Oppelt (1989), Heinrich, Corbine, and Thomas (1990), Herring (1989), Sue (1981), Fischer (1991) Axelson (1985), and Thomason (1991) provided comparative analyses of these values and dominant culture counterparts. Native American values most pertinent to rehabilitation are:

- a. Happiness and harmony between and within individuals, the society, and nature;
- b. generosity in sharing of self, resources, and possessions;
- c. transmission of knowledge through an oral tradition;
- d. an orientation to the past which honors tradition, and to the present in taking life as it comes;
- e. a fluidity of lifestyle which is without external constraints other than those voluntarily chosen;
- f. work which is in harmony with the individual and meets present needs;
- g. discrete and respectful communication with little eye contact and an emphasis on listening; and
- h. a universal spirituality which is integral to all life and every lifestyle.

These are all functional values with which the planning and delivery of rehabilitation services should be aligned. Functional values need to be considered among the strengths of clients and employed to enhance service delivery in all phases of the rehabilitation process. (2007)

As one might expect, Kelley's list emphasizes the more relational aspects of Native culture.

## The Evergreen Value Set

An example of another set of Native North American values comes from the Public Service Center of Evergreen State College, the Northwest Indian Applied Research Institute, and the Evergreen Center for Educational Improvement, and Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction's Office of Indian Education. Their work presents the research and development of culturally-responsive and culturally-appropriate curriculum representing Northwest Native American tribes for use in Washington state secondary public schools. The Evergreen value set draws a contrast between selected and widely shared Native American core cultural values and non-Native American values and associated behaviors and attitudes:

*Personal differences.* Native Americans traditionally have respected the unique individual differences among people. Common Native American expressions of this value include staying out of others' affairs and verbalizing personal thoughts or opinions only when asked. Returning this courtesy is expected by many Native Americans as an expression of mutual respect.

*Quietness.* Quietness or silence is a value that serves many purposes in Indian life. Historically the cultivation of this value contributed to survival. In social situations, when they are angry or uncomfortable, many Indians remain silent. Non-Indians sometimes view this trait as indifference, when in reality, it is a very deeply embedded form of Indian interpersonal etiquette.

*Patience.* In Native American life, the virtue of patience is based on the belief that all things unfold in time. Like silence, patience was a survival virtue in earlier times. In social situations, patience is needed to demonstrate respect for individuals, reach group consensus, and all time for "the second thought." Overt pressure on Indian students to make quick decisions or responses without deliberation should be avoided in most educational situations.

*Open work ethic.* In traditional Indian life, work is always directed to a distinct purpose and is done when it needs to be done. The non-materialistic orientation of many Indians is one outcome of this value. Only that which is actually needed is accumulated through work. In formal education, a rigid schedule of work for work's sake (busy work) needs to be avoided because it tends to move against the grain of this traditional value. Schoolwork must be shown to have an immediate and authentic purpose.

*Mutualism.* As a value, attitude, and behavior, mutualism permeates everything in the traditional Indian social fabric. Mutualism promotes a sense of belonging and solidarity with group members cooperating to gain group security

and consensus. In American education, the tendency has been to stress competition and work for personal gain over cooperation. The emphasis on grades and personal honors are examples. In dealing with Indian students, this tendency must be modified by incorporating cooperative activities on an equal footing with competitive activities in the learning environment.

*Nonverbal Orientation.* Traditionally most Indians have tended to prefer listening rather than speaking. Talking for talking's sake is rarely practiced. Talk, just as work, must have a purpose. Small talk and light conversation are not especially valued except among very close acquaintances. In Indian thought, words have a primordial power so that when there is a reason for their expression, it is generally done carefully. In social interaction, the emphasis is on affective rather than verbal communication. When planning and presenting lessons, it is best to avoid pressing a class discussion or asking a long series of rapid-fire questions. This general characteristic explains why many Indian students feel more comfortable with lectures or demonstrations. Teachers can effectively use the inquiry approach, role playing, or simulation to demonstrate they have a full understanding of this characteristic.

*Seeing and Listening.* In earlier times, hearing, observing, and memorizing were important skills since practically all aspects of Native American culture were transferred orally or through example. Storytelling, oratory, and experiential and observational learning were all highly developed in Native American cultures. In an education setting, the use of lectures and demonstrations, modified case studies, storytelling, and experiential activities can all be highly effective. A balance among teaching methods that emphasize listening and observation, as well as speaking, is an important consideration.

*Time Orientation.* In the Indian world, things happen when they are ready to happen. Time is relatively flexible and generally not structured into compartments as it is in modern society. Because structuring time and measuring it into precise units are hallmarks of public schools in the United States, disharmony can arise between the tradition-oriented Indian learner and the material being presented. The solution is to allow for scheduling flexibility within practical limits.

*Orientation to Present.* Traditionally most Indians have oriented themselves to the present and the immediate tasks at hand. This orientation stems from the deep philosophical emphasis on being rather than becoming. Present needs and desires tend to take precedence over vague future rewards. Although this orientation has changed considerably over the past 40 years, vestiges are still apparent in the personalities of many Native Americans. Given this characteristic, the learning material should have a sense of immediate relevancy for the time and place of each student.

*Practicality.* Indians tend to be practical minded. Many Indians have less difficulty comprehending educational materials and approaches that are concrete or experiential rather than abstract and theoretical. Given this characteristic, learning and teaching should begin with numerous concrete examples and activities to be followed by discussion of the abstraction.

*Holistic Orientation.* Indian cultures, like most primal cultures, have a long-standing and well-integrated orientation to the whole. This is readily apparent in

various aspects of Indian cultures, ranging from healing to social organization. Presenting educational material from a holistic perspective is an essential and natural strategy for teaching Indian people,

*Spirituality.* Religious thought and action are integrated into every aspect of the socio-cultural fabric of traditional Native American life. Spirituality is considered a natural component of everything. When presenting new concepts, teachers should keep in mind that all aspects of Indian cultures are touched by it. Discussing general aspects of spirituality and religion is an important part of the curriculum, although precautions must be taken to respect the integrity, sacred value, and inherent privacy of each Indian tribe's religious practices. Ideally all discussions of Native American religion should be kept as general and nonspecific as possible. Specifics should be discussed only in the proper context and with the necessary permission of the particular tribe involved.

*Caution.* The tendency toward caution in unfamiliar personal encounters and situations has given rise to the stereotypical portrayal of the stoic Indian. This characteristic is closely related to the placidity and quiet behavior of many Indian people. In many cases, such caution results from a basic fear regarding how their thoughts and behavior will be accepted by others with whom they are unfamiliar or in a new situation with which they have no experience. Educators should make every effort to alleviate these fears and show that students' subjective orientations are accepted by the teacher. To the extent possible, the class and lesson presentation should be made as informal and open as possible. Open friendliness and sincerity are key factors in easing these tensions (Evergreen State University).

The Evergreen set was actually the most descriptive of all those I evaluated.

### **“The Sacred” Value Set**

The fourth and final set of Native American values I derived from a book that resulted from a Title III, Higher Education Grant and was published by the Navajo Community College in 1977. The work has many contributors from a wide array of tribal backgrounds. The book is titled *The Sacred: Ways of Knowledge, Sources of Life*. The following six values are taken from this publication:

1. A belief in or knowledge of unseen powers, or what some people call The Great Mystery.
2. Knowledge that all things in the universe are dependent on each other.
3. Personal worship reinforces the bond between the individual, the community, and the great powers. Worship is a personal commitment to the sources of life.
4. Sacred traditions and persons knowledgeable in them are responsible for teaching morals and ethics.

5. Most communities and tribes have trained practitioners who have been given names such as medicine men, priests, shamans, caciques, and other names. These individuals also have names given them by the People which differ from tribe to tribe. These individuals are responsible for specialized, perhaps secret knowledge. They help pass knowledge and sacred practices from generation to generation, storing what they know in their memories.
6. A belief that humor is a necessary part of the sacred. And a belief that human beings are often weak—we are not gods—and our weakness leads us to do foolish things; therefore clowns and similar figures are needed to show us how we act and why. (Beck and Walters 1977, 8)

### **Synthesized Set of Native North American Core Values (Initial Effort)**

My first effort at synthesizing Native American values was to take all four sets (above) of Native North American values into one list using a very straightforward method (see Appendix A). The chart lists the four sets of values under the appropriate author or agency, and then carries over all duplicates to the Core Values list in the final column. The duplicates are an integration of similar concepts. I had to make this judgment based on my own experience and knowledge of indigenous values, as well as the descriptions and interpretations offered by these authors. Three entrees, (J7, J13, K2) were discarded because their descriptions seemed more virtues or behaviors—not values. I combined J11 and J5 and added “Elder’s Respected.” These all had to do with special categories of people who are not already mentioned. All remaining values were then added to the core values list.

To my surprise, the core value representing family was not specified in any of the lists, yet, I consider this value to be essential to any list of Native North American values because anyone who has been around Native Americans understands the centrality of family, Implicit and explicit references to family were mentioned in other compilations from the survey and the interviews. Therefore, value number 14 is my own addition.

Thus, my first attempt at developing a general list of Native North American Core Values for the purpose of this study<sup>22</sup> looked like this:

1. Belief in the Great Mystery/Creator
2. Seek to maintain harmony/balance in all of life
3. Personal worship reinforces identity
4. Sacred traditions/ceremonies and specialized practitioners
5. Humor is sacred and necessary
6. Women are powerful and vital, children are sacred, and elders are respected
7. Respect is normative and shown expressed cooperation
8. Use both the heart and mind when making decisions
9. Natural world is spiritual/sacred
10. Authority comes from reflected experience
11. Primal power in words and oral tradition
12. Time orientation emphasizes past and present
13. Open work ethic-work as need arises
14. Family orientated-relatedness extends past immediate family
15. Practice Hospitality/Generosity of self, resources and possessions

This list was an important beginning because it allowed me to formulate the survey questions and have a strong starting place from which to begin the interview and survey process. However, later in my research I learned of the *Values Project*, which added to the original literature. I then began to see the importance of a more specific effort to compare and contrast the dominant Western Euro-American values in some form to Native American values.

This line of thought led me to integrate the work of Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck concerning the Rimrock Navajo and Zuni Pueblo. Integrating the essay from *The Nacirema*<sup>23</sup> gave me a better focus on pulling together the values of western Euro-American culture. The combined chart is listed as “Appendix B” in this document.

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<sup>22</sup> Note that some of these are constructed like a behavior and some like a virtue. This distinction will become less idiosyncratic as the final list begins to surface.

<sup>23</sup> I originally found Arensburg and Niehoff’s unique study of American culture in an article in the book, *The Nacirema* (America spelled backwards) edited by James P. Spradley and Michael A. Rynkiewicz (1975). The article was originally published in Conrad M. Arensburg and Arthur H. Niehoff, editors,

## Interviews

In Native America, elders and spiritual leaders are considered our experts. Our elders and spiritual leaders are the most reliable source of knowledge and considered the authoritative repository of spiritual knowledge. My intention was to personally interview seven to ten Native North American spiritual leaders/elders. The interviews were conducted on video.

The Federal Government recognizes over 560 tribal entities in the U. S., not counting the many tribal groups who are not federally recognized. A similar scenario would be true for Canada. Each of these tribes may or may not have a well-being concept but because of the vast possibilities that existed, I wanted to interview elders/spiritual leaders representing a wide geographic profile. The interviewees were all Native North American elders/spiritual leaders or at least burgeoning elder/spiritual leaders who know their own culture well, and in most cases, who know of other tribal cultures and ideas. The only question I asked was one that allowed them to identify a concept of harmony in their own culture or other cultures.

I began with a statement: "In my own Cherokee culture we have a concept of harmony and balance we call 'Eloheh'. It's how life is supposed to be lived in the way Creator intended." I then said as little as possible to get them talking about the subject. The first point was to see whether or not they recognized such a concept, how soon they recognized it, and then my practice was to allow them to talk about it without interruption. In every case the interviewee knew exactly what I was talking about and then proceeded to expound his or her own understanding of the concept of harmony.



**John GrosVenor**

Echota Cherokee and also of Chickasaw and Choctaw ancestry, John GrosVenor is a former pastor and noted Cherokee elder among Christians in the Northwest. He has spent most of his life in the Cherokee *diaspora* and among various Northwestern tribes. He is married to a Yankton/Walaki woman. The Cherokee homelands are traditionally in the Southeastern section of the United States but after Indian removal, Oklahoma has also become a traditional homeland for the Cherokee. Other areas in the U. S. were heavily populated with Cherokees at various times including the Bakersfield, California area during the Dust Bowl era. John was raised among his traditional Cherokee relatives, in California and has many relatives still living in Oklahoma. John's views are representative of those of Southeastern Indian cultures but he also was able to comment accurately on other tribal cultures (i.e., the Northwestern tribes) because that is where he has spent the latter years of his life.

**Vincent Yellow Old Woman**

From the Siksika Band of the Blackfoot Confederacy, Vincent Yellow Old Woman is a respected elder in the United States and Canada. He serves on the tribal council and in the affairs of the Siksika Nation in Alberta Canada. Vincent is also a reputed Pow Wow Master of Ceremonies and performs this traditional role all across the U. S. and Canada. Vincent's views are representative of the Natives of the Northern Plains cultures. Vincent Yellow Old Woman is a Canadian citizen and also a former mission pastor. He is well respected among both Christian and traditional Native American peoples.

**Fern Cloud**

A Dakota tribal member, Fern Cloud is a noted spiritual leader among Native Christians and among non-Christian circles as a Pow Wow dancer, Hoop dancer, language and youth worker. She has a ministry called "Healing the Hoop," the hoop being the same type symbol as the circle which is a metaphor for all of life on the planet. Fern is a blood descendent of His Red Road (a.k.a. Little Crow), an honored Dakota Chief. She lives in the traditional homelands of the Dakota, Nakota and Lakota people on the Upper Sioux Reservation near Granite Falls, Minnesota. Fern works for the tribal government in the community youth programs and she is a reservation pastor on the Upper Sioux Reservation. Fern's views are representative of the transitional tribes between the Northern Plains cultures and the Northern Woodlands cultures.

**Casey Church**

Casey Church, a tribal member from the Pohegan Band of Pottawatomie, is currently living among Southwestern Native peoples in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Casey was taught his Pottawatomie traditions by his own people in Michigan. He is a traditional Pipe Carrier for his people. He is also an innovator in the Native American Contextual Movement among Native Christians. His views are representative of those of the Northern Woodlands cultures.

**Lora Church**

Lora Church was raised among the Dine' (Navajo) peoples. Like most Dine' people, she was raised traditionally and speaks her Navajo language. The Navajo are the largest tribal group in the United States. The Navajo language is the most widely spoken

Indian language in the United States. Lora is a noted speaker and a leader of women among Native Christians. Lora's views are representative of those tribes in the Southeastern United States, especially Navajo women.

### **Iglahliq Suuqiina**

Iglahliq Suuqiina is an Inuit with a Ph.D. in theology and an ordained minister. He is known as a spiritual leader in Native and Christian circles. He is a widely traveled and accomplished person and may have represented the Alaska Natives with his views. Dr. Suuqiina served as a pastor for twenty-one years. He is an impressionistic oil painter, ivory carver and jewelry craftsman. Suuqiina is also a concert pianist. He is a member of the Oil Painters of America, The Portrait Society of America, The Tennessee Art League and the Made in Alaska Artists Group. He served as a member of the Board of Directors for the 13th Regional Corporation, an Alaska Native Corporation. Unfortunately, we were never able to find a time when both of us were able to meet, so I did not interview Suuqiina.

### **Joe Garru**

Joe Garru is a traditional Mohawk elder and healer who resides on the Wahpole Island Reservation in Canada. He is a known medicine man and is not a follower of Christ. I felt that it would be important to have several non-christian opinions expressed but my trip to interview Joe was interrupted by my hospitalization with heart problems and then an inability to travel for several months. In the meantime, I was able to create the opportunity to interview another person from the Northwest tribes, Adrian Jacobs.

**Adrian Jacobs**

Adrian Jacobs is a Cayuga tribal member. Although he is now a Christian, Adrian was raised traditionally among the related people groups of the Iroquois Confederacy. Adrian turned out to be one of the most useful interviews because he was raised traditionally in the Iroquoian longhouse tradition of Handsome Lake and knew the stories of the Iroquois Confederacy. He is a respected spiritual leader and activist in his own Native community and among Native American Christians. He currently resides on his own reserve in Canada.

**Hopi Elder**

In my travels I was scheduled to interview a Hopi elder (name withheld) while teaching in Hopiland last November. Unfortunately, our time was cut short because of an expected snow and ice storm that ended up crippling much of the southwest. Rescheduling this interview was impossible, but before I left I was able to gain a brief interview with a Dine' man who was raised traditionally but is now is a Christian.

**Dale Tsoie**

My interview with Dale Tsoie was brief but beneficial. Dale is a leader in his local church and community. Dale is a burgeoning Dine' spiritual leader having been raised traditional but is now a Christian. I had to interview Dale quickly before I left Flagstaff Arizona in a snow storm. Dale's interview was very enlightening.

**Nuu-chah-nulth Group**

The *Nuu-chah-nulth* are a Northwest Island tribal group in Canada who live on an island off Vancouver Island, British Columbia. The group of people I interviewed

consisted of Vicki Wells, her husband Ivan Wells, and two Euro-Americans adopted into the *Nuu-chah-nulth*, Dean Johnson and Rick Lindholm. They asked to be interviewed as a group for their collected responses and wisdom. The interview was notable, but when I returned home I found that the sound on the recording did not come through.

Subsequently, I contacted the group and told them of the technical difficulties. The group then consulted a respected elder from their tribe about the problem and he told them to send me a book written by *Umeeek* (E. Richard Atleo), one of their traditional hereditary chiefs who teaches First Nations Studies at Malaspina University College. The book is called *Tsawalk: A Nuu-chah-nulth Worldview*.

I was able to conduct eight of the eleven interview possibilities with one interview having to be discarded because it still had no sound. Still, I was able to reconstruct some of the interview from memory. The interviewees represented a wide geographic representation of Native North America including viewpoints representing southeastern tribes, northeastern tribes, mid-western tribes, northern plains tribes, northwestern tribes and southwestern tribes. My interviews, although not as many I had hoped for, did provide a good cross section of diverse tribal cultures. I felt the seven good interviews made a fair sampling and the *Nuu-chah-nulth* book added to my literature and understanding of yet another harmony concept, but it yielded no new values. I also felt very good about the level of familiarity with which the interviewees had concerning their own cultures—all speaking their own language fluently except for Casey Church and John GrosVenor, who speak their language but not with fluency.

## Survey

In order to discover whether or not I could affirm a Native American understanding of Harmony on a popular level I produced an open Internet Survey tool for self-identified Native North Americans. It is difficult to determine just who is an Indian. If one uses blood quantum as an indicator then the exceptions must be made for each tribe who sets their own blood quantum. Blood quantum does not mean a person knows more than another about their cultural values. Some full-blood Indians have little knowledge of their culture, traditions, and ceremonies. Others are not members of federally recognized tribes. In addition, some mixed-bloods are not part of any federally recognized tribal system but know their traditions well. When deciding who is an Indian, I have found the best way is to respect the sovereign right of the individual to self-identify, which is the standard I used in the survey.<sup>24</sup> Still, I had no way to verify the respondents' self-identification.

I was able to obtain surveys, at least partially completed, from one hundred random self-identified Native North Americans. Because several million self-identified Native Americans live in the U. S. alone, one hundred surveys were not enough to substantiate my claims concerning Native American values. One hundred surveys did, however, yield results showing a relationship between values and well-being concepts on a sample basis.

The survey was also used to affirm the values that emerged from the literature and the interviews. Because the survey likely lacks the strength of the tools, I did not want to

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<sup>24</sup> The problems associated with identifying "who is an Indian?" are not unique to this project. There are at least seven different definitions that exist within various branches of the federal government and a few of these definitions contradict one another. Historically, each tribe has had its own standard of identification but with the advent and later removal of the "blood-quantum" standard imposed at one time by the U.S. Government, even these definitions now vary widely.

rely on the survey to create new value categories but instead, I used it primarily as a tool to confirm those values that emerged from the literature and the interviews. I will account for all the data, both in the survey and beyond the survey, in topics woven throughout the chapters citing the survey. The letter accompanying the survey read as follows:

Friend,

My name is Randy Woodley and I am a UKB Cherokee descendant working on a Ph.D. in Intercultural Studies. In order to prove or disprove my thesis I need one hundred self-identified Native North Americans to complete my survey online. (My thesis is undisclosed so it will not affect the outcome of the survey). The survey does not ask you for any personal information.

I would very much appreciate your help if you would take the time to complete a brief ten question survey. Your answers will provide important information for my research project and will hopefully be of help to our Indian people. Please try to answer all questions to the best of your ability. Feel free to forward this email to other Native Americans.

Note: Only take this survey if you identify yourself as a Native North American. You may go to the following link to take the survey online. Thank You!

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx...>

Sincerely,  
Randy Woodley

The survey was constructed in a way that allowed the person taking the survey to disclose core Native North American values and their relationship to an indigenous concept of Harmony. Those taking the survey first identified this concept on their own and then were given the opportunity to choose from a list of values to see if the values fit their concept. This allowed opportunity for an insider's view (inside their own tribal community) and an outsider's view (commenting on other tribal communities). Simple percentages were used to reflect the outcome of the data.

The survey had ten questions with mostly multiple-choice options and some fill in the blank (see below). Although one hundred people began the survey, only 87 percent completed the entire survey. The questions and the number/percentage of respondents for each question follows:

(PAGE 1)

1. With which specific Native North American people(s) do you identify?  
(100 % response)
2. Are you familiar with a concept or way of living and being in harmony/balance that relates to many of your Native North American values?  
99% responded
 

Yes	70.7%
Somewhat	22%
No	7.1%
3. What is this concept or way of living and being in harmony/balance called in the language of your people and/or the English translation you think is appropriate?  
(91% response)
4. What values does this concept express or include? (90% response)

(PAGE 2)

5. Please mark the values below if they are expressed or included in this concept or way of living and being in harmony/balance: (87% response)
 

Belief in the Great Mystery/Creator	94.3%
Seek to maintain harmony/balance in all of life	96.6%
Personal worship reinforces identity	81.6%
Sacred traditions/ceremonies and specialized practitioners	82.8%
Humor is sacred and necessary	85.1%
Women are powerful and vital, children are sacred, elders are respected	96.6%
Respect is normative and is shown through cooperation	88.5%
Use the heart & mind in making decisions	87.4%
Natural world is spiritual/sacred	89.7%
Authority comes from reflected experience	67.8%
Primal power in words and oral tradition	74.7%
Time orientation-emphasizes past and present	65.5%



Open work ethic-work as need arises 60.9%  
 Family orientated-relatedness extends past immediate family 97.7%

6. If you are familiar with other Native North American peoples who have a similar concept please identify them with their concept or way of living and being in harmony/balance: (62% response)
7. How important is it to you that you live according to the concept you identified? (87% response)
- |                    |       |
|--------------------|-------|
| Very important     | 79.3% |
| Important          | 16.1% |
| Somewhat important | 3.4%  |
| Not very important | 0%    |
| Not important      | 1.1%  |
8. How important do you feel it is to the people in your tribal communities to live according to this concept? (86% response)
- |                    |       |
|--------------------|-------|
| Very important     | 58.1% |
| Important          | 27.9% |
| Somewhat important | 11.6% |
| Not very important | 0%    |
| Not important      | 2.3%  |
9. How important do you feel it is to the people in other Native North American tribal communities to live according to this concept? (85% response)
- |                    |       |
|--------------------|-------|
| Very important     | 58.8% |
| Important          | 30.6% |
| Somewhat important | 7.1%  |
| Not very important | 1.2%  |
| Not important      | 2.4%  |
10. Please feel free to write more if there is any other information you wish to convey on this subject. Thank You! (52% response)

### Summary

I have utilized a number of sources to define values but for the purposes of this project the most basic values in Native American society are what I am calling *core values*. Core values appear to be infused into the fabric of Native American well-being and “The Harmony Way.” My initial assumption was that these core values are found within a sort of philosophical construct, which can generally be referred to as the way of

harmony or balance. “The Harmony Way” seemed to be central in all the literature and throughout my own experiences so I posited this as the central theme of the surveys and interviews. The greatest task was to extract the core Native American values from “The Harmony Way.” This was no simple task since it seemed that Native American core values cannot be removed from Native American life without the whole culture unraveling. Each core value can be identified as a particular category but not isolated to just that category. In other words, these core values readily “spill into each other,” creating various shades of understanding of that value. If ever there was a case of the sum being greater than the whole of the parts then I believe it is the Native American Harmony Way.

When attempting to understand Native American core values from an indigenous perspective it is important to see how interconnected these values are to one another. Western categorization can be helpful in discussing core value categories but often these categories are impotent in capturing the reality, scope, interrelatedness and nuances of core values. For instance, hospitality is a core value of Native Americans but it can be expressed through many forms, including through other value categories like generosity. It would be accurate to say that Native Americans make it a practice to be generous in the giving of finances and sharing of resources with others in need. Native Americans are generous with their time because of their past and present reality orientation, another core value. Native Americans are also generous in listening to other, which is generosity through respect, another Native American core value, and so on. At some point the Western system of categorization fails to encompass all of what it means to speak of Native American generosity.

In a Western worldview generosity is most often thought of in material goods or finances. To stretch beyond the material and into the generosity of one's time and even in their ability to listen would require another category. Is listening an expression generosity? Or, is it hospitality? These are the subjective areas where I tried to make decisions that allow aspects of one value to spill over with another. I tried to determine the closest related values to each other in order to make these distinctions.

The literature has been helpful, especially from those who have attempted to define Native American values in fields such as anthropology, mental health and Indian education. The value sets helped me by lending the framework I needed to begin the project. With five value sets in the literature it was a straightforward process in comparing and synthesizing those values into an initial beginning set, especially as it pertained to the survey, which allowed me to formulate relevant questions. My original set of synthesized Native American core values guided me through the survey and, in some ways, the interview process (although the interview process did not require a synthesized set and I did not have this part completed until mid-way through the interview process).

The literature concerning American cultural values was also helpful by providing a contrast to Native American values and to aid my understanding of why Euro-American mission among Native Americans has been such an abysmal failure. This led right into my concerns about who can be an agent of change in Native communities and under what guiding principles, especially concerning the issue of avoiding the possibilities of fostering unhealthy dependency among Native Americans through Euro-Americans doing mission.

In the next chapter I will discuss the process of my research in more detail, sharing the specific results of the literature, the survey and the interviews. I will show how these results were formulated, what the results are and what they may mean.

## CHAPTER 4

### RESEARCH RESULTS AND MEANING

In this chapter I delve into the details of the process that I used in gathering data, I present the data in first level abstractions, and I begin to suggest what interpretations of the data can be made.

#### **Synopsis and Analysis of the Literature**

Originally, I settled on four primary studies or values sets in the literature. I later included Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck. These value sets allowed me to understand whether or not there may be a shared set of Native American values, which I ended up calling Native American core values. I extracted these five value sets from the various authors:

1. the *Values Project*—Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck (Anthropology),
2. the *Jacobs set*—Don Trent Jacobs (Indian Education),
3. the *Kelley set*—Susan D. M. Kelley (Psychology),
4. the *Evergreen set*—Evergreen State College (Indian Education), and
5. the *Sacred set*—Beck and Walters (Indian Education).

I first integrated the values of the original four groups (2-5) into a master list of values. Later I added Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck to the list and each value category from these five value sets were condensed into a list (below) and given a short one or two letter code.

## Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck (Set KS)

1. Human beings are mostly good with some evil.
2. Human beings should live in harmony with nature.
3. The tribes studied are present oriented with reliance on past for direction.
4. Identity is found in both doing and being.
5. The tribes studied are strongly community oriented.

## Jacobs (Set J)

1. Cooperation is important.
2. Reciprocity, harmony, and balance are essential.
3. Decisions come from the heart as well as the mind.
4. Harmony with nature is the normative worldview.
5. Children are sacred.
6. A Great Mysterious Spirit is within all its creations.
7. Generosity is fundamental in cultures of non-materialism.
8. Diversity gives strength and balance to the world.
9. Resolution of conflict should be about restoring harmony.
10. Humor is necessary.
11. Women are wise and powerful.
12. Prayer and ceremony connect to an invisible world and maintain health and harmony.
13. Fear is a catalyst for practicing great virtue.
14. Authority comes from experience and spiritual awareness that all things are related.

15. Words are powerful and never to be misused.

#### Kelley (Set K)

1. Harmony between and within individuals, society, and nature;
2. Generosity in sharing self, resources, and possessions;
3. Oral tradition of transmitting knowledge;
4. Time orientation to present while honoring past;
5. Fluidity of lifestyle, unconstrained;
6. Work, in harmony with present needs;
7. Emphasis on listening; and,
8. Universal spirituality integral to all life and every lifestyle.

#### Evergreen (Set E)

1. Personal Differences/Mutual respect and tolerance
2. Quietness
3. Patience
4. Open work ethic and nonmaterialistic orientation
5. Mutualism solidarity with group members cooperating to gain group security and consensus.
6. Nonverbal Orientation, words have a primordial power and are chosen carefully
7. Orality
8. Time is flexible, not fixed
9. Orientation to Present, being rather than becoming. Present needs and desires tend to take precedence over vague future rewards
10. Practicality
11. Holistic Orientation
12. Spirituality is considered a natural component of everything
13. Caution

#### Sacred (Set S)

1. There is a common belief in The Great Mystery.
2. All things are dependent on each other.
3. Personal worship reinforces the bond between the individual, the community, and the great powers
4. Sacred Practitioners are common

## 5. Humor is necessary and sacred

### Comparing the Values of the Five Sets

Using a process based on the simple premise of eliminating all duplicate values, I collated the list, merging some, eliminating some, until I ended up with a final list of seventeen Native American core values that I extracted from the literature. This process seemed like the best way to limit my own prejudice from influencing the list of core values. Of course, I had to interpret the literature and make decisions about which list/authors were saying the same things, even when they were expressed through different words. For example, in my final literature list number 1 is “Belief in the Great Mystery.” S reflects this reality by stating clearly “Belief in or unseen powers/The Great Mystery.” E only sparsely states “Spirituality” and its integrated aspect. This synopsis is my own, since I was the one interpreting the meaning of the Evergreen report. The full category in E states,

*Spirituality.* Religious thought and action are integrated into every aspect of the socio-cultural fabric of traditional Native American life. Spirituality is considered a natural component of everything. When presenting new concepts, teachers should keep in mind that all aspects of Indian cultures are touched by it. Discussing general aspects of spirituality and religion is an important part of the curriculum, although precautions must be taken to respect the integrity, sacred value, and inherent privacy of each Indian tribe’s religious practices. Ideally all discussions of Native American religion should be kept as general and nonspecific as possible. Specifics should be discussed only in the proper context and with the necessary permission of the particular tribe involved (Evergreen State University).

E does an excellent job of showing Native American spirituality’s holistic nature, its religious nature and sacred nature but it does not go as far as S in calling the source of the spirituality “Great Mystery.” E simply acknowledges the importance of, and the scope of Native American spirituality, but S names the source of the spirituality calling it a “Belief



in the Great Mystery.” To list “Great Mystery” instead as “Great Spirit” as in J, could have a meaning that implies a reference to a personal god. To use the term “Great Spirit” might not represent all the sets. To call this force behind Native American spirituality “Belief in the Great Mystery” is perhaps more accurate and a compromise that is true to all the sets. Appendix B is simply a chart representing the final integration of all the literature. Likewise, the following list includes all the values from the literature (from all five lists) integrated together as one.

Values from the Literature:

1. Belief in the Great Mystery
2. Seek Harmony and Balance in All of Life
3. Personal Worship Practices Reinforce Identity
4. Sacred Traditions and Specialized Practitioners
5. Humor is Sacred and Necessary
6. Women Powerful are Vital
7. Children are Sacred
8. Cooperation not Competition Oriented
9. Use Heart and Mind in Decision Making
10. Natural World is Spiritual/Sacred
11. Authority Comes from Reflected Experience
12. Primordial Power in Words/Oral Tradition
13. Present and Past Time Orientation
14. Open Work Ethic
15. Family Orientation- Open Relatedness

16. Human Beings are Mostly Good with Some Evil
17. Identity is Found in Both Doing and Being
18. Practice Hospitality/Generosity

In integrating these five lists from the literature I felt it was crucial to not leave out any values. As a result, I was generous in creating new categories if a value did not seem to fit an existing category. A result of avoiding the elimination of any values was that some of the values may seem very similar and related to others listed. Again, my process involved reading the text and the corresponding author's list, interpreting their description and then determining which values were similar enough to list together, thereby reducing the list to 18 Core values.

Another example of the grouping process is value number 13. "Present and Past Time Orientation." KS3, K4, K5, E3, E8 E9, and E10 all refer to the idea of a particular time orientation among Native Americans. They all seem to indicate a sense of time that is mostly concerned with the present but also relies heavily on the past. They – indicate, either directly or indirectly, that the future is seen to take care of itself in its own time. Therefore, they were all merged together to come up with "Past and Present Time Orientation," a short phrase that represents all of them.

### **Synopsis and Analysis of the Interviews**

I conducted eight interviews with spiritual leaders/elders that aided in my understanding of Native American values even though only seven were properly recorded. Most of the interviews lasted about 45 minutes and were conducted without interruption. Other than my initial question, I asked only clarifying questions.

## **KEY to Interviewees' Identities**

In the KEY below, I have assigned the person's initials to identify them more easily. They are listed according to the chronological order in which the persons were interviewed.

### **KEY**

1. Vincent Yellow Old Woman (VY)
2. Fern Cloud (FC)
3. John GrosVenor (JG)
4. Casey Church (CC)
5. Lora Church (LC)
6. Adrian Jacobs (AJ)
7. Dale Tsosie (DT)

## **Categories That Emerged from Interviews**

My first order of discovery was to allow the interviewee to talk about their own tribal harmony concept and to see whether or not, from the interview, values would emerge that are directly related to "The Harmony Way." I then transcribed the interviews and discovered what values emerged from them. It should be noted that I had the complete list of 17 values from the literature about half way through the interview process but it made no difference in how I asked the question and it did not to my present knowledge, affect the outcome. Candor requires me to note that when I began extracting values from the literature I already had the list of 17 values in my mind and some of my

own prejudice towards these 17 values may have occurred subconsciously during the extraction process.

My next step was to compare these value categories to the values from the literature and to integrate them into the one list. Below, I have listed the value categories that emerged from the interviews and I have given a few brief examples of the context of what the interviewees said concerning that value category. I have extended quotes under categories h) and i) because these categories reflect the central Harmony concept, which was the thrust of the interview. The following categories (values) emerged from the interview process:

Values from the Interviews:

1. Children are important
2. Creation is central to harmony
3. Humor is essential to balance
4. Females are sacred
5. Family is integral to harmony
6. Community is egalitarian and shared
7. Elders are respected repositories of knowledge and wisdom
8. Symbols/ceremonies/societies/traditions are important to spirituality
9. Balance/harmony/circle/peace is the standard for everyone and everything
10. Respect/consensus/dignity express “The Harmony Way”
11. Hospitality/generosity are normative behaviors
12. Oral stories/teachings are an important part of understanding life

In Appendix C I have listed the totality of all statements made concerning each category. This list may easily be referenced if more support is needed for my postulations. Below I have listed a few statements for each category to give a sampling of what was said during the interviews and how the interviewees' statements reflect the value category I assigned.

### **Interview Value Categories**

During the interview process I tried to understand both what layers of meaning might exist beneath the surface of the words.<sup>25</sup> During the post-interview analysis process I listed a few exemplary remarks and then gave a brief synopsis and analysis of why I believe this to be a core Native American value. All these statements were made in relation to and in reference to the question asked concerning a "Harmony Way" concept.

### **Examples**

1. The following are examples of how the various interviewees spoke about the same values. For example, the first value I list is that "Children are Important." The following statements touched on this value:

[Speaking of traditional people] You go to their home, you see how they love their children. (VY)

So that's one aspect where we are really understanding what is happening to me-I might get angry too easily...then I feel that and I have to apologize to my kids and it brings me back to a life of compassion. This includes my siblings as well and my marriage-we all help each other to stay in harmony or balance, balance right now-in my personal life. (CC)

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<sup>25</sup> In my own experience with Native American elders, they often have a subtext or double meaning to their story or recollection. For example, our Cherokee stories often begin with the words "a long, long time ago." An elder once said, "Never forget that when you begin a story that way, it always means right now." This process tends to be subjective, but I suppose that being Native American and having been involved for so long in Native American ministry, I am perhaps in as good a position as most to make these interpretations.

We have 5 children and I hope that we can model to them-how to live a life-how to live an honest life-and you get tired and run down, stressed out and cranky and they see you fail but if they see another side when you at peace as well and trying to maintain balance. Some of the things that we do we run, work on shawls, etc. when I don't feel well-who can I trust? My sisters, relatives, extended families. It's a journey-there really no end. You need to know disharmony, and imbalance to know harmony. (LC)

In the first statement, Vincent Yellow Old Woman (VY) makes a direct claim about how people can observe how Indians love their children by visiting their homes. He specifically mentions how the traditional people love their children, as if to show that this is a key to understanding what it means to be Native American and living in harmony.

In the second statement, if Casey on later reflection thought that his punishment was too harsh, then he would decide that he needed to apologize in order to re-introduce compassion. His expression here of a need to apologize to his children shows a great deal of respect for them and reveals the importance placed on the children's feelings. It also is an example of how domestic concerns like the discipline of children, are seen as a vital part of "The Harmony Way."

In the third statement, Lora Church (LC) talked about herself as a model for her children. She wants to show her children how to live an honest life and that trust is sacred among family. She uses the example of her own children to show how balance works in daily life. All these statements and others made during the interview lead me to the conclusion that there is a fundamental value among these interviewees that children are important in a variety of ways concerning "The Harmony Way."

2. The second value I list is that "Creation is Central to Harmony." The interviewees continue:

[Speaking of traditional people] You see how they treat nature with respect. (VY)

Land comes out of balance or harmony. How do they deal with it? The earth, *Makah Enah*, we all see that this is happening. My uncle told me the earth is poisoned 10 feet down because of the chemicals and whatever else. Really, there is a big problem-the hoop is broken but the only way we know how to do things is through prayer. We pray in our ways and it's going to take a miracle, really. We are the land also. We are made by Creator and we all need to heal, look inside our hearts and get right. It's critical. (FC)

In his statement VY is referring to how traditional people treat nature with respect. Reading in the sub-text, I see that this is something that matters to Vincent and important to those whom he described. I hear him saying that to be traditional implies a certain kind of harmonious relationship with the earth.

FC then talks of the land coming out of balance, being poisoned and how it must be healed through the human agency of prayer. She even refers to people as land and how we all need healing along with the land. These statements show a core value concerning the centrality of creation and the role of human beings in maintaining harmony.

3. A third important value to the interviewees is "Humor is Essential to Balance."

In the following example Casey Church makes this point.

Like you gave me this tobacco and money and a Wal-mart card...there better be more than \$10 on this thing...eyee! You see because we've been talking about such a deep subject, I had to keep things in balance by making a joke...laughter is a medicine-it heals people and helps us...When I said that little joke it brought us back to some balance. I seen too many people too serious, and you don't want to hear them anymore ... its part of the balance. (CC)

CC made a joke and then used it as a teaching opportunity to talk about the importance of humor in "The Harmony Way." He had just been discussing his mother's recent death and after some quiet time, he made a joke to bring things back into balance. This was both a lesson on humor and its importance in balancing out life and a living example of using this in our interview when he spoke of his mother and things began to get sad.

4. The fourth value on my list is that Females are Sacred. The following examples highlight this concern.

It's no coincidence that White Buffalo Calf Woman was the messenger and Mary was a woman. Women are sacred and have a lot of respect because they have been given the gift to create. We have to go back in order to learn because those ways make sense. (FC)

We have the balance of the east and west which are female directions and north and south are the male directions and how you have balance there and one is not over the other. You need both to stay in balance. (LC)

FC spoke about women messengers in her culture like White Buffalo Calf Woman and of Mary, Jesus' mother. She linked the sacredness of women to the fact that they have been given the gift to create life. LC mentioned the four directions and their association to gender and how both are needed to balance each other and thereby showing the link between the male/female balance in "The Harmony Way."

5. The fifth value I obtained from the interviewees is the fact that Family is Integral to Harmony as exhibited in the following statements:

"What makes these good values? The family structure, the community, you don't want to go too far to tip the scale but you keep that balance. You don't want to go too far from where you come from" (VY).

"We are all a family in a circle the life cycles, the four seasons the four directions, you know that's our philosophy on keeping harmony and balance. It's a real simple way of life" (FC).

VY spoke of family as the center of the community and a place to come back to when one is out of harmony. FC expressed the sacredness of family by including the family in the greater cycles of life. Both made direct connections to the role of family in understanding "The Harmony Way."



6. Most of the interviewees expressed a concern for the sixth value, that community is “Egalitarian and Shared.”

The mark of a successful balanced community is a group who prays together, sings together, eats together, etc. (JG)

The chiefs both know the stories and how the ceremonies are conducted and the values that they represent. There are different elements of community values, etc. all tied into the great peace. Values are based on the fundamental idea of consensus, everyone is valued that way. When the people come together and talk, then it goes farther to the particular groups and each one has a role to play-making sure that consensus can be reached, keep the fire going, protocol, etc. Each nation has its own autonomy but when the larger group has issues facing it then they all come together. The strength was unity. Two row wampum,... a white belt with two parallel darker lines, symbolized the common river of life. One represented our people with our laws, our leaders and our people. One represented the British...like a big equal sign-equality. We refused to call king or father or queen our mother we used terms like brother. (AJ)

JG said a good community prays, sings and eats together, sharing everyday life together.

AJ said all the different aspects of community among his people are connected to The Great Peace. This is the center of their life and all other things are connected from the Great Peace that makes all people equal. He makes a point to mention that even though the Iroquois had a treaty with Great Britain they used terms showing their equality.

7. The seventh value I listed is that “Elders are Respected Repositories of Knowledge and Wisdom.”

My grandfather showed me people and say you see how they treat one another, you see the respect. and said these are good people, he'd show me other ones and say the same. Once in a while he would say these people, you be careful of. My grandfather was a leader in the society, and he always had people in his home, he was always called upon to help. We had good values. (VY)

Sharing of food, caring for each other-I was taught that by my mom and dad. At their funerals people talked about them and I could see how they were valued and the things we were taught were valued. Like when an elder comes over-you get up and get them what they need and when a middle aged person came you treat them

a little different. And no one ever left our home without some food and water and a little money to help them on their way. (CC)

VY told of the way his grandfather treated people and the respect they gave to one another and the responsibilities that came with such respect. CC talked of his mother and father and the way that that he and his siblings were taught to respect elders by serving them first and ahead of themselves.

8. The eighth value on my list obtained from the interviews was that

“Symbols/Ceremonies/Societies/Traditions are Important to Spirituality.”

We had certain societies, like sundance and only those society members would know fully what was going on in those meetings. Our society members also kept that harmony, even though only they knew what was going on inside their circle, it was okay.... So the people from each area they have their circles to keep, their rituals and ceremonies that they have to do. I think it's the prayers that go on, and what they learn from each other that keep things going well. They bring out our values. Unless you are initiated you won't really know. For the most part it's the prayers. When they come out of there, those ceremonies they would tell us about the prayers made for everyone and how to be strong and so forth. (VY)

We call ourselves Oyate, we are the people of the seven council fires. This includes the *Dakota, Nakota and Lakota*. It is about a way of life. *Oyate* just means the people. Thousands and thousands of years ago White Buffalo Calf Woman, she brought the pipe to our people and gave us the seven rites along with the seven teachings for us to live by.

The cannibal lives in the swamp with hair like snakes-the image of divination-man in pain-numb I suppose. Living away from the people. Hiawatha made a cross and a string with wampum and he begins a healing ceremony so the people can feel, hear and see again. The wampum is a reminder of what we should be doing to help those remember and it becomes a condolence ceremony. (AJ)

When you look at the history of our people and how they were treated by the white man. They saw the land and had greed but our people had balance and a way of life. In one front they tried to take away those dances and those songs. As a political leader I tried to work and undo the wrong that was made. And also from the religious people who came. They were ignorant and confused and condemned us. We were spiritual already. Fear in the minds of people will drive them to do the wrong thing. Rather than just embracing and being a part of the circle. I'm home-where I belong. This is the way the Creator has made me. (VY)

[Casey gets out his ceremonial pipe and begins to talk about it] For someone to use this-they have to live a life that is an example of “The Harmony Way.” A pipe carrier does not call themselves a pipe carrier. The life I leave shows this, like before I left from home, I cleaned it and it’s the same with my life, I need to take time to clean myself up. (CC)

You know with the teachings of balance and harmony comes, you know, those teaching come from our hearts and it also takes commitment, it takes time to prepare for ceremonies and there is teachings behind the ceremonies and all the different things that happens in community. If there is chaos, it takes someone who has the discernment to say “ we’ve got to take care of this chaos before we go on-our it won’t be of any help. Everyone in a ceremony has different responsibilities and they contribute in different ways. If one person say, has the responsibility to keep the fire, then that person may see something, like someone coming in anger or in a drunken state, then that person has the authority to ask them to leave. Same with a arena director at a Pow Wow. This can’t be taught in books, like we just had a precious time of learning with some of the elders in our family-I told my girls-you just received a very precious gift. (LC)

All those interviewed spoke directly to the issue of traditions, ceremonies, special societies and symbols being crucial for Harmony to exist among the people. It appears that all of these elements are present in Native American spirituality and are integral to “The Harmony Way.”

9. The ninth value that emerged from the interviews is that

“Balance/Harmony/Circle/Peace is the Standard for Everyone and Everything.” Because the subject of harmony and balance was the focus of the original question asked to the interviewees, they elaborated quite fully on the subject and here I spend considerably more time showing examples of this particular value. The concepts of the circle and peace are so interwoven with harmony that I needed to include them with the overarching concept of harmony. The circle is most often the image that is used to symbolize the interconnectedness of all the parts. It is both a physical symbol and an ethereal symbol. If one needed to make a drawing of what harmony and balance look like on paper, I think the circle would be the preferred image of everyone I interviewed.

Peace is both a process and a goal. The peacemaking process has transformative healing power and it is the by-product of harmonious living. Peace is often spoken of in terms of a feeling and an actual state of harmony in, and with the world. After reviewing my notes several times I realized that both of these concepts are assumed by the interviewees to be related to harmony in a deeply symbiotic way and they cannot be separated from the overall concept of harmony:

When I got older, the circle got out of balance, out of harmony because of alcohol, dysfunction, infant mortality, you name it. He was firm and talked strongly to us when we misbehaved. My grandfather told me-there are things you just don't do, you'll understand them when they come. (VY)

VY is speaking of his own experience of seeing the community leave the Harmony Circle. He interjected the strength of his grandfather, which is to say, the strength of the elders and the old ways:

So the people from each area they have their circles to keep, their rituals and ceremonies that they have to do. I think it's the prayers that go on, and what they learn from each other that keep things going well. They bring out our values. (VY)

In the first reference VY speaks of the circle as an over-arching concept in life. He spoke of the circle coming out of balance and out of harmony. In the second statement he speaks of different areas of life as circles, which include the circles of ritual and ceremony. Again, the circle is used interchangeably in the same way harmony and balance are often used interchangeably:

I went too far in religion for awhile, and then I came back to the circle and I found out there was nothing wrong with that circle. Today I enjoy the dances and Pow Wows and all the things in the circle and I feel like for me, I'm home. (VY)

In this statement VY is speaking of his days in the Western church when he was coerced to leave his Indian ways behind in order to become a Christian. He references his coming

back into the circle in relationship to Native American traditions, stating that circle as true harmony for himself. He calls it “home.”

We have to keep things in balance. If you get out of balance there is no harmony. So the thinking of our people is that when things get out of balance you have to do something to bring things back into harmony. And you know these things about our people probably as good as me. (JG)

JG points out the interchangeable quality of balance and harmony and the active role that ceremony plays in restoring the harmony. This insight is important because there seems to be nothing in my research pointing to harmony as a passive concept.

Now the people I live with have a similar system with peace chiefs who make decisions for these kinds of things. Another element on our reservation, out of 13 different bands and I’ve talked to them all and told them about our Cherokee harmony way, . . . and they all say they had something similar except they were very peaceful people. When people got out of hand they had whip men and women who dealt with the disciplinary stuff. For them-this brought things back into balance. When there is balance there is peace. My wife is both Yankton Sioux and Wintu/Walaki from California. These were basically peaceful people. They had different bands and each band had a chief who were peacemakers. (JG)

A relationship exists between peacemaking and harmony. JG is saying that most often, when inharmonious situations arise, acts of restoring the balance are necessary in order to bring peace.

FC expresses the common belief held by most traditional Native Americans, namely, there was a time in the past when Native people held things in balance and harmony:

“Through the ways of our people we have to go way back, back to that point in time when everything was in harmony” (FC).

“That word *wo* ‘*dakota* means to be a Dakota, *wo* ‘*dakota* means to be in harmony with everything around us. In harmony with the Creator and in harmony with the creation. That’s what it means to be Dakota” (FC).

“*Wo ‘dakota.*” It’s not a philosophy, it’s a path of life we do, looking at what creator gave us, in that whole circle of life and living it” (FC).

She relates the particular name of the Dakota concept and emphasizes its active nature:

So how do we do that? Our teachings show us that. We had seven, uh, virtues I guess you would call them. For us, the way that we can comprehend it is within the sacred circle. That sacred circle is a way of life. Like, the number four is also a very important thing for us or a life way, I guess you would call it. The four seasons, the four stages of life, the four directions and each has a way or virtue with it, for example compassion. These are not jus words but a way we order and live our lives. Like compassion, generosity, we follow the circle around to know how to keep these. Another is fortitude or bravery, patience, wisdom, these keep us on that path, those are our guidelines. (FC)

FC relates the seven Dakota virtues (values) and the symbolism of fours (four stages of life, four seasons, four cardinal directions) to the overall concept of the circle as the symbol that contains all their teachings and values. During our interview she names the seven Dakota virtues: *Wocekiya* ‘Prayer’, *Waohola* ‘Respect’, *Waonsila* ‘Compassion’, *Wowijake* ‘Honesty’, *Wawokiye* ‘Generosity’, *Wahwala* ‘Humility’ and *Woksape* ‘Wisdom’.

FC places some of the fault for the current imbalance among her people on the dominant cultural assimilation.

*Mitakwiasen* is a prayer and means we are all related, these things are for all people and it includes, really everything. I think right now we are out of balance. Our people are really out of balance because of the attempt of the settler people to assimilate us. But we are coming back. The seventh generation is bringing us back. We need to show more of these things, more generosity, like from the heart. We should always be humble. A true leader is generous and humble. Sometimes I think we have become ignorant of who we are. Its true for all Native people-we have a really good heritage to draw from. But we are coming back. (FC)

She is hopeful for a time of future restoration and suggests a few of the Dakota virtues as means to bring things back in harmony.

CC shares his personal imbalance and relates the relationship between being out of balance emotionally and spiritually to the physical.

My life as I understand it—being Anishnabe—is to really try to live in a good way. I am personally out of balance now because I just lost my mother and two and a half years ago I lost my mentor. This way of balance is important—physical and spiritual. It's all on the medicine wheel. If I'm off on one side or the other then I have to watch myself. Like my emotional self is out of whack now so I have to watch my physical health—and she helps me to watch these things. (CC)

I have this picture here of the medicine wheel with its quadrants—emotional, physical, spiritual and you see the balance this way. (CC)

He sees his life represented by the medicine wheel, which is used by various tribes as a harmony circle. He shows me a medicine wheel and how the quadrants can be used to represent ourselves in physical, emotional, spiritual ways:

You know on the medicine wheel you have the medicine wheel for the east the west, the south, the north and then you have medicines for the east, the west, the north, the south, and then you have animals for each of those directions. You have the colors and each tribe has its own colors for each direction. We have the balance of the east and west which are female directions and north and south are the male directions and how you have balance there and one is not over the other. You need both to stay in balance. (LC)

LC also talks about the medicine wheel and its importance as a representation of harmony. In addition to the cardinal directions she adds the teachings concerning each direction having particular medicines, animals and gender associated with it:

We need those times and those people to restore the balance. Restore that peace through the tears, through the anger and all those kinds of emotions that will come out—that's part of the healing process and I think for balance—or *Hózhóón*, that's all of life. I don't think it just comes here and then you are all right. It's fluid and it comes and then you are in state but its living day in and day out and that's the balance. (LC)

*Hózhóón* is the particular Navajo word for “*The Harmony Way*.” She mentions it is a daily process and that we need others to walk it out with us.

DT goes into some depth to explain the Navajo harmony concept of *Hózhóón*.

The way the Creator was always referred to includes *Hózhóón*:

The Navajo harmony way like the one you mention is usually referred to as *Hózhóón*. who is God is Navajo in the Navajo language (Can you clean this up)? We had a group of Navajos that used to come to our Bible study that we had in our home and we talked about certain things and then I asked a question to them. I asked, what was God's name, or was there a name given to God in the Navajo? Because we never really had a name for God and that would be really personal to the Navajos and so my father in law and he kind of thought and then he said, I think it used to be called *Sá'qh Naaghái Bik'eh Hózhóón*. It didn't go any further he just mentioned that and then the topic went to something else different and so we never really talked and pursued it. As I was starting to look for this after reading these accounts of Abraham, and John and things like that. So I started thinking back, who is God? And that memory came back to me. Could it be that God in our language and God that people already know, could it be that his name is *Sá'qh Naaghái Bik'eh Hózhóón*? And I thought does the character of this name and of this person, does it fit the character of God? In Navajo ceremonies are done for different things, "The Harmony Way," everything being back into harmony for healing, the blessing, the beauty way ceremony. There is so many of them. There is also the dark side, the evil way, many also where it becomes witchcraft and cursing and sickness and all of these things. But here was the beauty way ceremony is based upon this name *Sá'qh Naaghái Bik'eh Hózhóón*. When people are asked, you know, what is Navajo life... *Sá'qh Naaghái Bik'eh Hózhóón*? Could it be that our people know the Creator already? Because in every ceremony, most of the ceremonies when a song is sung (Dale singing ... name is heard in song) this is a name that is referenced all of the time (singing and repeating song). When the song is sung it is back to the *Sá'qh Naaghái Bik'eh Hózhóón*, everything pointing back to him. The base of life is *Sá'qh Naaghái Bik'eh Hózhóón*. So I started thinking about the name of this, and is it a person? So when I asked people, what is *Sá'qh Naaghái Bik'eh Hózhóón*? They say, no I don't know it's just our life, the way we live in harmony and beauty. I said no, it has to be more. So I broke the name down, actually I read somewhere the breakdown of this name. What it means, *Sá'qh Naaghái Bik'eh Hózhóón*, *Sá'qh* means old, old age is what that means. *Sá'qh* meaning around old age. *Naaghái* means somebody that is living, a person. That is what that means. *Bik'eh Hózhóón* means his way or *Bik'eh Hózhóón* is the beauty way. So I said, you know what, this is Jesus. This name belongs to Jesus. This is not just a name or a lifestyle or anything else. This name is a person, because *Naaghái* describes a living being. So I said, "Wow,... the Navajo do not realize that they know God already, that they know the Creator already." (DT)



*Hózhóón* integrates “The Harmony Way” with the Creator, and the ceremonies such as Beauty Way used to bring about harmony. He relates them to his people’s knowledge of Jesus as the one who was already known by them prior to white contact.

Rather than a particular word used to describe harmony, AJ cites The Great Peace as a way of living and understanding life in harmony:

The great peace was a result of what we view in our culture, what currently we call the great law understanding it’s not just some statement but it is the codifies consensus of the six nations people. It’s difficult to translate or make sense of in American terminology and culture. What’s interesting is we remember our failures in our own oral history. Part of the story is that there was a harmony in the beginning that we lost touch with. (AJ)

There was cannibalism. Story of Hiawatha who lost his daughters and he became very distraught in his actions as a murderer and a cannibal. When you become hurt and damaged you close your heart and even strike out. Dedondikwa found him and was able to bring him peace and consolment. The great law and the great peace restores dignity by giving comfort ceremonially by helping that person through your grieving process. (AJ)

The Six Nations of the Iroquois rely upon the historic account, example and teaching that took place among them with a man known among them as the Peacemaker. Their concept is rooted in this story and the ceremonies and philosophy he taught. The values that come from these examples are similar to other harmony values from other tribal peoples.

10. The tenth value extracted from the interviews was

“Respect/Consensus/Dignity Express “The Harmony Way.”

I really think they key for me is respect. I don’t always agree with the things that they do, but from different groups and religions, I must have respect. Not necessarily from within their circle but they should always respect my beliefs. (VY)

There was a man who crossed the great water in a stone canoe. He brought people to a place of making decisions and listening which dignified listening to one another’s stories and it is an affirmation of that dignity to gain consensus among differing views. (AJ)

The idea of mutual respect is “key” according to VY. He sees the necessity of respect among all people and all religions. AJ speaks of a similar concept to respect as dignity. When people are given the respect to make their own decisions, which is the point of consensus decision making, they have dignity. This may be especially applicable for people with differing views, which brings back VY’s concept of respect.

11. The eleventh listed interview value was “Hospitality” and the related concept “Generosity.”

My grandfather was a leader in the society, and he always had people in his home, he was always called upon to help. We had good values. (VY)

How are strangers treated? One of our seven rites is making of a relative. We really believe that in our way of *wo' dakota*, no one should ever be alone. Someone would take you into their family and adopt you. But today, after so many times of that generosity being burned, we are not as open as we once were. We need to tap into this again and make others family, kinship, living together and supporting each other-but it's changing as far as the outside. (FC)

Sharing of food, caring for each other-I was taught that by my mom and dad. At their funerals people talked about them and I could see how they were valued and the things we were taught were valued. Like when an elder comes over-you get up and get them what they need and when a middle aged person came you treat them a little different. And no one ever left our home without some food and water and a little money to help them on their way. (CC)

VY recalled that his grandfather, whom he respected as a traditional man, always had people in his home. FC remarked that in Dakota culture there is no such thing as a stranger but eventually someone would adopt that person into their family. CC spoke of how he was taught by his parents to always feed people and always send them off with food and water for their trip.

12. “Oral Stories/Teachings are an Important Part of Understanding Life” and this area was mentioned throughout the interview process, becoming my twelfth interview value.

Thousands and thousands of years ago White Buffalo Calf Woman, she brought the pipe to our people and gave us the seven rites along with the seven teachings for us to live by. Through the ways of our people we have to go way back, back to that point in time when everything was in harmony. (FC)

You know on the medicine wheel you have the medicine wheel for the east the west, the south, the north and then you have medicines for the east, the west, the north, the south, and then you have animals for each of those directions. You have the colors and each tribe has its own colors for each direction. We have the balance of the east and west which are female directions and north and south are the male directions and how you have balance there and one is not over the other. You need both to stay in balance. (LC)

There was a man who crossed the great water in a stone canoe. He brought people to a place of making decisions and listening which dignified listening to one another's stories and it is an affirmation of that dignity to gain consensus among differing views. (AJ)

FC brought up the story of White Buffalo Calf Woman and how the seven ceremonies and seven moral teachings of her people are directly tied into this messiah type figure. LC spoke of the directions of the medicine wheel and how the corresponding teaching encompasses so much. AJ stressed the importance of listening to one another's stories and how this teaches respect and dignity, which was part of a story he was telling me.

All in all, I feel the Interviews yielded the most reliable information for this study, both because of process (just allowing them to speak freely) and from the sources. The interviewees were respected elders and spiritual leaders in their respective communities.

### **Synopsis and Analysis of Survey Questions**

As I stated earlier, I chose not to use the survey as a means for creating new values categories. My decision was based on the fact that of all three tools, (the literature, the interviews and the survey), the survey was the least verifiable. Largely, this is a result of the necessity of anonymity for those who took the survey. Instead, I have used the

survey as a means for substantiating the central premise of a Native American Harmony Way and to substantiate the values found in the literature and the interviews.

In order to substantiate Native American values related to “The Harmony Way” I needed first to determine whether or not the person taking the survey was familiar with their own tribe’s concept of harmony. I had hoped that out of 100 self-selected respondents, at least half of the people surveyed would have had some knowledge of a Harmony Way concept in their own tribes. If so, I felt like this would establish “The Harmony Way” concept as widespread among Indian people.<sup>26</sup>

Secondly, I needed to see if the general population of Native Americans taking the survey had been exposed to concepts of harmony in other tribes and if so, could they name these concepts? This would further substantiate my first concern and broaden the data concerning actual names of various “Harmony Way” concepts.

To unpack the values associated with “The Harmony Way” concept I needed to determine what values they associate with the conception in their own tribes and how they associated the concept in other tribes? These responses, affirming Native American values associated with “The Harmony Way,” were important because they specify particular values associated with both being and doing, beyond a generalized discussion of what could otherwise be seen as an ambiguous concept. In other words, these questions move the discussion from a concept to real life.

Finally, I wanted to ask how important they felt the concept is to themselves personally, to their tribe and to other tribes? I needed to understand further if “The

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<sup>26</sup> It was surprising to me that no one denied there being a Harmony Way concept and that just seven were not familiar with the concept among their own people.

Harmony Way” was a romanticized, concept of the past or if it was something they felt was important in the daily lives of themselves and other Native Americans.

On the survey answers I did allow for various degrees of agreement or disagreement but my motivation was more to accommodate the gray shades in Native American thinking, so as to allow them to answer some way, and not skip the questions. The data found in the shades of gray was not so important in my research and I group my data primarily as either generally positive or negative.

### **1. With which specific Native North American people(s) do you identify? (N=100)**

This question was primarily qualifying. All one hundred people responded with some affiliation to a particular tribe. In this sense, the question accomplished its goal of allowing people to self-identify as Native American, at least for the purposes of this survey. It also lent a limited degree of validity to their authenticity as Native Americans. A fair number of responses were of the same tribe so I have not listed any tribe twice below. Sometimes answers given reflected a respondent with two or more tribal affiliations. In these instances I had no way to discern with which tribe they most affiliated, so I simply recorded the first one listed. Because the first question had one-hundred people’s responses, (with eighty-seven people completing the survey) I feel confident that the survey represented a wide variety of Native Americans, including people from forty-five tribal affiliations. The tribal affiliations given were

1. Ojibway of Ontario
2. Navajo
3. Cherokee
4. Hidatsa
5. Arawakan-Taino

6. Keetoowah Cherokee
7. Blackfeet
8. Crow
9. Tsimshian
10. Cayuga
11. Iowa
12. Pueblo
13. Oneida Nation of Wisconsin
14. Hunkpapa Lakota
15. MicMac
16. Oglala
17. Mohawk
18. Paiute
19. Choctaw
20. Eastern Shoshone
21. Fort Mojave Indian Tribe
22. Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwe
23. Cree
24. Lenape
25. Cheyenne
26. Cheyenne River Sioux
27. Dakota
28. Lac Du Flambeau Band of Chippewa Indians
29. Wyandot
30. Little River Band Ottawa
31. Shawnee
32. Lipan Apache
33. Eastern Band Cherokee
34. Gros-Ventre
35. Mescalero Apache
36. Echota Cherokee
37. Yaqui
38. Potawatomi
39. Klamath
40. Kiowa
41. Abanaki
42. Prairie Band Potawatomi
43. Osage
44. Muscogee
45. Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation

As I mentioned earlier, there was no way to verify the respondent's self-identification. If there had been answers such as "I don't know what tribe I am," or the listing of a bogus tribe such as "Sycamore tribe," those answers would not have been

used. Various associations with Lakota, Cherokee and Ojibway were made most frequently. According to the origins of the tribes listed, the survey was able to reach a wide geographic tribal distribution base that included a total of forty-five tribes.

**2. Are you familiar with a concept or way of living and being in harmony/balance that relates to many of your Native North American values? (N= 92.7)**

Perhaps the most important information obtained from this question is the fact that ninety-two people or 92.7 percent<sup>27</sup> of the ninety-nine people who answered this question were at least somewhat familiar with a Harmony concept among Native Americans. Only seven people were not familiar with the harmony concept, with one responder who skipped the question. This suggests that some form of a Harmony Concept is known among a wide variety of tribes and confirms the same understanding in the literature and the interviews that there is a broad-based concept of Harmony among Native North Americans. The 7.1 percent who answered no on this question are the only occasions that occurred during all my research, where Native Americans were not familiar with a type of Harmony Way concept. Most Native Americans have some familiarity with this concept.

**3. What is this concept or way of living and being in harmony/balance called in the language of your people and/or the English translation you think is appropriate? (N = 91)**

The 7 percent who were not familiar with “The Harmony Way” concept, plus another 2 percent who were familiar, did not respond to this and other questions where

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<sup>27</sup> Note: percentages are all based on the number of people who answered that particular question, not on the original hundred who began the survey.

they needed this knowledge to answer the questions. Sixteen responses were in a tribal language with the remaining responses being in English. I can only accurately interpret the 91 answers that were given in English but there is a great deal of consistency of meaning among them. It was not the purpose of this question to link specific tribes to their particular harmony concept and I saw no need to duplicate matching terms. The purpose of this question was to get an idea of how many people had more than a vague idea of the concept of Harmony. The assumption was that if they could name it in their own language or at least name the English equivalent, then their response could be considered reliable. The collective responses were:

*Mino Pimadiziwin*, the Good life, *Hozhoo*-Beauty Way, Walking the Sacred Red Road being a caretaker over all of creation, *Xo pi ne t*, sacredness of life or it is in all life, Walking the Sacred (White) Path, The Crow Way, balance is important, Great Peace, *Sk ^ na* means Peace, Faith, natural faith healing, the White Path of Peace or *Duyukta*, Tangled driftwood a.k.a. our clan system, White Buffalo Woman Calf Pipe, covenant relationship with Creator and His voice—*shalom*, *Mitaku Oyasin* We are all related, good path, Life long happiness, Living in Harmony, corn pollen path, Equality, Oneness, *Wicozani ewange ahot/Bimaadiziwin*: The good life, *Ke'*, Everything is well with respect, Mind, body and spirit must all be in balance, give back more than is expected, Circle of Life, There is no one word for this in our language, *Donelawega*- natural flow in the great circle, (being) part of it... also balance is a good translation, body/mind/spirit in balance with each other=*wozanni*, healthy, oneness with creation, power of silence; humility, Whole/*skënö*- is the root for Wyandot words for contentment, wellbeing, Thankful to Creator and respect for all living and non-living things on Mother Earth, Simplicity, The Way, respect of mother earth and all creation, *Bimotasaywin*, I am of the Great Spirit, medicine wheel teachings, Live on Mother Earth as she is your keeper, *do hi ge seesdi*, being a man of knowledge, *Onkwehonweneha*, Creator Mother earth, we are made out of her from her womb, Respect for everything God made, *Gayanashagowa*: Great Law of Peace. Also, *onkwe:honweneha*:original instructions for living, Sun, *Eloheh*, honoring our way of life and giving back to the earth, 'the Native way', Principles of Life - Grandfather's teachings, Relationship, Being in tune with and respectful to the land, all living creatures and most, important, to God, Walk in Beauty with the Creator (*hozho*), walking in harmony, Way of Life, *Hozho*, The good way, the good path, The Native Way, Harmony Way.



#### 4. What values does this concept express or include? (N = 90).

At one level the responses in this question just reflected the substantiation of the final list of Native American core values. The values that people expressed simply confirmed the list that I developed from the literature but on another level some of the responses here shed some light beyond the present values. For example, one respondent stated that, “the Great Law codifies human dignity in government by consensus.” Presumably, (referencing the interview with AJ), this person is related to one of the Six Nations in the Iroquois Confederacy and is referring to the Great Law of Peace. The response is most similar to value No. 8 from the original literature, “Cooperation not Competition Oriented.” The concept of the Great Law was not one I had read in the literature but I did encounter it in my interviews. In this sense, the survey response did not add another value to the compiled list between the literature and the interviews, but it did go beyond the literature and it reinforced a value that emerged in the interviews.

Question No. 4 on the survey was meant to be both a qualifying question and an integrative tool. By naming the values associated with their harmony concept I wanted to see if they could readily identify values associated with their harmony concept without any prompting from the questions in the survey. This question was deliberately set on the first page of the survey so they could not go forward to question No. 5, which lists possible values from which to choose, meaning they had to come up with the response on their own. By marking at least one answer the majority of responses (90 percent) showed their familiarity with at least one value associated with a harmony concept. Below is a selected list of responses reflecting both substantiation of those found later in the final list of Native American core values and also revealing added narrative to the existing set of

values. I have listed several answers as examples of narratives that substantiate values that have been discussed and those which develop one or more values further. In the next chapter and I will include them in the expanded list.

1. Having respect for our mother earth and all that she offers. Having respect for others and ourselves. Giving offerings for all that you take and taking only what you need. Being kind most times but fiercely protecting our land and our families;

2. Having honesty, integrity, generosity (actually the most valued from what I have learned so far), respect (for Creator, life of all creatures, and creation as well as others and family), honor, and gratitude;

3. Learning teachings, songs, dances, meetings, stories, and cultural practices of the Long House People. Learning our roles and the responsibilities of our clans. Learning better ways to live harmoniously with nature and enhance our spiritual relationship with the Creator, Great Spirit;

4. Being in balance with the living brings longevity and brings forth contentment to being blessed with happiness and a good life;

5. Knowing that all Creation is of value and that we are interdependent. To be in balance and harmony means we are ONE with the Great Mystery and all creation, be it the animal kingdom, plant, mineral, sky nation, and even other universes. We are all to respect and value one another and see everything as a part of each other;

6. Having good thoughts, words ,and deeds as essential to balance. Anything negative will throw one out of balance. Community and family needs come before individual wants. Only by giving can I obtain. Everything I do has an effect on the next 7 generations;

7. Knowing Creator as our Father and praying to Him and showing our thanks.

We respect our Mother Earth and every living and nonliving thing on it, for they each have a spirit given to them by Creator. We take no more than we need and before we take it, we pray, say thanks and ask forgiveness for taking such things. As humans, we are not above any other. We are all equals and everything should be respected. We do not force our beliefs on others, yet we respect other's beliefs. We are one.

8. Knowing that the most important one is nonmaterialism Honoring Creator and our ancestors. Loving and respecting animals and the environment Respecting and letting others be who they are (respecting each person's individual journey). Enjoying humor. Taking one day at a time. Enjoying life and living in the moment.

9. Knowing that the entire earth and all in it were made by one Creator where each plays a part in the other's existence and well-being. In modern terms we understand how even the giving of oxygen and carbon dioxide between trees and man keep them both living, so everything created needs each other to stay healthy and growing and thriving.

10. Not carrying anger or hostility to another person. Being in balance and harmony with all living things, including people. When a murder is committed, the wrong must be set right, not for the purpose revenge but to keep a balance and keeping in harmony. Everything out of balance is not harmony. Then sickness (of all kinds) comes to the People.

11. Having faith in the Creator. Showing gratitude and respect to and for all living things. Treating others as I want to be treated. The three binding principles are *gaihwiyo* (righteousness)—good news or something wholesome to partake; power (civil

authority)—that is the spiritual power granted to human beings to maintain peace and harmony; and, mind (reason)—the greatest gift given to humanity, the ability to think and create as the Creator does.

12. Praying to the Creator is the first. Women are sacred. Children are sacred. Respecting all living things. Respecting the elders. Taking care of the elders. Caring for widows and orphans. Giving away the best that you have without letting anyone know you are giving your best away. All the people of the world are related. The earth is our mother. The stone people are the most powerful.

13. Being in harmony in all areas—with the Creator, creation, life, family, present, and past.

14. Respecting community. Respecting self. Understanding that what we do today will impact the next seven generations, honoring our ancestors. Maintaining traditions in all ways possible, even if you do not live on the reservation.

15. Giving back is more important than one's own needs. Treating others as you would be treated. Respecting the Creator and living a life pleasing unto him.

There were a great many similarities between the answers in survey question No. 4 and what I had already discovered through the literature and interviews. Question No. 4 in the survey was extremely important because it was the only place where respondents could name values themselves without any prompting. The above responses typify many of the responses but they also expanded my understanding of some of the values. For example, a good number of the responses mentioned the interconnectedness between the earth and human beings, that is, response (a) mentions offerings given to the earth and taking only what one needs. Response (c) states we can learn better ways to live with the

earth. Response (e) touches on the interconnectedness of the earth and the Creator.

Response (g) speaks of stewardship but then goes as far as saying we must pray and ask forgiveness when we take from the earth.

The second value I understood better from reading the responses to question No. 4 was the connection between imbalance and sickness or lack of well-being. The two examples I chose to list above are found in responses (d) and (j). The first response connects living in balance with a long and happy life. The second states that when things are not in harmony all kinds of sicknesses will come to people.

Another expanded value is the community ethic that the group, including one's family and community, is sometimes thought of in ways that are more important than the individual (see (f)). A corollary to this is the value of generosity where one is expected to give their best (see (l) and (o), and when giving their best they should keep it from being known by others (l).

The idea of tolerance and respect for other people's beliefs and human journey was reinforced in (g) and (h). The second response linked respect for humans in a similar way we respect animals, with each animal or person having their own path to travel. Finally, the last value I found expanded in question 4 was that of our actions affecting the future generations. Two of the responses spoke of it affecting the next seven generations (see [f] and [n]). Although it had been mentioned in my earlier research, I was faced with the possibility that thinking about the next seven generations challenges the idea that Native Americans tend to live in the past and present time orientation and not so much thinking about the future. Having taken a Futuristics course in college my mind automatically went to the Western idea of charting future trends and possible scenarios.

Having spent much time with traditional Native American elders I had to contemplate what this might have meant coming from them. It then became obvious. A past and present time orientation does not mean we do not think about the future. It does mean that we realize what we do in our present reality affects future generations.

**5. Please mark the values below if they are expressed or included in this concept or way of living and being in harmony/balance. (N=87)**

The responses are ranked below from the most the least responses. Though certain values were given more weight by the responders than others, all the values were considered to be important by over 1/2 of the responders. The responses are ranked below from the most the least responses. The following list reflects the values extracted from the initial four value sets.

Family orientated-relatedness extends past immediate family	97.7%
Seek to maintain harmony/balance in all of life	96.6%
Women are powerful and vital, children are sacred, and elders are respected	96.6%
Belief in the Great Mystery/Creator	94.3%
Natural world is spiritual/sacred	89.7%
Respect is normative and is shown through cooperation	88.5%
Use the heart & mind in making decisions	87.4%
Humor is sacred and necessary	85.1%
Sacred traditions/ceremonies and specialized practitioners	82.8%
Personal worship reinforces identity	81.6%
Primal power in words and oral tradition	74.7%
Authority comes from reflected experience	67.8%
Time orientation-emphasizes past and present	65.5%
Open work ethic-work as need arises	60.9%

**6. If you are familiar with other Native North American peoples who have a similar concept please identify them with their concept or way of living and being in harmony/balance. (N=62)**

Sometimes respondents provided the names of several tribes in their answer. In all, forty-four tribes were named (not including one response for Native Hawaiians). This question served to find out how widely known the harmony concept is thought to be among tribes other than one's own tribe. A possible indicator for wide distribution is the respondent's perception that another tribal group has a Harmony Way concept similar to their own. These responses may give credence to the idea that a Native American Harmony Way is widespread among indigene across North America.

These tribes included Cree, Sioux (Dakota/Lakota/Nakota), Cheyenne, Pikuni (Blackfoot Confederacy), Blackfeet, Crow, Annishanabe, Cherokee, Creek, Choctaw, Miccosukee, Miqmac, Hopi, Navajo, Menominee, Oneida (Wisconsin), Pottawatomie, Stockbridge-Munsee, Ho-Chunk, Seminole, Comanche, Seneca, Membrino Apache, Zuni, Quechan, Crit, Chemuevi, Hualapai, Cahuilla, Pima, Odawa, Kainai (Blood), Lenni-Lenape, Native Hawaiians, Miwok, Laguna Pueblo, Mescalero Apache, Mollala, Umatilla, Coos, Lower Umpqua, Siuslaw, Yakama, Omaha, Tlingit, Haida, Mohawk, Oneida, Onandaga, Cayuga, Tuscarora, Ponca and Oto.

**7. How important is it to you that you live according to the concept you identified?**

(87 percent responded)

The responses to this question came as follows:

Very important	79.3%
Important	16.1%
Somewhat important	3.4%

Not very important	0.0
Not important	1.1%

My reasons for listing the degree of importance in questions 7-9 was not based on any inherent value I sought in the degrees themselves but rather, I wanted to give people room to respond, either positively or negatively in gradients so they would be more likely to answer the question. In other words, I believe some people, especially Indian people, sometimes do not like to commit to a simple affirmative/negative type question. By offering gradients I gave them more freedom to answer in the generalized category of important or not important. This question revealed that 98.8% felt it was important that they live according to “The Harmony Way” concept they identified.

**8. How important do you feel it is to the people in your tribal communities to live according to this concept? (N=86)**

The responses to this question came as follows:

Very important	58.1%
Important	27.9%
Somewhat important	11.6%
Not very important	0.0
Not important	2.3%

Respondents felt that 97.6 percent of the people in their own tribal communities believe they should live according to “The Harmony Way.” Obviously, the people in question are not answering this for themselves so we can only say that the respondent thought it would be important to others. Answering the question infers that the respondent has some idea of what the people in their own tribal community feel about “The Harmony Way.” This also presumes that others in the respondent’s tribal group have some knowledge of “The Harmony Way.”



**9. How important do you feel it is to the people in other Native North American tribal communities to live according to this concept? (N=85)**

The responses to this question came as follows:

Very important	58.8%
Important	30.6%
Somewhat important	7.1%
Not very important	0.2%
Not important	2.4%

Respondents felt that 96.5 percent of people in other tribal communities would believe it is important that they should live according to “The Harmony Way.” If question number 8 takes us farther from the source then this questions becomes even more unreliable if we want to make too much of it. However, on a popular level, (in the mind of other Native Americans) 96.5 percent of the Native Americans surveyed felt other Indians would think that it is central to live their lives according to “The Harmony Way” and only 3.6 percent felt it was not important. Even if this is a projection on other tribes it reinforces the fact that living life in “The Harmony Way” is critical to the respondent.

**10. Please feel free to write more if there is any other information you wish to convey on this subject. Thank You! (N=52)**

No new information or insight was gained by the final question. I added this question primarily to relieve any frustration on the part of the person taking the survey. Generally, Native Americans have an aversion to talking about their beliefs and values in such succinct and impersonal ways such as a survey. I wanted the responder to be able to feel like they were given a chance to express themselves more freely. None of the answers in this question provided any new material that needed to be included. The

answers were primarily a summary of what they had said earlier. Here are a few examples:

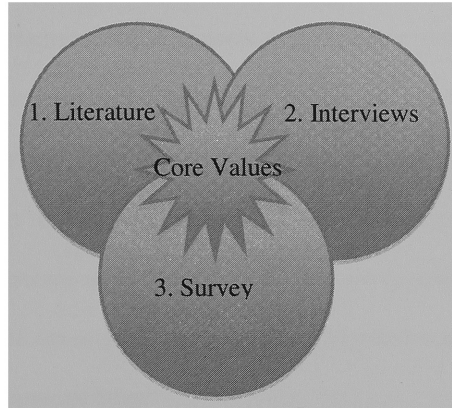
- a). A person is known mainly by how they act, how they speak and how their children act and speak and by the company they keep.. We each must do the best we can to walk in balance here on Mother Earth in all aspects of our life. We must make a goal to become strong Physically, Mentally and most of all Spiritually
- b). I believe this concept of harmony/balance is the key! If a mirror is broken into thousands of little pieces, when I look into them I see thousands of myself. Creator made diversity and uniqueness, yet all as a part of The One. Our society has attempted to cause separation and discord- equate Oneness with sameness....not allowing for the beauty in each part but striving to make us all the same. Oneness is cooperation, respect, and love for each part of ourselves...just as we are to love our own body; each part being necessary and important.
- c). In order for us to survive as a people our everyday life must be lived in accordance to our spiritual beliefs

The answers to the final question tended to summarize what had been said already.

### **Summary**

The survey, although used as a secondary tool, was helpful in substantiating the other data and even extending some further understanding beyond the literature and interviews. The values collected from the literature were drawn from several fields including education, anthropology, and psychology. This variety was helpful because each entity approached the idea of values from different perspectives and added to create a much more robust list of Native American values. The interviews, although there were only eight, were collected from Native American elders and/or spiritual leaders who contributed a breadth of experience, tribes and perspectives. Each was in-depth in that they were allowed to talk about the subject until they had nothing more to say. Together, these three tools allowed me to examine my original hunch concerning a Harmony Way

concept among Native Americans, in a way that “fleshed out” that concept with a list of core Native American values (see Figure 1.).



**Figure 1. Integration of data process.**

The study also added new data for future reference and discovery. First of all, the project has given some geographic credibility to the idea of the universality of “The Harmony Way” concept among Native Americans. At least forty-five different tribes were represented in the survey with the addition of the various tribes that were represented in the interviews. The map in Appendix D. displays the current geographic distribution of the tribes represented in the literature, interviews and survey that claim familiarity with “The Harmony Way.” In addition, most Native Americans not only recognize “The Harmony Way” concept in their own tribe but they recognize it in other tribes as well. Forty-four tribes, other than their own (and Hawaiian) were mentioned by the survey respondents. “The Harmony Way” concept appears to be widely distributed across Canada and the United States.

Secondly, most Native Americans seem to recognize “The Harmony Way” as something that is associated with their own tribe. Each interviewee immediately identified “The Harmony Way” in their own tribe with no need for an explanation or further prompting. In addition, all those except for the seven taking the survey who were not familiar with “The Harmony Way” concept, could name a great many values associated with “The Harmony Way.” Ninety-two of the one hundred people who took the survey were familiar with “The Harmony Way” in their own tribes and could name values associated with it “off the top of their heads” and when prompted. In addition, the majority of Native Americans surveyed (60.7-97.7 percent depending on which value was marked) agreed with the original literature list I compiled that all those values are associated with “The Harmony Way.”

Thirdly, the values associated with “The Harmony Way” concept are considered by Native Americans to be important in their everyday lives. This was true in the literature, the interviews and the surveys. In the next chapter I will attempt to synthesize the values associated with “The Harmony Way” into one cohesive list, including subcategories under each value. I will also list specifically, the expansion of meaning in the values gained from question No. 4 of the survey.

## CHAPTER 5

### INTERPRETING CORE NATIVE AMERICAN VALUES

In this chapter I will interpret the data that I collected which makes up the core Native American values in “The Harmony Way.” I began this project by making the claim that no current American model of mission, known to me, is using primarily Native North American values in mission among Native Americans. By and large, my experience has shown me that Western models of mission have failed among Native Americans, and that colonial practices have devastated Native communities. My pursuit of this concern led me to seek a better way of pursuing Christian mission among Native Americans. I believe I have found that there are generally shared Native American values that could guide the construction of new models for mission in Native American communities. These shared values exist within a broader system, called by various tribal names according to tribal language, but which I refer to generically as “The Harmony Way.”

When asked about “The Harmony Way” concept, the questions elicited responses among Native Americans including them naming certain values. These are the same values that I have shown are held in common among a great many Native Americans. Naming these common values was demonstrated both in the survey in question No. 4 and in the interviews. It was unclear in my research as to whether all these values are simply subsumed under “The Harmony Way,” or whether these values take their shape when viewed through the lens of “The Harmony Way.” I suspect a kind of reciprocity to be active that would demonstrate both paradigms to be correct.

I engaged in the research by first asking some questions to set the framework of the project. I wanted to know what resources (particularly values) are available within the Native American communities themselves for developing appropriate models of mission. However, before I could propose any alternative models of mission I needed to know to what degree these values are shared among Native American communities. My research tools included Native American values literature, interviews with Native American elders/spiritual leaders and a sampling survey from across Native America.

The literature, surveys and interviews all provided substantiation for, and went beyond, my original hunch. Namely, they indicated that there is a broad-based understanding of a Harmony Way concept among many North American Natives. My samplings provided information yielding the discovery of at least some of the values that are associated with the Native American Harmony Way. Particularly helpful were the interviews which helped me to understand just how deep these values go and how they are symbiotically entwined with each tribe's concept of a Harmony Way. The literature, the survey and the interviews showed much more similarity than dissimilarity in various tribal Harmony Way concepts.

The following lists name the values extracted from my research. The concluding list represents those values after they are synthesized into one final list of core Native American values associated with "The Harmony Way." Each of the ten core values are then explored and expanded into sub-categories in order to provide a fuller explanation of the ten core Native American Harmony Way values.

## Values That Emerged from Literature

The following set of values emerged from my literature research in the beginning of my project. After deciding on what seemed the most appropriate sets of values already grouped by competent researchers, I discerned which values overlapped each other and then in some cases described them with a title that encompassed similar thoughts from duplicate values. I did not omit any values from any of the five value sets. Those values common among Native Americans are:

- a belief in the Great Mystery;
- the desire to seek harmony and balance;
- a sense of personal worship identity;
- sacred traditions and practitioners;
- the feeling that humor is necessary and sacred;
- an understanding that women, children, elders are sacred;
- cooperation and respect;
- the use of both heart and mind in decision making;
- an understanding that the natural world is spiritual;
- a view that authority is drawn from reflected experience;
- belief that words have primordial power;
- a present and past time orientation;
- an open work ethic;
- a great Family orientation;
- a sense that human beings mostly good with some evil;
- a sense that identity is found in both being and doing; and,

- a strong sense of hospitality/generosity

### **Values That Emerged from Interviews**

The interviews were by and large, held after most of the literature review was accomplished and the initial value sets were already compiled. I tried to find the most prominent themes of each interview and then I compared the interviews with each other.

The interview themes are listed below as a set of values.

- Children are sacred.
- Creation is revered through an active relationship.
- Humor is sacred and necessary.
- Females are vital.
- Family is essential.
- Community systems are fundamental.
- Elders are respected.
- Symbols/Ceremonies/Societies/Traditions all exist for society.
- Balance/Harmony/Circle/Peace is connected to all of life.
- Respect/Consensus/Dignity are the ethics of society.
- Hospitality/Generosity is always practiced.
- Stories/Teachings play many roles in society.

### **Values Reinforced or Expanded by Question No. 4 of the Survey**

I did not view the whole survey as a core research tool but it was chiefly used as a means of corroborating the information found during my other research, particularly in the literature. Besides the unexpected wide geographic profile that the survey respondents



represented, question No. 4 was the main focus of the survey. In this question respondents had the opportunity to answer without prior suggestion, what values their own tribal concept of “The Harmony Way” expressed. Although the survey added no new values to the literature or the interviews, there were answers that shed some light on the values already determined by the literature and interviews. This fact was especially true concerning the relevance of “The Harmony Way” with creation. Because these answers were helpful in to my understanding and they allowed me to expand the meanings behind the final core value set, I have included them in the list below.

- All of life is interconnected
- We have a reciprocal relationship with the earth
- We are stewards (keepers) of the earth
- Gratitude to the earth is expressed in ceremony (offerings)
- We can learn to live better with the earth
- Community is often more important than the individual
- Our present actions affect future generations
- Imbalance results in sickness
- Native culture is non-materialistic (things not that important)
- It is better to give than receive
- People should always give their best away to others
- Giving should be done in secret

### **Core Native American Values**

By synthesizing the lists of values that emerged from the literature, the survey and the interviews, a core list of values associated with the Native American Harmony Way

have emerged. It is difficult to categorize or even to rank these values since they are all symbiotic to Native American understandings of “The Harmony Way.” Therefore, the core values are not numbered in a hierarchical fashion according to importance, but they all should be seen as being related to each other.

### 1. Tangible Spirituality

- Belief in the great mystery/creator
- Creation, (including land and water) being natural and spiritual
- Practiced ceremonies and traditions
- Vital societies
- Heavily symbolic culture
- Authority from reflected experience

### 2. Life Governed by Harmony

- Seeking to maintain balance in all of life
- Interconnectedness in all of life
- Life in harmony expressed as a circle or hoop
- Seeking peace
- Humans as mostly good with some evil
- Fear as a catalyst for virtue
- Imbalance resulting in ill health

### 3. Natural Connectedness to All Creation

- Reciprocity
- Stewardship (keeper)
- Gratitude expressed in ceremony

- Learning with creation as a dynamic process

#### 4. Community as Essential

- Sacred women
- Beloved children
- Elders are Respected
- Vital family
- Integral relation of all

#### 5. Sacred and Necessary Humor

- Humor as part of the balance
- Humor as impromptu or designed in ceremony

#### 6. Cooperative Form of Communalty

- Dignity from consensus
- High tolerance of and respect for dissension
- Process of both hearts and minds
- Diversity giving strength and balance to life

#### 7. Orality as the Primary Communication Method

- Orally passed traditions
- Spoken words with primordial power
- Stories as a main vehicle for teaching and sustaining
- Quiet, respectful communication

#### 8. Present and Past Time Orientation

- Present engagement above future scheduling (Indian time)
- Future determined by looking to the past

- Fluidity between past and present
- Present reality affecting future generations

#### 9. Open Work Ethic

- Meaningful work
- Work as needed
- Identity in both doing and being
- Lifestyle with few constraints
- Nonmaterialistic

#### 10. Great Hospitality/Generosity

- Giving one's best away to others
- Better to give than to receive
- Giving secretly

### **Tangible Spirituality**

Because Native American Spirituality is so much a part of everyday reality it is sometimes difficult to parse or categorize. Even when one searches the index of books written by Native American scholars, spirituality is very seldom listed as if it were a separate subject. While thinking about spirituality in Western terms we sometimes refer to Native American spirituality as religion, but religion is usually thought of in one of two binary tracts, as something either internally private or externally public. In the Indian way of understanding religion there is no difference between private, public or other spheres of thought or expression. Spirituality is inseparable from Native American life and thought. It is woven into the very fabric of being Indigenous. Native American

spirituality in this aspect of understanding is similar to other indigenous people in the world. In speaking of Melanesian worldview concerning religion, Henry Paroi comments,

Defining an area called religion is a typical Western approach to life, for it requires separating one aspect of life from others...For Melanesians, it seems more accurate not to separate religion from politics or economics or kinship. That is, religion is not limited to the sacred and supernatural, but it is a way of integrating and managing life...There is no distinction between the sacred and the profane in typical Melanesian thinking because the total world is put together by religion. (Paroi 2001, 169-70)

Spirituality among Native Americans is a natural constituent of everything but even the idea of a spiritual worldview can be viewed as ethereal in a more dualistic worldview. To Native Americans it is very tangible. Of the eight interviews I conducted all eight linked the concept of the Creator with tangible actions. Whether it is ceremony or just the way we conduct ourselves on a daily basis for Native Americans, the entirety of life is considered to be a sacred, spiritual path.

Many traditional Cherokee Indians begin each morning with prayer and a type of self-baptismal at the river or creek. Traditional Washoe Indians begin the day by washing their face with water, preferably with water from Lake Tahoe. Traditional Muskogee tribal people often face the morning sun for their daily prayers and traditional Kiowa Indians burn cedar each morning. Each tribe has its own version of morning prayers.<sup>28</sup> These morning times of prayer remind our people that each day is sacred. Native American spirituality is expressed tangibly using water, sunlight, smoke, and many other symbols, but it is also wholly integrated in our hearts. Here, Casey Church notes how his duties as a father fit into his spirituality.

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<sup>28</sup> I have heard these things through examples, both shown and shared by various elders throughout my life.

I might get angry too easily or punish [sic] my kids too hard, then I feel that and I have to apologize to my kids and it brings me back to a life of compassion...we all help each other to stay in harmony. (CC)

It is important to Native Americans like Casey that their spirituality and actions are congruent.

**Belief in the Great Mystery/Creator.** A resolute 94.3 percent of the people from the survey affirmed that belief in the Great Mystery/Creator is part of their understanding of “The Harmony Way.” Although this figure may show a high percentage of Native Americans who see the connection of a Supreme Being or Life Force to their Harmony Way concept, I was actually surprised that it was not closer to 100 percent. In my life I have only met two Native American agnostics and I have never met a Native American atheist. “We were spiritual already” was one of the comments made by Vincent Yellow Old Woman during our interview. Normally, Native Americans believe in a supreme being in either a personal sense or in a more distant sense of a life force that is above everything else.

The literature also confirmed the belief in a Great Mystery/Creator/life-force or unseen powers. Again, to use the term God as some religions do in referring to a personal deity would not represent the broad spectrum of beliefs among Native Americans. For example, Beck and Walters state “these [unseen] powers may be more of a ‘feeling’ that something exists and is sacred and mysterious” (Beck and Walters 1977, 9). This more ambiguous view would in no way preclude the idea of a personal deity as shown in the conversation between Danish Ethnographer Knud Rasmussen and an Eskimo man named *Najagneg*. When asked by Rasmussen if he believed in the ancient powers, he replied:

Yes, a power that we call Sila, which is not to be explained in simple words. A great spirit, supporting the world and the weather and all of life on earth, a spirit

so mighty that what he says to mankind is not through common words...No one has seen Sila; his place of being is a mystery, in that he is at once among us and unspeakably far away. (Rasmussen 1927, 383-86)

Given his testimony, there is little doubt that *Najagneg* has a view of a personal divine being similar to most of the Native Americans who I have met. Still, Native Americans are generally not likely to discuss their theology in the details to which the West is accustomed.

In contrast to many organized religions in the world, Native American sacred ways limit the amount of explaining a person can do...Many Native American sacred teachings suggest that if people try to explain everything or seek to leave nothing unexplored in the universe, for them they are trying to be like gods, not humans. (Beck and Walters 1977, 4)

This view reinforces my original concerns at the onset of this paper. In our Native American understanding, too much explanation is evidence of a lack of understanding.

**Creation (including land and water) being natural and spiritual.** Fern Cloud gave the example of Native American spirituality in the context of healing the land. She made a natural transition to the idea that human beings are also land made by Creator and we are all in need of healing. “We are the land also. We are made by Creator and we all need to heal, look inside our hearts and get right. It’s critical.” When first asked what values their Harmony Way concept expressed or included, over 1/3 of the respondents from the survey (33/90) specifically mentioned the earth, land or creation as part of their spirituality. When given an option to answer the same question only this time with a suggested phrase being, “natural world is spiritual and sacred,” 89.7% from the survey said it was included in their concept of “The Harmony Way.” Both questions show that creation, as a part of Native American spirituality is significant. Again, Fern Cloud refers to the relationship of earth and spirituality:

Land comes out of balance or harmony. How do they deal with it? The earth, *Makah Enah*, we all see that this is happening. My uncle told me the earth is poisoned 10 feet down because of the chemicals and whatever else. Really, there is a big problem-the hoop is broken but the only way we know how to do things is through prayer. We pray in our ways and it's going to take a miracle, really. (FC)

For indigenous people, land is paramount in understanding "The Harmony Way." Land not only gives identity but it is often a part of the covenant story between the people and the Creator. It is seen as both a gift and a responsibility for caretaking.

I am a Keetoowah (Cherokee). We have our own stories of our origin, as do many tribes. In short, after a long time of wandering the Creator spoke to our Keetoowah people, gave us our boundaries, our Harmony Way of living and even our name which connotes this covenant to the land and our relationship to the Creator. Steve Charleston's article "The Old Testament of Native America" helps deepen our understanding of these ancient covenants:

The place I stand is the original covenant God gave to Native America. I believe with all my heart that God's revelation to Native People is second to none. God spoke to generations of Native People over centuries of our spiritual development. We need to pay attention to that voice, to be respectful of the covenant. (Treat 1996, 69)

The land and the covenant are often considered one among Many Native American peoples.

It is often said around Indian country, "Without our land, we can't be a people." This concept and its relationship to Native American spirituality is very different than the understanding of Western, immigrant peoples. For Native Americans, writes Charleston, "They tied this identity to the land given them by God. It was this land-based covenant that gave them their identity as 'The People,' as the community special to a loving God" (77). Western immigrant-based peoples tend to live in a concept or a description of a



place<sup>29</sup> rather than being place-based like Native American People. For example, America may be more of an idea to Western immigrants whereas, to Native American it is more about being a place.

**Practiced ceremonies and traditions.** Native American ceremonies and traditions are practiced throughout Indian country. These traditions may be associated with personal worship and also practiced in the sense of what has been called “earth renewal ceremonies”<sup>30</sup> or both meanings may be given credence simultaneously. Some ceremonies began as a way of recreating the seasons or renewing the earth and have now taken on more personal meanings. Speaking of Sundance Jerry H. Gill states, “While it may at one time been associated with the great buffalo hunts, it is more commonly used nowadays as a means of expressing a personal vow or renewing various socioreligious commitments” (2002, 129). The results of the survey show that 82.8 percent believe that these ceremonies and traditions are important to their concept of “The Harmony Way.” Those being interviewed felt the same. Adrian Jacobs shares,

There was cannibalism. Story of Hiawatha who lost his daughters and he became very distraught in his actions as a murderer and a cannibal. When you become hurt and damaged you close your heart and even strike out. Deganawitah found him and was able to bring him peace and consolment. The great law and the great peace restores dignity by giving comfort ceremonially by helping that person through your grieving process. (AJ)

Jacobs relates the first act of healing in the Hiawatha story. The Great Peace Maker initiated a ceremony that helped him bring his life into balance. In this ceremony emotions are brought into balance with the rest of creation and community. Because of

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<sup>29</sup> Robert N. Bellah, in his defense of American Civil Religion refers to poet Wallace Stevens’ poem, *Description without Place* by affirming Stevens’ line, “We live in the description of the place and not the place itself” (Stevens 1966, 494; Bellah 1968).

<sup>30</sup> Mircea Eliade’s *Sacred and Profane* (1987) idea of *homo religiosus* and the way in which, according to him, humans sanctify space, time, natural phenomena, and the processes and stages of living.

Hiawatha's grieving for his departed daughters he was living like a madman. He could find no rest in his present life. The ceremony was able to bring harmony also between his past and his present life.

**Vital societies.** Native American societies were crucial to proper government and spirituality.

We had certain societies, like sundance and only those society members would know fully what was going on in those meetings. Our society members also kept that harmony, even though only they knew what was going on inside their circle, it was okay. (VY)

Vincent Yellow Old Woman's statement about the importance of particular groups within a tribal community like the Sundance society reveals how the community viewed "The Harmony Way" in a manner that did not need to involve every individual person in every aspect or ceremony. Here he is saying that there were responsibilities to maintaining harmony that only involved certain groups and as long as they did them, it contributed to the overall harmony of the group. These spiritual ceremonies then would draw the support of the whole community because they were acting in a sort of vicarious fashion for all the people.

The following statement by Fern Cloud alludes to the fact that when those societies do not continue practicing the ceremonies, people have trouble finding harmony.

When our ways were working for us and we had societies and structure for the good of all the people. Those seven rites, the moral principles, they all had a meaning. Males and females, every aspect of our life-there was a meaning to it. (FC)

Fern points out the problems of an encroaching modernity that continues to destroy Native American structures.

**Heavily symbolic culture.** Native American spirituality is highly symbolic so it should come as no surprise that so many people, when making a reference to “The Harmony Way,” mention a circle or hoop to symbolize harmony. Casey Church mentions it right away during the interview, “I have this picture here of the medicine wheel with its quadrants-emotional, physical, spiritual and you see the balance this way” (CC). The four cardinal directions are often used as a reference to harmony as also mentioned by Cloud.

The four colors represent the four directions, black is in the west, red is in the north, yellow is the east and the white is in the south. When we die we believe we follow the Milky Way so we go south along those white stars. Each has a meaning. Some say it represents the four kinds of people. And then you go to different tribes and many times they have these same colors but maybe different directions and different stories. (FC)

The four directions color and meaning vary according to tribal traditions but many tribes use a four or seven cardinal direction while talking about their spirituality. Cloud unpacks some of the meaning for the Dakota giving meaning to the colors, directions, stages of life, kinds of people and as I have heard her and others say, stages of one’s life. For other aboriginal people wampum belts have come to symbolize their journey and spiritual harmony. Here Jacobs explains how the Iroquois Confederacy understands harmony through the representation of the story of the Great Peacemaker.

We have the wampum belts and people who are committed to passing on the story. There are numbers associated with it and people give detailed accounts of the story. One wampum is a complete circle beaded in wampum with 50 strings. One string goes farther than the rest and it represents the peacemaker. Our system of consensus allows everyone to come together for one voice. Each of the original names is preserved and passed down to the person who takes that position. This all happened likely about 1151 AD. All of those positions are fulfilled except for the peacemaker. (AJ)

Several respondents in the survey mention the pipe. One comment was “Connects us with the Creator through prayer with the pipe.” Many tribes have pipe keepers or pipe

ceremonies. As explained to me, that sacred smoke always goes up—just like our prayers.” The pipe is also associated with truth-telling or covenant making between two or more people or groups. Here, Cloud tells of how the pipe plays a central role in Dakota culture, symbolizing the focus of the seven ceremonies and seven teachings which make up Dakota life and living in harmony.

We call ourselves Oyate, we are the people of the seven council fires. this includes the Dakota, Nakota and Lakota. It is about a way of life. Oyate just means the people. Thousands and thousands of years ago White Buffalo Calf Woman, she brought the pipe to our people and gave us the seven rites along with the seven teachings for us to live by. Through the ways of our people we have to go way back, back to that point in time when everything was in harmony. (FC)

For the Sioux, a simple symbol such as the pipe serves as the center of a whole life of spiritual harmony.

Other tribes have other central symbolic references such as the Shoshone Sundance, the Cherokee Stompdance or the Kiowa Medicine Bundles. These sacred objects, dances and songs all serve as symbolic reference to a way of life that is to be lived in balance and in harmony.

When you look at the history of our people and how they were treated by the white man. They saw the land and had greed but our people had balance and a way of life. In one front they tried to take away those dances and those songs. (VY)

Yellow Old Woman refers to the Christian practice of the attempt to remove Native American dances, songs and ceremonies that symbolically serve as a focus and catalyst to encourage the people to continue in “The Harmony Way.”

Among Native Americans symbols have deep seated meaning and they are symbiotically related to a particular Native American spirituality and lifestyle of Harmony. Fern Cloud’s understanding is that the ceremonies are at the same level as the

Bible is to Western Christians. In the following statement she compares the two meanings.

The Christians have the Bible and so forth and we have our ceremonies and they're the same. There are so many things to help those who are searching or for healing or whatever ways-they are there. We have the keeping of the soul, which sounds way out there but it's really all about mourning. (FC)

In the strictest sense, words are symbols and the Bible is a book containing words. In this sense she is comparing the Bible and the Dakota Spirit-Keeping practice as symbols that aide people with grief and for healing.

**Authority from reflected experience.** The idea here is that we can trust our elders and our traditions to lead us into a good path. The following Cherokee story of the expansion of the world has many teaching points but primary among them is that we should listen first to those among us who are the oldest because their wisdom is based upon much reflected experience. Although I have heard this story told by others, I have a particular fondness for the way Cherokee story-teller Robert Francis relays the story.

When the earth was first made, it was covered all over with water except for one small island. This island was the top of a high mountain. This was Blue Mountain, in the Cherokee country. White folks came a short time ago and named this mountain Clingman's Dome, no doubt after some white man or other named Clingman. But it has always been Blue Mountain and always will be Blue Mountain. For the Cherokees, the Ani-Kituwa, the Ani-Yvwiya, this is where it begins.

Everyone lived together on this mountaintop island. The human beings and the animals all got along fine. In those days they could understand one another's speech, for this was before the humans broke the harmony. The animals were also much bigger in those days. In fact, the animals of today are but shadows of those who once were. It was a good place to live. Sure, the island was small, but it was what everyone knew and was used to. All were content, until there came to be more of them than the small bit of land could support.

As they noticed they were getting crowded, a general council of all the people (both humans and animals) was called. The question was asked, "What can we do?" The only answer given was, "We can pray. All we can do is pray and ask the Grandfather Above to please give us some more land.

So all the people prayed, and Creator/Apportioner answered, “Oh my precious children, there is nothing I enjoy so much as giving good gifts to my children. But if I do everything for you without asking you to help in any way, how will you ever learn any responsibility? I really want to teach you some responsibility. Here’s what I will do: If one of you will swim to the bottom of the ocean and bring up some mud, just a little bit of mud, I will take that mud, that little bit of mud, and make a whole great land of it.”

All the people (animals and humans) began to look at one another. Someone asked, “Who will go? Who will get the mud?”

A slow, deep voice answered, “I will go. I will get the mud.” It was Grandma Turtle.

“Grandma Turtle, you can’t go!” They said. “You’re too old and slow. We don’t know what it’s like down there. We don’t know how deep it is.”

“I’ll go,” quacked Duck.

“Now that’s more like it,” they said. “You’re a good swimmer, Duck. You can go; you can do it.”

Duck paddled out onto the ocean and dived, but he popped right back up to the surface. Duck dived again and again and again, but the same thing happened each time. Well, you know how ducks are. They dive well, but they float much better. Duck paddled back to shore, shook the water off his tail and said, “I can’t dive that deep. I float too well.”

The question was asked again, “Who will go? Who will get the mud?”

Grandma Turtle said, “I will go. I will get the mud.”

“Grandma Turtle,” they said, “we settled that before! You can’t go. You’re too old. Who will go? Who will get the mud? Hey Otter, how about you?”

“What?” Otter said.

“How about you going to get the mud?”

“Mud? What mud?”

“The mud we need so Creator/Apportioner can make more land!”

“Oh, sure,” said Otter, and he slid off into the water and was gone a good long while. When he came back, he had a fish in his mouth, but no mud. Without a word to anyone, Otter climbed up onto the beach and began munching on the fish.

Everyone was watching him, but Otter paid them no mind, just kept eating his fish. “Hey Otter!” someone yelled.

“What?” Otter said.

“Where’s the mud?”

“Mud? What mud?” Otter asked. “Ohhh the mud! Well, I left here to go and get it. Then I got started playing. Then I caught this fish. Then I forgot all about the ummm, ummmm, whatever it was I was supposed to get.”

Oh my! They were nearly at their wits end. “Who will go?” they all asked. “Who will get the mud?”

Grandma Turtle said, “I will go. I will get the mud.” No one even paid her any mind.

“Who will go? Who will get the mud?”

“I will go,” said Beaver. “I will get the mud. I don’t play, and I do not eat fish.”

Resolutely, Beaver swam out into the ocean. He took a deep, deep breath and dived. Wow, Beaver was gone a long time. Some of the people watching and waiting were holding their breath in sympathy, but none seemed able to hold it that long. Finally, Beaver popped to the surface gasping for air. He swam to shore and climbed onto the beach shaking his head. “It’s too deep!” Beaver said. “I don’t know how deep it is. I never reached the bottom.”

Everyone was in despair. Beaver was the last best hope. How would they ever get mud? Maybe there would never be anything but the little mountaintop island. “Who will go?” they asked. “Who will get the mud?”

A slow deep voice answered, “I will go. I will get the mud.”

“You can’t go, Grandma Turtle, you’re too....”

“I WILL GO! I WILL GET THE MUD!”

There were no other volunteers, so they let Grandma Turtle go. She slowly paddled her way out onto the surface of the ocean. As everyone watched, she took a slow, deep breath, then another and another and another. She took three more breaths and disappeared beneath the water.

They waited a long time. Grandma Turtle was gone much longer than Duck or Otter or even Beaver had been. She was gone all that day and the next and the next and the next. They posted a sentry up on the very top of the mountain. Finally, on the seventh day, the sentry called out, “I think I see something coming up. Yes, yes, something is rising in the water. Could it be? Could it be? Yes! It’s Grandma Turtle!”

Sure enough, Grandma Turtle rose to the surface of the ocean, and there she lay, not moving, with her legs, her tail, her head all hanging down.... Grandma Turtle was dead.

Quietly, reverently, Duck, Otter and Beaver swam out and drew Grandma Turtle’s body to the shore. They pulled her up on the beach, as all the people (humans and animals) gathered sadly around, and what’s this? There, under her front feet, they found ... mud.

Someone took the mud, that little bit of mud from under Grandma Turtle’s front feet, rolled it into a ball and lifted it up toward the sky. The Grandfather took that mud, that little bit of mud and cast it out, making this whole, great land that many nations call Turtle Island. (2005; used with permission)

Indians are not surprised to hear that in this story Grandmother Turtle’s actions turn out to be those that save the community. She represents the oldest and wisest of the group. Conversely, they understand that the situation will not improve until the elder is heard and her suggestions are heeded.

As I stated earlier, elders are the repository of wisdom in Indian society, but very few elders will readily admit that they are elders. This was apparent in the interviews. Admittedly, a few of those interviewed are just recently entering the age to be considered an elder but most were in their sixties and seventies. Each elder being interviewed was quick to reference their own elders as the follow examples illustrate.

My grandfather was a leader in the society, and he always had people in his home, he was always called upon to help. We had good values. (VY)

I grew up with traditional Cherokee older people, this has mainly been my influence. (JG)

Sharing of food, caring for each other—I was taught that by my mom and dad. At their funerals people talked about them and I could see how they were valued and the things we were taught were valued. Like when an elder comes over—you get up and get them what they need and when a middle-aged person came you treat them a little different. And no one ever left our home without some food and water and a little money to help them on their way. (CC)

The reflected experience that is given to the community through the elders and their continuing of the stories, ceremonies and traditions provide the authority in Native American communities. It is not written down anywhere but the first reference when giving advice, regardless of the age of the person being asked, will usually defer to what that person's elder told him or her. I was once asking for permission to teach on a reservation in Wisconsin from an eighty-five year old tribal elder and spiritual leader. He continuously referred back to his uncle's teachings, who I later discovered died at 111 years old.

### **Life Governed by Harmony**

In Native American understanding, Harmony or Balance is the key to all happiness, health, and well-being. Harmony is the hallmark of Native American spirituality. This



understanding is rooted in a belief that life was more harmonious in the past or at least that harmony was much easier to maintain prior to the European invasion. Respondents to the survey and interviewees often referenced the past as a way of moving forward as evidenced by the following statements.

North American Indian people are spiritual already. What makes these good values? The family structure, the community, you don't want to go too far to tip the scale but you keep that balance. You don't want to go too far from where you come from. (VY)

Now everything is out of balance because the Government has come in and dissolved all our traditional structures and ceremonies and everything. So it's difficult now to get things back into harmony as compared to how it was in our traditional days. (JG)

Through the ways of our people we have to go way back, back to that point in time when everything was in harmony. (FC)

Typically, when statements such as these are heard by Euro-Americans, they are cast aside as an unrealistic view of the Native American past.<sup>31</sup> Euro-Americans have a difficult time believing that Native Americans prefer much of their own past to the Eurocentric dominated present. I don't believe these statements reflect a type of Native American Utopianism as much as they acknowledge that there can be no way forward unless we reclaim the ways that worked so well for us in the past. This connection to the past is strong and pervasive among Native Americans as pointed out by Vine Deloria, Junior:

Even the most severely eroded Indian community today still has a substantial fragment of the old ways left, and these ways are to be found in the Indian family. Even the badly shattered families preserve enough elements of kinship so that whatever the experiences of the young, there is a sense that life has some unifying principles that can be discerned through experience that guides behavior. This feeling, and it is a strong emotional feeling towards the world that transcends

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<sup>31</sup> As a teacher of Native American history and culture, I have experienced this argument from my Euro-American students dozens of times.

beliefs and information, continues to gnaw at American Indians throughout their lives. (Deloria and Wildcat 2001, 43)

Deloria is speaking broadly of the “unifying principles” to which I believe this project is dedicated, namely Harmony Way values. But he also is addressing a specific feeling that connects Indians to the past. It is a difficult feeling to describe but I believe he accurately points out that it “gnaws” at us.

This feeling may be similar to one I have heard Christians express in the idea of being a “pilgrim” and by saying “this world is not my home.” Perhaps it is a similar cognitive dissonance felt by Native Americans when we must live in the world we know was made for us but its systems and values have become powerfully ubiquitous and they are subjugated to the values of the dominant society.

**Seeking to maintain balance in all of life.** John GrosVenor inserts his Cherokee understanding of the importance of human agency in repairing the harmony.

We have to keep things in balance. If you get out of balance there is no harmony. So the thinking of our people is that when things get out of balance you have to do something to bring things back into harmony. (JG)

Cherokees believe that human beings live between an above and a below world. The above world is completely harmonious and the below world is chaos. According to our Cherokee traditional beliefs, it is the responsibility of human beings while they are earth to maintain harmony and to restore harmony when it becomes broken. The Cherokee believe this is done primarily through keeping our traditional ceremonies. This would be a similar understanding of many Native Americans including those who participated in this project.

**Interconnectedness in all of life.** Somewhat similar to maintaining balance and harmony in life is the understanding of interconnectedness felt among Native Americans. Casey Church addresses this from an Anishanabe perspective when he says,

My life as I understand it-being Anishnabe, is to really try to live in a good way. I am personally out of balance now because I just lost my mother and two and a half years ago I lost my mentor. This way of balance is important-physical and spiritual. It's all on the medicine wheel. If I'm off on one side or the other then I have to watch myself. Like my emotional self is out of whack now so I have to watch my physical health-and she [his wife] helps me to watch these things. (CC)

Casey notes that he is currently out of balance because of the tremendous losses he has recently experienced. He also mentions his need for help from his wife to try to bring him back in balance. In this short confession he connects the physical to the emotional and spiritual. He connects his family to his own ability to heal and he connects the symbolism of the medicine wheel and its teachings on balance to give examples of how interconnected life is in “The Harmony Way.”

A historical example of the interconnectedness among Plains Indians is found among the Lakota. Some of the most basic structures to Lakota life were the warrior societies. Yet, there existed (and remains) a philosophy of harmony expressed through the inter-relatedness of all things, including, for them, the Sioux tribes, other tribes, other humans, animals, birds, insects, plants, etc., expressed through the words of a common prayer—*mitakuye oyasin*:

A translation of *mitakuye oyasin* would better read: “For all the above me and below me and around me things.” That is, for all my relations,... it is this understanding of inter-relatedness, of balance and mutual respect of the different species in the world, that characterizes what we might call Indian peoples greatest gift to Amer-Europeans and to the Amer-European understanding of creation at this time of world ecological crisis. (Kidwell, Noley, and Tinker 2003, 51)

Giving credence to the idea that all people and things are related to each other envelops all of humanity to the possibility of once again becoming family. By realizing the

connectedness of humankind to all animal life, the Lakota believe that we become aware of new possibilities for learning, and for the preservation of all living things. In the humanity's dependence upon the earth, the Lakota believe we allow ourselves renewed opportunities for sustaining our planet and can find fresh prospects for developing food, water and renewable energy. All of this and more is contained in their two simple prayer words *mitakuye oyasin*.

As pointed out earlier by Jacobs, among the Iroquoian peoples lived a Peacemaker who united the tribes during terrible times of turmoil. The Six Nations still live today according to the law and teachings of the Peacemaker, whose view of harmonious living is consistent with those already mentioned. Tadodaho, Chief Leon Shenandoah, comments,

The teachings are very good. The most important thing is that each individual must treat all others, all the people who walk on Mother Earth, including every nationality, with kindness. That covers a lot of ground. It doesn't apply only to my people. I must treat everyone I meet the same. When people turn their thoughts to the Creator, they give the Creator power to enter their minds and bring good thoughts. The most difficult part of this is that the Creator desired that there be no bloodshed among human beings and that there be peace, good relations, and always a good mind. (Wallace 1994, 14)

Like the Lakota concept of *mitakuye oyasin*, the Iroquois' philosophy seeks to bring all people together in one accord by recognizing that all people and creation is interconnected.

In the following example, Chief Leon Shenandoah shares how this interconnectedness is related to "The Harmony Way:"

In explaining the good news to a chief named Degaihogen, Deganawidah presented a vision of a world community. "What shall we be like," Degaihogen had asked, "when this reason and righteousness and justice and health have come?" "In truth," replied Deganawidah, "reason brings righteousness, and reason is power that works among all minds alike. When once reason is established, all

the minds of all mankind will be in a state of health and peace. It will be as if there were but a single person.” (Wallace 1994, 108-09)

The “reason” to which Chief Leon Shenandoah makes reference, is the very relatedness of interconnectedness and living life in a harmonious existence. I offer several more quotes to substantiate various Native peoples’ common value of harmony as their preferred existence. A traditional Ojibway Elder, Eddie Benton Banai<sup>32</sup> writes, “Today, we should use these ancient teaching to live our lives in harmony with the plan that the Creator gave us. We are to do these things if we are to be natural people of the universe” (1988, 9). Benton Banai connects the past and the present through Harmony Way teachings, calling them “natural.” He concludes his book by referring to the Ojibway concept of harmony in their own language, “There are yet more teachings that can teach us how to live *ni-noo-do-da-di-win* (harmony) with the creation” (113).

**Life in harmony expressed as a circle or hoop.** The connectedness within “The Harmony Way” is most often referred to symbolically as a circle or a hoop. Here Fern Cloud makes a distinction between the tendency of a more Western worldview to see “The Harmony Way” as a philosophy: *Wo ‘dakota*. It’s not a philosophy it’s a path of life we do, looking at what creator gave us , in that whole circle of life and living it” (FC).

To Cloud and many Native Americans this point is crucial. A philosophy is something that can be believed but “The Harmony Way” must be lived. It requires not only a belief but action which aligns itself with the whole of the universe.

The list of tribes whose overall life-ways promote a similar view of harmony might include every North American Native tribal group. In reality, this common idea is

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<sup>32</sup> “Banai” is an honorary title bestowed upon traditional Ojibway spiritual leaders. They are also referred to as “*Gichi Dowan*” meaning “Big Medicine people.”

evidenced by a common active spirituality, expressed by common symbols, including the eagle feather, burning plants (i.e., sage, sweetgrass, cedar) and even the most common symbols such as the circle. Canadian Cree theologian Stan McKay draws the harmony connection to the *Sacred Circle* and the respect present among our Aboriginal peoples:

The image of living on the earth in harmony with creation and therefore the Creator, is a helpful image for me...Each day we are given is for thanksgiving for the earth. We are to enjoy it and share it in service of others. This is the way to grow in unity and harmony...It allows for diversity within the unity of the Creator...There are many teachings in the aboriginal North American Nations that use the symbol of the circle. It is the symbol for the inclusive caring community, where individuals are respected and inter-dependence is recognized. In the wider perspective it symbolizes the natural order of creation in which human beings are part of the whole circle of life. Aboriginal spiritual teachers speak of the re-establishment of the balance between human beings and the whole of creation, as a mending of the hoop. (Treat 1996, 54-55)

The circle or hoop is found in nearly all tribes as a powerful representation of the earth, life, seasons, cycles of maturity, etc. This symbol is found in ancient cliff writings, petroglyphs, etc. Many of the ceremonies such as Sundance, Pow Wow, Peyoteism, Ghost Dance, etc. are fashioned intentionally in a circle. As one observes nature one sees that a circle is a common shape. Trees, rocks, whirlpools, tornados, flowers, etc. all bear a more common resemblance to circular objects than any other. In general, right angles do not naturally occur in nature without assistance from a human being.

**Seeking peace.** Indians are most often stereotyped as violent savages.

Indian people by and large didn't have a word for sin, but there was peace-making and restoration but then the church came in and along with these concepts they brought in whole truckload of guilt and condemnation that they never needed to bring. (JG)

Perhaps one of the most ubiquitous harms done to Native Americans has been the creation of the "Hollywood Indian" or what Deloria calls "the Indians of the American Imagination" (2003, 23). For the average Euro-American, little imagination is needed to

recall one of the most successful genre of film and literature in American pop culture. There, larger than life, the blood-thirsty savages lie in wait to attack the poor white settlers, who were just “minding their own business.” In the late 1960s, great strides were made in popular culture to understand the reasons the Indians in the movies were attacking the settlers. This sympathy led the pop culture to link Indians to other popular social concerns, like caring for the earth. Unfortunately, little attention was given to our philosophies of socio-religious harmony or concepts of tolerance and non-violence.

Grosvenor fluently substitutes the idea of “peacemaking” and “restoration” as a means of atoning for sin. With the Christian idea of sin came condemnation for mistakes. Grosvenor prefers another solution, that of peacemaking. The restoration to which Grosvenor refers needs no substitute but rather a harmonious coming together of the hearts and minds in order to achieve restoration. The sources confirming these commonly held principles of harmony among Native Americans are many and varied in nuance, but it can be stated, without great disputation, that most North American indigenous tribes held to a life-way of harmony and peacemaking was a vital part of the process for maintaining harmony.

Even among those tribes who have gained a reputation as the most warlike in the American imagination, there existed striking counterbalances in their structure and philosophy to war as expressed in 1876 by revered Brule' Lakota Chief Spotted Tail who said, “When people come to trouble, it is better for both parties to come together without arms and talk it over and find some peaceful way to settle it” (Jacobs 2006, 135).

Another such example is that of the Cheyenne “Peace Chiefs.” According to the teachings of Sweet Medicine, the most revered Cheyenne teacher and prophet, all forty-

four chiefs among them must be Peace Chiefs. Even today, Sweet Medicine's words are repeated at the inauguration of every new chief:

"Listen to me carefully," Sweet Medicine advised, "and truthfully follow up my instructions. You chiefs are peacemakers. Though your son might be killed in front of your tepee, you should take a pipe and smoke. Then you should be called an honest chief...if strangers come, you are the ones to give presents to them and invitations. When you meet someone, he comes to your teepee, asking for anything, give it to him. Never refuse." (Hoig 1980, 7)

The structure of the Cheyenne was such that these words (strikingly reminiscent of the teaching of Christ) are still valued as the highest form of response to one's own personal tragedy and the needs of others. In the Cheyenne system, the one who lives according to these teachings is, of all people, most honored.

In the history of my own Cherokee people the idea of war and peace were seen as crucial sides to a great balance. Two separate councils maintained this balance. The White Council, sometimes called the "Peace Council," was responsible for domestic affairs within the village. The Red Council or "War Council" dealt with foreign concerns and disputes. The White Council Government was the status quo until issues emerged which concerned foreign affairs. At that time, the White Council stepped down until the issues of foreign affairs were resolved, at which time they would be reinstated. Besides wars, there were a number of common alternatives appropriated by the Cherokee. These included the two disputing tribal groups playing a stickball match and the giving of gifts, adoption of and marriage ceremonies to people from the other tribe, sending ambassadors to live with the other group and accepting their ambassadors and decentralized multi-level peacemaking efforts.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> I have been taught all these things by Cherokee elders and friends at various points in my life.



Perhaps the most striking image of Native American peacemaking comes from the Peacemaker story from the Iroquois Confederacy. Adrian Jacobs sets up the background to the story:

*Hiawatha* traveled with *Degoniwitha* and spoke to the people about these things. The cannibal lived in the swamp with hair like snakes—the image of divination—man in pain—numb I suppose. Living away from the people. *Hiawatha* made a cross and a string with wampum and he begins a healing ceremony so the people can feel, hear and see again. The wampum is a reminder of what we should be doing to help those remember and it becomes a condolence ceremony. (AJ)

According to Jacobs, when *Hiawatha* stands before the Great Cannibal who had killed *Hiawatha*'s last child, instead of hatred he has compassion which is exhibited by an unexpected move on the part of *Hiawatha*. *Hiawatha* takes a comb and begins to comb the snakes out of the Great Cannibal's hair. The Cannibal is immediately converted to living a peaceful existence. The dramatic picture is one of peace. *Degoniwitha* then installs the Great Cannibal as a great chief of peace. Jacobs then shows how this remarkable transformation affects the whole Confederacy:

These two people were an influence in the five nations originally, Teaching us to listen to each other, pain and grief and death—this condolence is like coming home—to be with people who dignify you and embrace and they ceased the cannibalism. I can just see the whole society opening up to this peace which is, with this conversion of the chief, turns the whole community around. *Hiawatha* and cannibal conversion, sees what he is doing is wrong and the revelation comes through this peacemaker. He is made the head of this confederacy...even though everyone has a voice. But what is foundational is that people can turn from this other way of imbalance or being out of harmony and what you have is embrace of each other in peace. (AJ)

From where do these ancient notions of peacemaking among Native Americans come? Certainly time and the long experiences of coexistence, the abundance of food in the Americas and the strict taboos against intermarriage that led to intertribal marriages were among possible factors which may have led to a value of peacemaking. In his study

concerning major New World sites of violence and warfare, drawing from a number of prior studies, Don Trent Jacobs suggests that cultures with high male dominant values are invariably more violent than cultures with high female values (2006, 141). In summary Jacobs suggests,

the general vindication of the vast majority of Native American values and peoples as standing on the peace-making side of history. Certainly, not all Indigenous American cultures fit the peaceful images given in *Dances With Wolves*, but it is not an exaggeration to say the majority did. (151)

**Humans as mostly good with some evil.** John Grosvenor states a common Indian refrain, “Indian people by and large didn’t have a word for sin.” It may be more precise to say we did not see ourselves as “sinners” in the way that some Christian doctrines concerning original sin assert. Evil is known among Native Americans, both intrinsically and extrinsic to the human experience but we do not consider anyone made by Creator evil. Even the Trickster figures of Coyote, Rabbit, etc., as he is seen in various tribes, has some goodness with wisdom to be learned from hearing of trickster’s antics. In the *Values Project* Human Nature Orientation was shown to be “definitely as a mixture of Good and Evil ... invariably Good with an Evil side” (Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck 1961, 335).

Jacobs points out the idea of an original harmony that existed among their people as well as the concept of losing touch with “The Harmony Way:”

The Great Peace was a result of what we view in our culture, what currently we call the Great Law, understanding it’s not just some statement but it codifies consensus of the Six Nations people. It’s difficult to translate or make sense of in American terminology and culture. What’s interesting is we remember our failures in our own oral history. Part of the story is that there was a harmony in the beginning that we lost touch with. (AJ)

This worldview implies restoring balance by reclaiming what was lost. In the case of the Iroquois Confederacy it was the Great Law brought by the Peacemaker, and the surrounding circumstances that restored the people to “The Harmony Way.” He is quick to point out that they remember their failures in their history including war, hatred and cannibalism. Through “The Harmony Way,” codified in the Great Law, they can be restored to what Chief Leon Shenandoah called “righteousness” or coming to one’s right or natural mind.

Several of the interviewees mentioned the idea of understanding the meaning of being out of harmony and that disharmony becoming a catalyst to seek harmony. Lora Church equates wellness with harmony. She refers to being out of harmony as a “lack of peace” and “discord.” She mentions the interconnectedness of all areas of one’s life being in harmony and she indicates that restoration to harmony is not a static experience but comes in various seasons of our lives:

I think living in harmony and balance you have to know what it means to not be in balance or out of harmony-to know discord. And if you’ve experienced that in life, in life situations then you know how you feel about your relationships at home, or work, or you just don’t have a peace-then you are not well-what does that mean-well? It is being in harmony or balance. I think for us a people-our life situations are so different from one season to another-that’s a test for us to stay in balance and there are teaching on these things. (LC)

This statement reinforces the idea of a tendency for human beings to get off the path of harmony but certainly there is no indication that humans are inherently evil.

The other Navajo interviewee, Dale Tsosie, also mentions an evil side to the harmony journey that can eventually become witchcraft, revealing that Native Americans do believe that humans can become evil to a degree:

In Navajo ceremonies are done for different things, “The Harmony Way,” everything being back into harmony for healing, the blessing, the beauty way

ceremony. There is so many of them. There is also the dark side, the evil way, many also where it becomes witchcraft and cursing and sickness and all of these things. But here was the beauty way ceremony is based upon this name *Sá'qh Naaghái Bik'eh Hózhóón*. (DT)

The fact that there is a dark side to a culture's practices does not negate the value of the positive aspects of that culture.

Prolific author of Cherokee studies William McGloughlin summarizes some of the nuances of Cherokee (and other Southeastern Indian) beliefs about the harmony concept and their view of sin or evil. He draws from several Western writers in Cherokee studies:

As for the concept of sin, that entered their worldview only in terms of imbalances or disorders that broke harmonious relationships between humans and nature or between humans themselves. Charles Hudson aptly says, "If there is a single word which epitomizes the Southeastern Indian belief, it is order." He explains further, "The Southeastern Indian concern with purity and balance was based upon the assumption that man lived in a just, well ordered universe." Other scholars emphasize harmony as the chief theme. John Phillip Reid in his study of Cherokee culture states, "The key to the Cherokee legal mind was the Cherokees' desire for social harmony." Fred Gearing writes that "the single focus which created pattern in the Cherokee moral thought was the value of harmony among men.... The Cherokee ethos disallowed disharmony." Life was not, as with Protestantism, a constant moral battle among erring individuals prone to disobedience against a righteous God; it was a group effort to sustain harmony among themselves and with the orderly forces of the cosmos. (1994, 160)

Once more, the order of creation and how it relates to us in our daily lives is crucial to Native Americans. Whether it is viewed as "a just, well ordered universe" or harmony and balance, the end result is that Native Americans believe human beings have enough good in them to make them capable of maintaining harmonious relationships.

The divine order of things which the Cherokees believed included an intricate balance of plants and animals, humans and nature, the Creator and the created. The way in which people lived, and the continuation of ceremony, and tribal laws, all helped to

maintain or restore the balance in the world for which human beings were responsible as noted in the following quote. “Disorder also came when people did not behave correctly with one another or when humans abused the animal world” (McGloughlin 1994, 160).

**Fear as a catalyst for virtue.** Lora Church points out that balance is not something contrived but something that occurs in the natural process of living:

We need those times and those people to restore the balance. Restore that peace through the tears, through the anger and all those kinds of emotions that will come out—that’s part of the healing process and I think for balance—or *Hózhóón*, that’s all of life. I don’t think it just comes here and then you are all right. It’s fluid and it comes and then you are in state, but it’s living day in and day out and that’s the balance. (LC)

Through the multitude of human emotions such as sadness, anger, and even fear as stated as a Native American value by Don Trent Jacobs, we are able to recognize our state of being and gage how far out of “The Harmony Way” we have drifted. “Fear is a great catalyst for practicing a great virtue such as generosity, patience, courage, honesty or fortitude” (2006, 19). The idea in common here is that in the natural course of life we find means for practicing the values found in “The Harmony Way,” As cited by Alfred, “Bravery is to face challenges with honesty and integrity” (Alfred 1999, 134). The first challenge in this Native American value is to be honest with ourselves, our faults and our weaknesses and our place in or outside the sacred circle, only after which, can we act according to our values.

**Imbalance resulting in ill health.** The following is my own recollection of the Cherokee story of how disease came into the world and it reveals an important point. Namely, that the origin of disease is because of broken harmony. This story varies slightly depending on who is telling it, but it was told to me by a traditional Cherokee friend that disease came upon our people because we became out of harmony with the

animals; not giving thanks for the gift of food we were given. I will share it in an abbreviated form.

Every traditional Cherokee knows that it is considered polite to thank the Creator and the animal when it furnishes its own life so people may eat and sustain their own lives. It was said that during this “era of ingratitude” the Cherokees even began to kill that which they were not going to eat. These were evil days indeed!

As a result of these abuses, the animals held council, in order to protect themselves from the evil that had come upon the once grateful Cherokee. After much debate, the animals decided to bring diseases upon the Cherokee people. The Cherokees began getting sick and dying from these diseases. After many Cherokees had died they pleaded with the animals, “please, we will become grateful and kill only that which we will eat.” But the animals would not recant.

At the same time, the plants were watching all of these things. They watched as the Cherokee children got sick, and even died. The plants decided to hold a council. In the council they agreed to provide medicine for the Cherokee. Each night, as the Cherokees would sleep, the plants would come to them in their dreams and show them how to use the plants to heal the diseases that the animals had brought upon them.

The Cherokees recovered and agreed to kill only what they absolutely needed. They also agreed to say a prayer of thanks to any animal that they killed, and to any plant that would be harvested for food or medicine. The Creator was happy with the Cherokees once again because harmony was restored among all that he had created.

The story asserts a holistic view of relationships. Harmony was broken between human beings, the Creator and the animals through ingratitude. The ingratitude was

expressed in two ways; not giving thanks and killing what was not to be eaten—both of which are an affront to God and the creation. Disease and death came by disease into the world through animals (creation). The healing also came through the creation (plants). Humans were restored back to the creation and as a result, back to God.<sup>34</sup>

One of the points often made after this story is told is, for every disease spread to humans by animals, there is a plant that can cure it. This very much involves balance, restoration and harmony between the Creator and all creation. It depicts a time of broken Harmony, but through the mending of the hoop, all is restored to the way Creator intended it to be. In Cherokee thinking, restoration must include holistic relationships between Creator, human beings and the rest of creation.

The story also teaches us to always be grateful for everything that we have. The expression of this gratefulness means that we only kill what we are going to eat. An Ojibway elder once told me about a time when he was ten years old and he killed a robin. His mother made him clean it, cook it and eat it to demonstrate a similar lesson. Gratitude among our Indian people is extremely important and considered to be a part of living in harmony. Among our indigenous people, most morning ceremonies begin with thanksgiving. The custodial relationship we have with the earth and with all of creation is expressed as gratitude in all that we do. If we are not grateful, we cannot live in “The Harmony Way” and we become sick people. Adrian Jacobs illustrated in his story of the Cannibalism among his people.

Jacobs referred to this imbalance as being “distracted.” People’s inner pain and imbalance caused them to act in ways inconsistent with “The Harmony Way,” such as

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<sup>34</sup> Cherokee ceremonies most often involve earthly symbols to express restoration and harmony.

violence and in the case of the Iroquois story of the Great Cannibal, even committing the most heinous of acts. The conclusion of the story, as stated earlier, is that Hiawatha and the Peacemaker are able to bring restoration and balance. Among Native Americans there is no physical-emotional/spiritual dichotomy. Traditionally, when a person is physically ill, a reputable healer will often go to that person's home so they can get a fuller picture of what is occurring in the sick person's life. Not only does the Medicine Person ask about the symptoms but also about dreams, feelings, and relationships that have occurred lately in that person's life. In addition, all medicine given to patients is accompanied by prayer.

Although cited earlier, the following quote by Mohawk concerning the health risks of colonization upon Native Americans and our values bears repeating in this section:

Colonization is the greatest health risk to indigenous peoples as individuals and communities. It produces the anomie - the absence of values and sense of group purpose and identity - that underlies the deadly automobile accidents triggered by alcohol abuse. It creates the conditions of inappropriate diet which lead to an epidemic of degenerative diseases, and the moral anarchy that leads to child abuse and spousal abuse. Becoming colonized was the worst thing that could happen five centuries ago, and being colonized is the worst thing that can happen now. (Mohawk *Indian Country Today*, 2004)

Mohawk draws a direct line from colonization to the everyday ills among Native Americans. If Mohawk is correct in naming colonization as one of the greatest health risks to Native Americans, then it is in a sense, a sickness from which Native Americans must be delivered and healed. According to Mohawk, the path to better health, wellness or well-being for Native Americans is decolonization. This point will be reconsidered in the next chapter.



## Natural Connectedness to All Creation

Many of the interviewee's answers, the survey answers and the literature focused on the primacy of the interconnectedness between human beings and the rest of creation. I have mentioned a few of these earlier at other points but because this is such a repeated point it is necessary here to list a few more of the examples and quotes from the survey and to go a bit further in my explanation than I have gone prior.

**From the interviews.** As expressed in the following examples, people in the interviews were eager to talk about the harmony concept and especially how it relates to the creation.

You see how they treat nature with respect. (VY)

In harmony with the Creator and in harmony with the creation. That's what it means to be Dakota. (FC)

Land comes out of balance or harmony. How do they deal with it? The earth, *Makah Enah*, we all see that this is happening. My uncle told me the earth is poisoned 10 feet down because of the chemicals and whatever else. Really, there is a big problem-the hoop is broken but the only way we know how to do things is through prayer. We pray in our ways and its going to take a miracle, really. We are the land also, we are made by Creator and we all need to heal, look inside our hearts and get right. It's critical. (FC)

**From the literature.** The literature also bore definite views concerning creation's importance as shown below.

- Humans should seek to live in harmony with nature (KS).
- Humans are entwined in and with nature and the idea of "conquering" or being "in Charge" of it rather than honoring the relationship is considered an aberration (J).
- Happiness and harmony between and within individuals, the society and nature (K).

- Knowledge that all things in the universe are dependent on each other (S).

**From question No. 4 of the survey.** What values does this concept [Harmony Way] express or include? The following are examples of responses related to creation from the survey.

- A love for the Creator, love for others and self, and love for the land
- A respect for all things, a love for all things, a value for all things, and a respect for all creation, including self.
- A respect for Mother Earth and all that she offers.
- A respect for the earth that the Creator provided.
- Living harmoniously with nature.
- All creation is of value and people are interdependent.
- Walking in balance with Mother Earth, respecting all creation.

As demonstrated by the above sampling, the natural connectedness that is felt between Native Americans and the earth, including all creation is central among our people. Perhaps I could deepen the reader's perspective by explaining more of this connection from my own Cherokee tribal understanding.

The Cherokee Harmony Way, of which I am the most familiar and which I briefly mentioned in earlier portions of this paper, was especially well developed as a philosophical base for living. It has been told to me through traditional Cherokee practitioners that the origin of our religious belief system, [Harmony Way] came through a direct covenant with God, many thousands of years ago.<sup>35</sup> Some Cherokees refer to the

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<sup>35</sup> Although I consider myself to be a practitioner of traditional ways and I am a keeper of sacred ceremonies and traditions, I am not enrolled in a Cherokee Stomp Dance Grounds nor do I reside in one of

Cherokee Harmony Way in the English language as ‘balance’ and others simply as ‘The Way’ (which has interesting parallels in early Christianity).

The Cherokee Harmony Way is called by two names according to locale.

Generally, the Cherokees in Oklahoma refer to *Eloheh* both as a way of living and as a real place where “The Harmony Way” was practiced in a special way or under special circumstances. The Eastern Band of Cherokee in North Carolina use the Cherokee word *duyukti*, yielding connotations of the English word ‘righteousness’, to refer to a way of living in harmony and, wherever this way was practiced, they call a place of *Eloheh*.

I have heard *Eloheh* translated as ‘the green earth place’ although there seems to be disagreement on this translation. The implications of ‘green earth place’ would be that *Eloheh* is about everything related to what is considered ‘good and right’ living for the Cherokee and much of this had to do with hunting and agriculture, growing good crops and having an ample supply of food. Regardless of the dialect one chooses, *Eloheh* is used as a noun and a verb, considered to be both a place, and a way of living where all of life is in balance and harmonious with the Creator; where all people and all of creation work interrelated and together in the most natural and mutually conducive ways. It is from this understanding that “preachers” at the Cherokee Stomp Grounds (a part of the traditional Cherokee religious system) share with the people how to live: exhorting them to pray; keeping harmonious relationships with nature; and keeping familial, clan and tribal relationships intact, yet *Eloheh* is even considered to be broader, in a sense, *Eloheh* is a worldview.

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the few remaining Cherokee traditional communities. I do, however, have the utmost respect for our traditional people, who are holding on to the remaining vestiges of our former beliefs and culture. I have been fortunate to become friends with such people and while I will never betray their confidence by revealing too much to disinterested parties, I am able to share some Cherokee beliefs from what would be considered a well informed, but not expert opinion.

*Eloheh* contains within it, not only the foundational bearing for Cherokee life-ways, but also the very history of the Cherokee people and the lands that we were given to steward or keep. This connection is made by Jimmie Durham, a traditional Cherokee during a United States Congressional hearing in 1978. In an effort to protect Cherokee lands from being flooded by the TVA, Durham explains:

Is there a human being who does not revere his homeland, even though he may not return?... In our history, we teach that we were created there, which is truer than anthropological truth because it was there that we were given our vision as the Cherokee people.... In the language of my people...there is a word for land: *Eloheh*. This same word also means history, culture, and religion. We cannot separate our place on earth from our lives on the earth, nor from our vision nor our meaning as a people. We are taught from childhood that the animals and even the trees and plants that we share a place with are our brothers and sisters. So when we speak of land, we are not speaking of property, territory, or even a piece of ground upon which our houses sit and our crops are grown. We are speaking of something truly sacred (Brown 1999, 38).<sup>36</sup>

Brown goes on to comment,

In noting the meaning of the Cherokee word *Eloheh*, he [Jimmie Durham] succinctly illustrated the linguistic inseparability between religion and the land, even as he spoke of the difference between land as property and land as sacred reality (38).

The single conceptual integration of land, history, religion and culture may be difficult for Western minds to embrace. For Native Americans, this integration is often explained as a visceral “knowing” or somehow being imbedded in our DNA. This feeling we have of ourselves as a people, including our history and cultures being connected to the land, is perhaps the single most glaring difference between a Western worldview and an indigenous Native North American worldview. In its simplest reduction, the earth is

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<sup>36</sup> Testimony of Cherokee, Jimmie Durham, at Tellico Dam Congressional Hearings, 1978. The Sixth Circuit dismissed the Cherokee claim to prevent flooding of our sacred sites and villages.

our mother and all the creatures on the earth are our relatives. “The Harmony Way” makes room for the kind of living that allows respect for these relationships to exist.

**Reciprocity.** According to the literature, reciprocity seems to be one of the unifying principles in Native American understandings. Jacobs (J) stated, “Reciprocity guides living systems towards balance;” Evergreen State (E) says, “Mutualism promotes sense of belonging in the group;” and according to The Sacred (S), Native Americans have a “Knowledge that all things in the universe are dependent on each other.” One of the responses from the question No. 4 of the survey stated,

The entire earth and all in it were created by the Creator and each plays a part in the other’s existence and well-being. In modern times we understand how even the giving of oxygen and carbon dioxide between trees and man keep them both living. So, everything created needs each other to stay healthy.

There is extreme fluidity between the understanding of reciprocity between human being and reciprocity in other creation. Concerning people, Casey Church states, “If it’s a ceremony, a celebration, whatever, we help each other in the community. It’s also going to come around. Someone will end up helping you when you need it.”

Although Casey’s observations are accurate concerning social structures and reciprocity in relationships, such as the “Mutualism” mentioned in the Evergreen study, it is important to note the connection with creation. This relationship of balance is what I am referring to as reciprocity, not just a “tit for tat” exchange as one might think of in a superficial understanding of the word. What I am getting at here is more of a focus on the relationship between all things and the balance that Native Americans feel must be maintained. The commonality between mutuality and natural reciprocity is found in the understanding that all of creation operates according to this principle. Reciprocity is

viewed by Native Americans as a natural law of the universe and for humans to maintain harmony, they must reflect the created order.

This idea, as I have been taught, is expressed in Cherokee understandings of opposites. Cherokees say the sun is female and the moon is male. We say that, like life, an Eagle feather has two sides to it. One side is a grayish, darker side and the other is a brighter clear side. In a Cherokee way of understanding, everything has a “better” side and a “lesser” side to it. Another way to say this is that in all of life there is a harmonious existence and an existence of chaos.

Cherokees believe in three co-existing worlds, *Ga-lun-la-ti* or the “above world,” where everything is harmonious; the world where we live now on this earth; and the “below world” where things are in chaos and where there is constant strife. Our teachings tell us that we are suspended between earth and *Ga-lun-la-ti* and when harmony is broken it means the below world is taking over. Therefore, it is the responsibility of human beings to restore harmony between the earth and the above world through prayers and ceremonies. We are the intermediaries. Simply understood, reciprocity is how the universe maintains its order. Day follows night, Spring follows Winter, death follows birth. Another respondent from question 4 of the survey stated it profoundly by writing, “Giving and receiving helps to make the circle of harmony and balance continue to turn.” Fern Cloud stated,

Land comes out of balance or harmony. How do they deal with it? The earth *Makah Enaw*, we all see that this is happening. My uncle told me the earth is poisoned 10 feet down because of the chemicals and whatever else. Really, there is a big problem-the hoop is broken but the only way we know how to do things is through prayer. We pray in our ways and it’s going to take a miracle, really. We are the land also, we are made by Creator and we all need to heal, look inside our hearts and get right. It’s critical. (FC)

Fern points out the problem in the physical world namely, pollution. She describes the remedy for this problem is prayer, which to her would also likely include ceremony. The she notes that humans are also land and in need of healing, implying that our hearts are polluted like the land. In one brief statement she connects the relationship of the physical earth and our physical bodies to their need for prayer, ceremony and honesty. The idea is that when our hearts are right we can see clearly how to heal ourselves and the earth. The understanding of the balance and reciprocity between these physical and spiritual arenas is quite natural.

Another survey respondent hit on the idea of reciprocity as crucial to harmony in the answer, “natural source of food, water, wildlife, plants and insects-all which benefit every living thing as well as earth and air-one cannot keep taking without giving something back.” Like Fern Cloud, the respondent mentions creation and the responsibility of humans to give something back. To Native Americans, reciprocity is the natural order of the created universe and it applies to everything.

**Stewardship (keeper).** Closely related to reciprocity, the responsibility of human action in maintaining or restoring harmony can be called stewardship. A more common word among Native Americans but using a similar concept is the idea of being a “keeper.” In traditional circles people who have been trained to keep certain sacred objects and ceremonies are called keepers. Here are a few examples. Among the Southern Cheyenne there is a “Sacred Arrow Keeper.” Among the Kiowa there are “Sacred Medicine Bundle Keepers.” The Lakota have a “Keeper of the Sacred White Buffalo Calf Pipe.” Those people who are trained in Sweat Lodge are called “Sweat Lodge Keepers.” A leader of a Pow Wow drum is a “Drum Keeper.” All these people mentioned are

crucial in maintaining harmony. Because of this longstanding tradition I will use the word keeper.

Vincent Yellow Old Woman points out the necessity of maintaining Native ceremonies such as dances and songs in keeping the balance. It was his responsibility as a political leader to try and reinstate Aboriginal ceremonies when the White people, (Government and Missionaries) tried to stop them from performing them.

When you look at the history of our people and how they were treated by the white man. They saw the land and had greed but our people had balance and a way of life. In one front they tried to take away those dances and those songs. As a political leader I tried to work and undue the wrong that was made. And also from the religious people who came. They were ignorant and confused and condemned us. We were spiritual already. Fear in the minds of people will drive them to do the wrong thing. Rather than just embracing and being a part of the circle. I'm home-where I belong. This is the way the Creator has made me. (VY)

Vincent's concerns have to do with the inability of his people to maintain their ceremonial life. Even though he did not belong to all the societies or participate in all of the ceremonies, he still understood it to be crucial to their way of life to make sure the ceremonies were continued. He addresses two problems. The first being the White people's fear of their ceremonies and the second being the larger driving force behind the missionaries and the Government which is modernity. It must be difficult for Western people to understand why maintaining seemingly primitive ceremonies are crucial to the happiness of Native Americans. Critical to this legacy is the proper training of keepers of these sacred ceremonies. Vincent cites fear as the cause of the dominant society's concern but his hope is that they would simply come to embrace our ceremonies and become part of the circle.

**Gratitude expressed in ceremony.** Through expressing gratitude in ceremonies Native Americans reveal to others and themselves the connection between the Creator,



human beings, the earth and all of creation. The foundation of Native ceremony is gratitude. Having observed hundreds of Native American ceremonies from various tribes over the years, I am quite certain that there has never been one that lacked an element, if not it being the entire theme, of gratitude. Most prayers by Native Americans also are full of grateful statements, often beginning with the words, “we give thanks.”

Giving daily thanks for the gifts in creation has always been the normative way of living for traditional Native peoples. The six nations of the *Haudenosaunee* ‘Iroquois’, that is the federation of the Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, Seneca, and Tuscarora, who live in New York State and neighboring Canada, express their thanks by reciting a prayer known as “The Thanksgiving Address.” This address is spoken at ceremonies, schools and other community gatherings. I have heard this beautiful prayer spoken. The words convey gratitude for fellow human beings, Mother Earth, the moon, stars, sun, water, air, winds, animals, plants and more. Here is an excerpt expressing thanks for the food plants:

With one mind, we turn to honor and thank all the Food Plants we harvest from the garden. Since the beginning of time, the grains, vegetables, beans, and berries have helped the people survive. Many other living things draw strength from them, too. We gather all the Plant Foods together as one and send them a greeting of thanks. (National Museum of the American Indian)

The totality of the prayer is inclusive of almost every aspect of creation.

**Learning with creation—a dynamic process.** I have noticed what appears to be a key difference between a Native American worldview and a Western American worldview when it comes to understanding the dynamic process involved in the interconnectedness of Creator, human beings and the earth and the rest of creation. Because of the tendency of Western scientific influence, Westerners create linear, more

static categories as part of their observation and discovery. Native Americans also create categories but not in the same way. Western categorization tends to be more extraneous and disconnected from the whole of the original concern whereas, Native American categorization is mainly concerned about the whole and the relational aspects of the original concern. Because Native Americans do not view the earth as a static object but rather as living, each part of creation having spirit, the framework for understanding is already present that allows us to have a dynamic learning relationship from Creation. The following illustration reveals this keen understanding even by an “unschooler” Comanche mother.

A Comanche elder once told me a story about his early education. When he was small, he said, a missionary came to his parents’ home and urged his mother to send him to school. He begged her to allow him to walk to the school the next morning. Finally she agreed. She packed him a lunch and pointed to the woods to the west. “Come back in time to do your chores,” she said. The boy tried to correct his mother. “But the school is to the east.” She persisted in pointing west. So he spent the whole day in the woods and came home just before dark. “What did you learn today, son?” his mother asked. “Nothing, Mother. I just sat in the woods all day.”

Each day was the same, until about the fourth day, when he answered her differently. “I saw a rabbit outsmart a fox today, because he could move back and forth more quickly than that fox. Also, I saw a hawk catch a mouse in a field.” And he described those dynamics. The reports got longer with each stay in the woods, until the boy began to look forward to the next day with great excitement. He found himself listening to the wind sing him songs, and discovered for himself that everything created has a story to tell. One morning after several weeks, the mother pointed east. “Only now, son, are you ready to go to school.” (Woodley 2004, 156-57)

As respected elder Robert Coffee shared this story with me early of what would become many visits over a two year time period, I sensed he was particularly interested in letting me, the educated missionary, know that there are two kinds of education. Neither of them was bad, but he wanted to be sure I understood the value in the Indian way of seeing things. Over the years I have considered this story many times. I have learned from this

and other stories from elders that they believe we are all interconnected parts of the whole of creation. Everything is part of that circle and life can only make sense when it remains a circle. When any part of life is dissected and the original concern is examined without maintaining an understanding its relationship to the whole, it is no longer a circle. Rather, it becomes linear, losing the relationship to the whole. In linear, extraneous categorization the original concern becomes the focus and of primary concern. This type abstraction diminishes the relational whole. To Native Americans, this process is dynamic and everything within the circle has an effect on everything else.

In my Comanche elder friend's view, the rabbit, the fox, the hawk, the coyote all become known teachers from whom we can learn. They teach because they are part of a living system that is relationship to one another. Stories are developed based on the traits of the animals. Native Americans draw values, humor, and other teachings from the remembrance of these stories and from the observation of and experiences with these animals in their environment.

After growing up hearing stories of Grandmother Turtle, Redbird, my youngest son's reaction in science class after seeing a turtle dissected, was to vomit. He does not have a weak stomach. On many occasions he assisted me in gutting and butchering Deer, Goats, Sheep and Fish. My son described what they were doing to the turtle as evil. He had experienced a very different way of learning from turtle than he had known prior. As I explained the purpose of the dissection he had trouble understanding how people could learn anything from the turtle by disrespecting it in this manner. Redbird was used to understanding the turtle in a larger context of relationship. In the past, when we found a live turtle, we always set it free and out of harm's way. If we found a dead turtle, we said

a prayer and turned it upside down near an ant bed. The ants benefited from the turtle's flesh and when clean, we used the shell to make a rattle. The rattle helps us to sing our prayers and turtle is honored as a result. Western science had upset my son because the teacher did not seem to understand the relationship of the turtle to the larger context of Redbird's worldview.

Stories like these, and the fact that 89.7% of those surveyed said their Harmony Way system includes a view of the natural world as "spiritual or sacred, exposes people from other worldviews to another way of living."<sup>37</sup> Traditional Native Americans are always looking for a sign. It could be an animal, or a shift in the direction of the wind, or even a rock out of place, but the view that holds up creation as a teacher is very real and pervasive. Theological we could even call this learning dynamic "God's first order of discourse." Any religion, (Christianity, Judaism, Native American, etc.,) might understand creation to be a gift from God from which people can learn. In the Native American Harmony Way, God continues to speak through creation and creation continues to speak to us.

### **Community is Essential**

There exists a palpable sense of community among Native Americans. Sometimes the community can be seen as protective and guarding and sometimes it is inviting and expanding. Whether protective or inviting it is observable and almost never ambivalent. When one is far from his or her tribe and homeland the generic term "Native American" takes on new meaning. In urban settings, where Native Americans are the minority

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<sup>37</sup> Nearly 90 percent is an astounding figure when one considers the fact that many of those surveyed may not fall in the category of traditional Native Americans.

population, I have even observed friendships extended to other Natives who were traditional tribal enemies. John GrosVenor lifts up a few of the hallmarks of tribal community when he says, “The mark of a successful balanced community is a group who prays together, sings together, eats together” (JG).

As an educator I have noticed the difficulty Native American students have in succeeding without a strong Native community behind them and supporting them in ways such as in a cohort model or peer tutoring. The individual drive to succeed is just not as self-propelling among Native American students as it tends to be among their fellow Euro-American classmates. The Indian students need to feel they are a part of a larger purpose than just getting ahead for themselves. The type of self-achievement that Native American students devalue is often viewed by them as breaking harmony. Vincent Yellow Old Woman warns us that this type imbalance will eventually lead Indian people to an identity crisis: “The family structure, the community, you don’t want to go too far to tip the scale but you keep that balance. You don’t want to go too far from where you come from” (VY). The implication is that when you wander too far from where you come from, you forget who you are. Staying close to family and community, or I would add even friends who share the same values, aids in ensuring that a Native American will remain in harmony.

**Sacred women.** Another important value related to community among Native Americans is the importance of women. This is especially true in matrilineal societies but can also be clearly seen in more patrilineal Native American tribes like the Siouian groups.

Fern Cloud, speaking from a traditionally patrilineal Dakota tribe draws a clear distinction in the role of women and men because women have the power to create life through birth: “It’s no coincidence that White Buffalo Calf Woman was the messenger and Mary was a woman. Women are sacred and have a lot of respect because they have been given the gift to create” (FC). Cloud compares the sacredness of Mary, the mother of Jesus and White Buffalo Calf Woman, the most sacred messenger of the Dakota, who imparted the Dakota virtues and ceremonies. Cloud is implying that they both were chosen by Creator to give birth to a religion and that the power of giving birth is uniquely feminine, making females sacred.

Lora Church notes how even the cardinal directions have a balance of male/female among the Navajo and one does not control the other.

We have the balance of the east and west which are female directions and north and south are the male directions and how you have balance there and one is not over the other. You need both to stay in balance. (LC)

**Beloved children.** “You go to their home, you see how they love their children” (VY). Yellow Old Woman was referring here to Native American traditional people. He considered their love for their children to be a hallmark of the Native American Harmony Way. It is true among Native Americans, as it is in many societies, that children are loved. Perhaps what is characteristically Native American is how this value related to Harmony. Casey Church shares how he understands his children in relationship to “The Harmony Way.”

So that’s one aspect where we are really understanding what is happening to me. I might get angry too easily or punish [sic] my kids too hard, then I feel that and I have to apologize to my kids and it brings me back to a life of compassion.... We all help each other to stay in harmony or balance. (CC)

Children have a way of sensitizing us to our faults. Coming back into a life of compassion, or back in the circle is a lesson easily taught by our children. Because Native Americans are ready for anything in life to be a vehicle from which Creator teaches, we are able to see children as teachers.<sup>38</sup>

**Respected elders.** One of the things that I have learned must be emphasized to Euro-Americans while trying to sensitize them to Native Americans culture is not to interrupt when an elder is speaking. This is one of the cardinal rules in Indian country but unless they are warned, and sometimes even with a warning, Euro-Americans, to the aghast of the Natives present, will freely start talking right in the middle of an elder's speech. This exemplifies a huge difference between Native American values concerning elders and the dominant American cultural values. For Natives Americans though, it goes beyond rules about interruptions. I was taught to give the seats to elders first, to assist by carrying things for them or opening doors; to never to send an elder away from a feed without a plate to go; to always bring a gift when visiting an elder; etc. Casey Church shares his own experience in this regard:

Sharing of food, caring for each other, I was taught that by my mom and dad. At their funerals people talked about them and I could see how they were valued and the things we were taught were valued. Like when an elder comes over, you get up and get them what they need and when a middle-aged person came you treat them a little different. And no one ever left our home without some food and water and a little money to help them on their way. (CC)

Elders are considered to be the most important members of the Indian community. They are valued and respected *a priori* and for the vital role they play in the community.

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<sup>38</sup> I heard a Lakota teacher one time mention the reason children are sacred to them is because they were with the Creator before their birth. By this he implied that children are pre-existent before being born and therefore, are closer to God. He used a similar rationale to explain why he thought elders were sacred, because they are nearing the end of their lives and they drift in and out of a state that will place them next to God.

**Vital family.** Native American families, like most societies who are not too far removed from an age when survival meant depending upon one's family, are traditionally close and each member is valued. How that family and the individuals within that family conducted themselves could have dire consequences for the tribe. Perhaps how Native American societies differ is found in their view of diversity. "The Harmony Way" consists of both a sense of unity and diversity that recognizes an individual, not just for how they can continue the family's survival, but for the uniqueness and giftedness of each individual. One respondent from the survey put it this way while describing "The Harmony Way," "Focus is on the good of the whole and each individual is a part of the whole. Everyone is necessary."

I once heard Chief Lawrence Hart, A Southern Cheyenne Peace Chief, talk about the recognition of the uniqueness of each child in the tribe. He spoke about how the elders, particularly the women elders, would closely observe the children of that tribe in order to discover the particular giftedness bestowed on them by Creator. For example, if one child was particularly good at sharing, they would consider that an attribute of leadership knowing that during tough times that person would direct the tribe towards resources for the good of the group and not just themselves. Also, children who had frequent strange dreams and spiritual encounters might be taken into apprenticeships with healers and Medicine people in order to develop their giftedness.

**Integral relation of all.** For the reasons expressed above concerning survival, it made sense for families to create extended relationships among themselves and among other tribes. Many tribes have "making a relative" ceremonies. Again, this concept goes beyond survival mode and is integrated into the values of sharing and hospitality. In other



words, it is not just based on reciprocity but also on a true sense of generosity. It is also based upon the sense of being connected to or related to all things. The Native American Harmony Way circle symbolizes the idea that we are all connected. The fact that Native Americans believe that we are all made by the same creator makes us relatives, and this is not merely symbolic. We see ourselves as truly related to all of the creation as Fern shared by saying, “We are all a family in a circle; the life cycles, the four seasons; the four directions. You know that’s our philosophy on keeping harmony and balance. It’s a real simple way of life” (FC).

A deep bond of trust is found within Native American families and extended relatives that is sacred. Here, it is expressed by Lora Church,

We have five children and I hope that we can model to them how to live a life, how to live an honest life. And, you get tired and run down, stressed out and cranky and they see you fail. But if they see another side when you are at peace as well, and trying to maintain balance.... Some of the things that we do; we run, work on shawls, etc. but when I don’t feel well, who can I trust? My sisters, my relatives, extended families (LC).

Lora was looking at the positive and negative big picture view in the life of her family. She talked of living an honest life in view of her children including them seeing their parent’s strengths and weaknesses. The cementing factor among them and their extended families is the trust they have in one another, in God and in the way of balance.

### **Sacred and Necessary Humor**

In the survey 85.1% of respondents said that humor is both sacred and necessary in their understanding of “The Harmony Way.” Hollywood has created the image of the “stoic Indian” in the same way they created the image of the “Indian warrior.” It always astounds me to hear from non-Indians their surprise when they discover the sense of

humor among Native Americans. Conversely, when Native Americans define themselves, humor is often an important characteristic of that self-description. Native elders can often be heard telling young people to enjoy yourselves” and “have fun” because they know that laughter and playfulness is an important part of life’s balance.

Most Native American sacred traditions have a common belief that humor is a necessary part of the sacred and a belief that human beings are often weak—we are not gods: our weaknesses lead us to do foolish things ... too much power, too much seriousness, were to be feared for they too could ‘unbalance’ life in the community and environment. We are taught by the clown, among others, not to take ourselves too seriously. This means, not to make ourselves too important. We are not *that* indispensable (Beck and Walters 1977, 30)

It may seem to outsiders that our humor is self-deprecating or that we are particularly tough on each other but this kind of humor stems from a grounded sense of awareness of our human frailty. Indian humor serves the function of reminding ourselves that we are just human beings.

**Humor as part of the balance.** The above quote exposes our weaknesses and it shows our tendency to deny them. Among Native American communities I have found that there are plenty of people who are willing to use humor to point out our humanity and subsequent imbalance. Our humor tends to be self-deprecating and sometimes brutal. It is one of the important ways Native Americans can use to laugh at our unfortunate circumstances. This kind of humor brings us back in balance. In my interview with Casey Church he was reflecting on the recent deaths of his parents and his mentor friend. The mood was becoming very somber but then he made a joke:

Like you gave me this tobacco and, money and a Wal-mart card.... There better be more than ten dollars on this thing.... Eeye!

You see because we’ve been talking about such a deep subject, I had to keep things in balance by making a joke.... Laughter is a medicine, it heals people and helps us...when I said that little joke it brought us back to some balance. I’ve seen

too many people too serious, and you don't want to hear them anymore.... It's part of the balance. (CC)

In this instance Casey wanted to point out the need for humor in our transpiring moment and also teach something about Native American humor as a value.

**Humor as impromptu or designed in ceremony and stories.** The example in the interview with Casey would be *impromptu* humor. Most Native American sacred teachings and practices contain humor. Often our stories contain a trickster-hero like Coyote, Raven or Rabbit who is both wise and foolish. The mythical figures in our stories are allowed to ask questions and act in ways in which we are not. They are also there just to make us laugh. Many ceremonies have a time of designated humor. Pow Wows sometimes have Pow Wow clowns. The Crow tribe even has a Teasing Clan who serve this important purpose. Some tribes have Clown dances. Many tribal ceremonies have Sacred Clowns. All of these to serve the purpose described earlier. The following quote lists the seriousness of life and in turn, the seriousness of Sacred Clowns to help us keep life in balance:

Fundamentally, the sacred clowns portray a Path of Life with all its pitfalls, sorrows, laughter, mystery and playful obscenity. They dramatize the powerful relationships of love, the possibility of catastrophe; the sorrow of separation and death; the emerging consciousness of human beings entering into life—entering this world as ordinary beings with non-ordinary potential. They show the dark side; they show the light side; they show us that life is hard; and they show us how we can make it easier. If death takes everything away when it robs an individual of life, then the Clowns must be able to combat death in mock battle and wrestle life back again. (Beck and Walters 1977, 307)

The clowns are actually “ministers” in disguise because the clowns know that sometimes people need to laugh at our awful situations in order to keep them in perspective.

## Cooperative Form of Communalities

One of the observable characteristics of Native Americans, as pointed out in both Zuni and Rimrick Navajo cultures by Kluckhohn and Strodbeck, is the strong community orientation. Perhaps this aspect is easily observable because of the apparent contrast of individualism in the majority American culture. A cooperative culture, as opposed to a more competitive culture, also tends to share in activities and achievements. According to my interviews I believe respect or tolerance, and a keen understanding of diversity and consensus serve to make possible the uniqueness of Native American community. Vincent Yellow Old Woman cites his understanding of respect.

I really think the key for me is respect. I don't always agree with the things that they do, but for different groups and religions, I must have respect. Not necessarily from within their circle but they should always respect my beliefs. (VY)

Vincent understands that we do not have to practice their beliefs but we must respect the beliefs of others.

**Dignity from consensus.** For the Iroquois, Adrian Jacobs prefers to speak of consensus being that which gives the community and everyone in the community dignity.

There was a man who crossed the great water in a stone canoe. He brought people to a place of making decisions and listening which dignified listening to one another's stories and it is an affirmation of that dignity to gain consensus among differing views. (AJ)

The ability to listen seems to be key in the Iroquois story. In the following quote Jacobs gives us insight into the role of each member nation and their understanding of the interaction between unity and diversity:

There are different elements of community values all tied into the Great Peace. Values are based on the fundamental idea of consensus and everyone is valued that way. When the people come together and talk, then it goes farther to the particular groups and each one has a role to play, making sure that consensus can

be reached, such as: keep the fire going, protocol, etc. Each nation has its own autonomy but when the larger group has issues facing it then they all come together. Their strength was unity. (AJ)

According to Jacobs, each individual has importance because the idea of consensus is foundational. In consensus, everyone has a voice. Furthermore, he explains how each Nation within the larger group has a different role to play in the consensus making process. The result was strength in unity. Jacobs' description of decision making among the Iroquois Confederacy typifies the importance of Native American values concerning the importance of the group. Individual autonomy is exercised and respected in the group but in the end, the group is more important than one's individual autonomy.

The primacy of the group can also be seen in the story of Grandmother Turtle that was shared earlier. On three occasions Grandmother Turtle volunteered to dive for the mud only to be squelched by the decisions of the group. She was finally able to act on her idea only when the group could not come up with a better idea for a volunteer. I should point out that the demarcation between individual autonomy and group consensus are not always distinguishable.

My understanding of how our Keetoowah people went to war is perhaps an example that favors the autonomy of the individual. The Keetoowah original had forty-nine major villages or "fires" as they are called.<sup>39</sup> Very rarely did all forty-nine villages ever decide unanimously to go to war. Instead, only certain villages would decide to go to war and this was usually a result of local concerns such as a dispute over hunting grounds rights. The idea of a national war was virtually unknown to early Cherokees but usually neighboring villages assisted one another.

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<sup>39</sup> Some small villages were like suburbs that shared the fire of a nearby dominant village.

Even though a village would decide to go to war it did not mean that every warrior in the village had to participate. Each warrior would decide for themselves and their autonomy was respected. Then, even if a warrior decided to join the war party and then had second thoughts along the way, their autonomy was completely respected and they could return home in dignity. In this example the importance of the group decision is respected as well as the autonomy of the individual. The point is that for community to be valued so highly, respect through consensus making of some sort must be present for both the group and individual.

**High tolerance of and respect for dissension.** In order to maintain harmony Native Americans are deliberately tolerant, showing deference to other viewpoints, especially in matters of religious concern. A definite belief exists among Native Americans in the sovereignty of religious beliefs, whether that be found among individuals, families, tribes or nations.

I knew a missionary friend who received a sizable grant for an Indian youth drug prevention program. Because he lived in a Northern Plains Indian community the intention was to utilize the sweat lodge as a key part of the program. He gathered all the families in that town together to talk how they would construct the sweat lodge. The dilemma was that each of these ten families did sweat just a little different than the others. Some of the families built their lodges with twelve vertical poles, some used 16 and some even more. Some of the families put the hole in the middle; some put it on the side. The differences continued to surface.

During this process no one ever condemned another family for the particular way they build their sweat lodge and yet, no one would budge from the way they built it in

order to accommodate a compromise. They all agreed that each family's way was good for them and they should do it the way they were taught but no one would make the changes necessary to build a common lodge. The grant eventually had to be returned.

I share this story to show how tolerant our Indian people can be of other spiritual beliefs but also to show how disrespectful they feel it is to force another to believe the same as someone else. Any type of coercion of someone's own beliefs is seen as breaking "The Harmony Way." Among Native Americans it is generally understood that no one should tell another what they must believe.

To illustrate this principle, Adrian Jacobs described what is commonly referred to as the "Two Row Wampum":

[A] white belt with two parallel darker lines symbolized the common river of life. One represented our people with our laws, our leaders and our people. One represented the British, like a big equal sign-equality. We refused to call the king our father or the queen our mother. We used terms like brother.... These are agreements between nations. We agreed that neither of us will interfere with the other or we would tip the boat and become unstable. (AJ)

Interference, according to Jacobs will "tip the boat," which is tantamount to instability, imbalance, and disrupts "The Harmony Way." It was with a wry sense of Indian humor that Adrian pointed out the visual of the Two-Row wampum looking like a big equal sign. He translated this as representation of equality, although one only sees it in that way when it is pointed out.

**Process of both hearts and minds.** In the survey 84.7 percent stated that using both heart and mind are a Harmony Way value in making decisions. In the world of the dominant American culture, Western peoples can often be heard making decisions based on objective factors. Generally, it is understood that feelings fall in the least important criterion. Among Native Americans, how one feels about a decision being made is

paramount. Indians often think with their hearts and minds. In other words, a decision must not only be reasonable but it must feel right. In fact, I have seen many decisions in my life made by Native Americans where how a person feels about a decision overrides simple reason. Somehow, we believe a good mind is linked to a good “heart. When Native Americans fail to consult the “heart” on matters of importance, disharmony is sure to follow.

On several occasions I have heard the following story told on the Wind River Indian Reservation. Chief Washakie was being honored by the President of the United States with a silver saddle. The President’s aides had accompanied the gift all the way to Wyoming and the press was there ready to report the old Chief’s reaction. After the gift was given, Washakie said nothing. One of the envoys queried Washakie and asked him to comment. Still, Washakie stood in solemn silence. Again the men from Washington pressed the Chief for a response. “Don’t you want to send a message back to the Great White Father in Washington, D.C.?” one of them asked. Yet Washakie never moved his lips.

The Press and Government officials alike were indignant. How dare this old Indian slight the President this way, they thought. Finally, the uncomfortable silence was broken one more time as they began to solicit Washakie for a response. Finally, Chief Washakie moved slowly to the center of the platform and he opened his mouth just to say these few words. “The White man thinks with his mind, and he has many words to describe his thoughts. The Indian thinks with his heart, and the heart has no words.”

**Diversity giving strength and balance to life.** Cherokees speak of the four cardinal directions in terms of representing the gifts of different ethnic groups. For



example, the North represents the European tribes and its gift is technology. They say the diversity of human beings makes the whole human race stronger. Our Indian people understand the principle of diversity bring a strength and balanced unity. This principle value is simply understood among indigenous peoples.

The Cherokee have seven clans. I am told that when our most sacred fire is made, the fire keepers use seven kinds of wood, each pointing in different directions but there is but one fire. We also pray in seven directions but to just one God. The seven clans of the Cherokee each have different functions, but they all contribute to the good of one tribe.

When Vincent Yellow Old Woman, was referring to the strength and balance of diversity by speaking of particular societies in his tribe when he said, “Our Society members also kept that harmony, even though only they knew what was going on inside that circle, that was okay. Each had a different role,” Vincent understands that different individuals and different societies play different roles for the good of the whole tribe.

Lora Church mentioned the four cardinal directions and explained that there are “east and west, which are female directions, and north and south are the male directions.... You need both to stay in balance.” She was speaking of diversity giving strength and balance to life. Lora understands the concept as it applies to all areas of life.

Like most all of those interviewed, Fern Cloud addressed this issue when she said, “Those seven rites, their moral principles, they all had a meaning. Males and females, every aspect of our lives, there was a meaning to it.” Our Native American people know that community is based upon cooperative values or communality but each person, clan, society, etc. has a different role to play in promoting strength through diversity. When everyone is cooperating by working within this shared value, there is harmony.

## Orality as the Primary Communication Method

In the popular movie *Smoke Signals*, (now a somewhat famous Hollywood Indian movie because it was the first to be written, directed, produced and acted primarily by Indians) Victor, the young Indian protagonist, is trying to convince his mother that he will keep his word. He asks her if she wants him to sign a paper and she replies, “No way! You know how Indians feel about signing papers!” The fact that Native Americans mistrust the words of treaties, (and well we should) has as much to do with the form of a written document as it does with the content.

I have heard elders say “I don’t like talking on the phone because I can’t see the person’s heart who I’m talking to.” There is a general mistrust among our people, especially our traditional people, of any form of communication but oral in a face-to-face encounters. The broken treaties only serve to substantiate the mistrust in all other communicative forms. Seventy-four percent of those surveyed agreed that in their understanding of Harmony Way, there is primal power in words and an oral tradition.

As a pastor I encountered this in the form of understanding the Bible. If I read from the Scriptures the people did not respond. If I paraphrased them, they listened more attentively. Some of the traditional people in the congregation expressed their thoughts when I asked them about my observations. They said to me, “If we hear it from your heart we will believe you but we know that the White man translated the Bible and he could have removed things he didn’t want us to hear or added things that are not true.” Truth, to the traditional people in my congregation, was about hearing the words from a person’s heart.

By the same token, those same people did not really care for what could be called “expository preaching.” They felt the more good words had to be explained, the less power they contained. In the introduction to this paper I stated,

Our Native American values teach us that each moment is sacred and organic, and when one tries to record those sacred moments outside of the sacred space from which they took place, it could be viewed as presumptuous. Our Indian people tend to feel that life should be taken as it comes, with each moment given its due when it occurs.

Trying to recreate a sacred moment by recording it tends to stifle a mutual sense of trust among some Native Americans. What is sacred, cannot be duplicated nor can it be judged by the community. By that I mean, in Indian country a person must make himself or herself vulnerable in order to be heard. A person’s words, along with their heart, will be judged at that time by the community. If the community who witnessed those words is absent later when they are examined by others it would be considered out of context. Words taken out of context are not important because they don’t impart the same understanding they did when they were given.

In Indian country true knowledge is not so much about facts as it is understanding or revelation from the Creator. I am honored to be a keeper of several traditional items and ceremonies. I was taught by elders to observe closely when a task was being done and not to ask many questions. After a certain time period I was given the opportunity to try it, and I was corrected when I messed up. I was also told to pray about these things and meditate on them. Every so often my questions—which I kept in my heart and mind—would be answered. This learning style was very different from my training in college and seminary, where I was certified based on my knowledge of certain facts. Understanding is sacred to the experience at the time and organic.

**Orally passed traditions.** There is a sacred historic and mythical figure among Dakota/Lakota/Nakota known as the White Buffalo Calf Woman.

Thousands and thousands of years ago White Buffalo Calf Woman, she brought the pipe to our people and gave us the seven rites along with the seven teachings for us to live by. Through the ways of our people we have to go way back, back to that point in time when everything was in harmony.... You hear these themes in our stories and you know if you go to Lakota country, they all have the same ways, sometimes things change a little but basically it's the same (FC).

Fern Cloud affirms the oral tradition of her Lakota people, including their ability to endure great periods of time intact. The traditions of our Aboriginal people are not trends or fads. They have been passed down orally for hundreds, thousands and sometimes tens of thousands of years.<sup>40</sup> Because there are often stories, ceremonies and mnemonic objects that accompany these traditions, including places, natural features like the Sun, moon and stars, and species of animals, trees and insects, they have remained fairly stable. Fern also points to a past Lakota history “when everything was in harmony.” The continued passing of the oral history seems to help to ensure a return to or maintenance of “The Harmony Way.”

Adrian Jacobs also makes the connection between the power of the Iroquois ancient origins story and their sense of harmony.

In our Iroquois origin story there is this tree of life, which symbolized peace and harmony. Everything works together well and then someone divides the community. In western Christianity it is either or, and it ends up being cooperation with colonialism and destroys communities. Our story is the codification of human dignity. (AJ)

Jacobs points out here the original peace and harmony that the Iroquois Confederacy had among themselves until someone “divides the community.” In this case, he points to the

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<sup>40</sup> Our Cherokee Cedar Fire ceremony is an example of a traditional ceremony that traveled with our people before we came to Smoky Mountains and before we were given our name by the Creator. Even most conservative estimates would affirm this point in time to be over 10,000 years ago. New forensic science is beginning to point to a 40,000 year point of American entry for Native Americans.

dualism of Western Christianity as the culprit. How do people restore their dignity when it has been lost? According to Jacobs, people restore their dignity by returning to their story which is passed down orally from one generation to the next.

**Spoken words with primordial power.** Because oral traditions among Native Americans are so vital, it is not much of a stretch to understand why words may be seen as having what the Evergreen Study called “primordial power.” The Jacobs Study confirmed this conveying the idea that words are powerful entities and they should never be used deceptively or misused. I could find nothing pointing to a belief that words by nature were always sacred. Over time there may have been a natural occurrence that the vehicle used to transfer sacred things through time and space, also took on sacred attributes.

Certain words are seen as more sacred and more powerful than others among Native Americans. One example among some tribes is the use of particular names of the Creator. In our Keetoowah traditions one name that represents the Creator of our covenant is [to be read silently] “Yowah.” This name is only to be spoken under particular circumstances. Other names for the Creator may be freely spoken.

The Navajo or Dine’ people have a similar construct as told by Dale Tsosie:

My daughter went to Dine’ college which is situated in Tsaile, Arizona. She took a lot of Navajo cultural classes. One of the things that she said is that in the classes there are based on a lot of Navajo religion and ceremonies and so they really stress traditional and culture and so they will not mention this name in full term, Sá’ąh Naaghái Bik’eh Hózhóón. They keep it very sacred and very holy. They don’t speak it. They will call it SNBH.... Sá’ąh Naaghái Bik’eh Hózhóón. SNBH is all they will say. (DT)

Using SNBH as a substitute for the full name of the Creator is similar to the current usage among many Jews who do not write or say the name of God. Other names revealing a

primordial power and that may be spoken only under particular circumstances include the name of the dead. While attending a Kiowa funeral I was instructed by my adopted Kiowa mother that I could speak the person's name for three days only. After that I would be in danger of calling that person's spirit back. Since that time I have observed similar circumstances among other tribes.

**Stories as a main vehicle for teaching and sustaining.** As I mentioned, stories are among those oral traditions that teach and sustain "The Harmony Way." By using the following quotes I will illustrate this principle from two of the interviewees. First Adrian Jacobs stated,

We have the wampum belts and people who are committed to passing on the story. There are numbers associated with it and people give detailed accounts of the story. One wampum is a complete circle beaded in wampum with 50 strings going to the center to represent the system of fifty chiefs which was settled upon. One of those strings goes farther than the rest and it represents the Peacemaker. Our system of consensus allows everyone to come together for one voice. Each of the original names is preserved and passed down to the person who takes that position. This all happened likely about 1151 AD. All of those positions are fulfilled except for the Peacemaker. (AJ)

Jacobs points out the symbolism of the wampum belts and their significance in telling the story of the Iroquois Confederacy. He shows how forty-nine of the chiefs continuously have been replaced through the years since AD 1151, with each new chief taking on the name of the original forty-nine chiefs. Again, Adrian points out how this system of consensus brings harmony to the whole group.

Secondly, Fern Cloud stresses the importance of her oral traditions by sharing about a recent Womanhood Ceremony she attended:

The sacred rites that Calf Woman brought to us are more than ceremonies, they are teachings. So we did the ceremony for a young gal for womanhood and we go there and we support her, and we go through sweat with her and we all tell her how to be a woman, how to be respectful. That's the key I think. Nobody else has

told them these things. This is our duty, You can't read it in a book or something! It's coming back to our people and this is also healing. People are coming back in the circle again. It's very powerful. The boys do something similar.... [W]e are coming back to the way the Creator meant us to be, back in harmony. (FC)

Through her recollection of this recent ceremony, Fern stresses the importance and responsibility of the older women passing these traditions on to the next generation of younger women. She is unwavering in the foundational communicative tool of oral traditions when she states, "you can't read it in a book or something!" Again, unlike the Western approach to learning, the words would not have the same power if they were written down. Fern weaves her understanding of the oral traditions in the symbol of the circle of harmony.

**Quiet, respectful communication.** Several of the literature studies revealed observations concerning the affect or manner in which Native Americans communicate orally. The words to describe these observations were "discrete," "respectful," and "quiet." In my experience Indians can get loud, overly expressive and even boisterous. I state this in order to avoid the danger of stereotyping Native Americans as stoic. Under many circumstances nothing could be further from the truth. With that said, I do believe these observations are helpful in pointing out a certain demeanor during more instructive situations, especially while listening. Because we are primarily an oral culture, our Native people do tend to have refined listening skills. Perhaps it is only natural to exhibit these since in order to be attentive one must be quiet. Listening then, is the key to understanding others. Listening is perhaps the greatest compliment one person can pay to another or what Adrian Jacobs calls giving dignity to others.

There was a man who crossed the great water in a stone canoe. He brought people to a place of making decisions and listening which dignified listening to one

another's stories and it is an affirmation of that dignity to gain consensus among differing views. (AJ)

Traditionally, we are taught to listen in all circumstances. When one is in the woods it is not just our observations of images that become important but also one's listening skills. For example, a river that is shallow has a bubbling sound and is louder than the quiet, sleepy sound a deep river. A *Machupta/Maidu* elder once showed me how to listen to the sound of birds while looking for herbal medicines in the woods. The particular sound of the birds led us to the medicine we were seeking. In order to be a culture that values oral tradition and the world around us, Native Americans have learned to be good listeners.

### **Present and Past Time Orientation**

Statistically, only 65.5 percent of those surveyed agreed that their understanding of Harmony Way included a time orientation that emphasizes the Past and Present. Although this is still a majority it does rank at the lower end of the categories on the survey. In addition, it was not a frequent answer when respondents were able to state freely the components of their understanding of "The Harmony Way." Only two responses mentioned it directly, one of them stating, "our spirit echoes from where we have been and follows us to where we are going." This response seems to acknowledge the importance of the past and the significance of the past in leading us from where we are to the future. I have considered several possibilities for this lower occurrence in the survey, listing my two primary concerns, although satisfactory explanation is likely found in a combination of these two considerations.

The first concern is the level of modernity among the respondents. While they may easily speak of creation and other harmony concepts from a knowledge base,



modern time constraints capture almost everyone who participates in the dominant society. Because it was an online survey may lead to the conclusion that many of those who responded have been assimilated into the time orientation of the dominant culture.

Second, time orientation is simply a difficult concept to visualize. When one runs their life according to a clock, it is easy to segment time into concrete meaning. It is more difficult to talk about time orientation as an abstract reality.

The time orientation categories themselves were developed primarily using Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck's Values Project literature although it did occur in the earlier literature studies as: "an orientation to the past which honors tradition, and to the present in taking life as it comes" (Kelley) and "Orientation to the present. Being, rather than becoming" (Evergreen). The Values Project considered past, present and future orientations but they admitted that time orientation was difficult to test (which gives some credence to my concern No. 2 above. Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck perhaps summarized it best by stating a past and present time orientation is "a source of knowledge and continuity that keeps the Present stable and the Future predictable (Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck 1961, 325) and that "time was not viewed as a commodity" (331).

There are several values that are more abstract in nature among Native Americans that are difficult to explain like, sense of time orientation, work ethic, the connectedness of all things, as opposed to generosity or more concrete values. Those who live among Native Americans, especially traditional people just know certain things to be true like the way we view time. It will assist our understanding of this somewhat illusive category

and our understanding of why it is a value associated with “The Harmony Way” by examining the following subcategories:

**Present engagement above future scheduling (Indian time).** In 1917, venerated Keetoowah Medicine Man Redbird Smith spoke of his understanding of religion and the present in this way:

This religion as revealed to me is larger than any man. It is beyond man’s understanding. It shall prevail after I am gone. It is growth like the child—growth eternal. This religion does not teach me to concern myself of the life that shall be after this, but it does teach me to be concerned with what my everyday life should be. The Fires kept burning are merely emblematic of the greater fir, the greater Light, the Great Spirit. I realize now as never before it is not only for the Cherokee but for all mankind. (Young 2002, 149)

In Smith’s view, the present is where his spirituality exists. He has little concern for the future. This value of past and present cosmic orientation can be reduced to a micro-level to help us understand how Native American life on a daily basis. I have heard Native Americans say of people who operate within the confines of the dominant culture, “they have a clock inside their head,” meaning they live their life in relation to a tighter time schedule than do Indians. In order to understand the natural rhythm of traditional Indians, especially those living in traditional communities on the reservations, the tighter time schedule must become less rigid.

Native Americans generally do not adjust well to the dominant cultures’ value of time. While it may seem like a good use of time to people from Western cultures to mark the hours and even the minutes, Native Americans lean more towards valuing the organic interactions of place and people. The idea of *place* is related to creation based spirituality. The Kantian philosophical divide concerning the concepts of *time* and *space* were ideally a balance of Western and non-Western thought. Yet, the West historically placed the

emphasis on *time*, to the deprecation of serious thinking concerning *space* (or what I prefer to call *place*). When thinking about a creation-based spirituality, *place* takes on relational aspects that may be neglected by an emphasis on time.

Time tends to be event-oriented in nature. Americans have adopted a “temporal materialism” that lends itself to events. The importance of these events becomes a *pseudo-place* for them, from which they draw their identity. Event-oriented people seem to adapt easily to changes in locale. The new generations of event-oriented people are able to pass down the myth of *pseudo-place* whereas, land based, *place* oriented peoples seem to be more bound to a *place* as a base of identity. When place oriented people are removed from their place, such as when Native Americans were removed from their homelands, they have great difficulty. Often, such differing views of time means that people end up talking right past each other, as noted in the following quote.

When the domestic ideology is divided according to American Indian and Western European immigrant, however, the fundamental difference is one of great philosophical importance. American Indians hold their lands—place—as having the highest possible meaning, and all their statements are made with this reference point in mind.... When one group [American Indian] is concerned with the philosophical problem of space and the other [Western European immigrant] with the philosophical problem of time, the statements of either group do not make much sense when transferred from one context to the other without proper consideration of what is happening. (Deloria and Wildcat 2001, 143)

The two different understandings concerning time about which Deloria speaks is important if we are to understand how “Indian time” is a value that goes far beyond just being late. Deloria believed that place oriented peoples are concerned with truth in their own context whereas, time oriented people tend to make truth abstract and apply it to any situation at anytime.

American Indians and other tribal peoples did not take this path in interpreting revelations and religious experiences. The structure of their religious traditions is

taken directly from the world around them, from their relationships with other forms of life. Context is therefore all-important for both practice and the understanding of reality. The places where revelations were experienced were remembered and set aside as locations where, through rituals and ceremonials, the people could once again communicate with the spirits. Thousands of years of occupancy on their lands taught tribal peoples the sacred landscapes for which they were responsible and gradually the structure of ceremonial reality became clear. It was not what people believed to be true that was important but what they experienced as true. Hence revelation was seen as a continuous process of adjustment to the natural surroundings and not as a specific message valid for all times and places. (Deloria 2003, 65-66)

To Deloria, a temporal worldview has limitations. It must have a real beginning and a real end. Spatially oriented worldviews have no need to inject this extreme view of historic and future reality upon themselves or others. With Native Americans the value of the now is the critical moment. The future has not happened. This is easily illustrated in our ideas concerning "Indian time." As I stated earlier, philosophical constructs concerning time are difficult to discuss yet Indian time is a stark difference in reality that western clock time. What Indian time means practically, is that our events and appointments will begin when everyone eventually shows up, despite any plans to have folks there at a certain time reflected by the clock. Indian time is regulated by place and experience, not by a clock.

**Future determined by looking to the past.** Native Americans depend upon our stories, ceremonies and traditions to guide us to a good future. Often that future is best expressed through exploring things from the past. We mine our past and those gems are our payment to the future. That is why our stories and other past concerns are so very important. Without our past, we cannot be a people of the future. My *Mi'kmaq* friend Terry LeBlanc tells the story of his grandfather taking him deep into the woods when he was younger. His grandfather told him to look twice as much at the scenery behind him

as he moved forward because if he did not recognize where he had been, he will never find his way out of those woods. This story has become a metaphor for Terry as he speaks on this subject.

**Fluidity between past and present.** When sharing, Native American elders often drift freely between current and past events. They may begin a story by saying it began a long time ago but it is likely that the behavior or problem they wish to address is occurring in the present. As stated before concerning our learning through reflected experience, we learn about how to live now through examining what has happened in our history.

**Present reality affecting future generations.** Only when we view the importance of the past of Native Americans to be critical in the way we live the present, can we project what might be our future. It is not as though Native Americans don't consider the future. The study from Evergreen State suggested that there is an ethos among Native Americans that all things will eventually unfold in their time. As I understand it, this is not a casuistic statement but rather one that reveals the primacy of living in the moment. In the same way that there is a relationship between Native American views of the past and the present, there is a relationship between the present and the future. Several of the survey respondents made statements reflecting this view. One said, "What we do today will impact the next seven generations." This is a widely held warning among Native Americans when considering the relationship of our present decisions to how they will affect those in the future.

## **Open Work Ethic**

An open work ethic, another of the more abstract values and closely related to time orientation, was mentioned in several literature studies revealing work among Native Americans to be purposeful and accomplished as needed. It means that Native American values concerning work are more about meeting a present need rather than working for the purpose of gaining future temporal considerations like wealth, power and material possessions. Similar to the discussion of time, it is not that future needs are not considered but that the present need is the immediate concern and the future will be taken care of when the future need arises. Like all agrarian and nomadic peoples of the past, Native Americans have had to plan for the future in order to survive. The fact that Native Americans lived in cooperative communities also meant that it was not up to each individual person to worry about supplying everything needed for the future.

Native American values concerning work were traditionally role oriented. This was especially true concerning male and female roles. In Cherokee society the young boys learned hunting skills by guarding the corn fields from nighttime scavengers. As they grew older they progressed to hunting with their male relatives in the mountains. When they became young men they were eligible to go on far away trips for big game and even war parties. Among the Cherokees, men hunted and went to war, although Cherokee society allowed for exceptions to role assignments. Men brought home wild game and women dressed and cooked it. Women planted in the fields and harvested the food. While most tribes in North America are no longer agrarian or nomadic, some of the role ideas are still common today.

**Meaningful work.** There are two stories that are used to help Cherokees, among other things, to understand our male and female roles concerning work. *Kanati* and *Selu* are the first man and the first woman of the Cherokees. (*Kanati* means “the hunter” and *Selu* means “corn”). The Hunter and Corn Mother had two sons. One son was Home Boy, their biological child. The other was Wild Boy who had been found living in the cane-brake along the river. This story tells what happened when the sons were nearly grown and *Selu*’s husband *Kanati* was away, in the West:

One evening, Selu saw her sons getting their weapons ready, so they could go out to hunt the next morning. She smiled and said, “I see you’re going to hunt tomorrow. When you come back, I’ll have a wonderful meal prepared for you.”

The next day, while her sons were gone, Selu took all the old meat and cooked it into a soup thickened with hominy grits. In the evening, the boys came back with a deer they had killed, and their mother served them this soup. They thought it was very good and ate eagerly but didn’t know what it was. They had never seen or tasted grits or any type of corn before. “This is selu (corn)” their mother said, “and it’s very good food.”

The next morning, the boys went out hunting again. This time, their mother took fresh venison, cut it up fine and, once again, thickened the soup with hominy grits. That evening, the boys returned with two turkeys they had killed. Once again, they enjoyed their meal, what their mother had prepared, very much.

They next morning, as they were leaving to hunt, Wild Boy said to Home Boy, “This corn our mother gives us is a very mysterious thing. Where does it come from? Let’s spy on our mother to see where she gets this.” Creeping back through the woods the boys watched as their mother came out of the house with a large basket. They saw her go into a shed, and quietly ran up to peak through the cracks in the shed wall. They watched as their mother placed the basket on the floor of the shed. She then struck her sides and rubbed her belly, and hominy grits fell like snow from her body, filling the basket.

Home Boy turned to his brother and whispered, “This is a very disgusting thing we’ve been eating.”

“Yes,” Wild Boy said, “and it looks as if our mother is a witch.”

That evening, the boys returned from the hunt with no game. Their mother had worked hard preparing the turkey meat with hominy grits, but the boys only picked at their food. They didn’t eat.

Finally, their mother broke the silence. “Something is wrong, she said. Maybe you have learned something. Maybe you don’t like what I have prepared for you. Maybe you don’t like me anymore.”

One of the boys said, “We know where the corn comes from. We think you are a witch. We have to kill you now.”

“Do as you must,” their mother said, “I ask only this one thing: When you have killed me, drag my body over the ground seven times. Wherever my blood touches the ground, a plant will grow. This plant you will call ‘selu (corn).’ You will take care of it, and it will take care of you and feed you. As the stalks grow, they will form ears. You may pick some ears when they are green, for roasting or boiling. They are very good. The rest you must allow to get ripe and hard. This you will use for hominy and to make your bread. Don’t forget to save the best for seed. As long as you have this corn with you, you have me with you. I am Selu, the Corn Mother.”

And so the boys killed their mother. They dragged her bleeding body over the ground, but they were lazy and only dragged her around three times. Wherever the blood touched the earth, corn grew. The people had food to eat, but because of the original laziness of the boys, the corn must be hoed each year. The women wisely took over the management of the crops and so instruct the men in what to do and when to do it. (*The Corn Woman and Her Two Sons*)

The companion story to this one is a story about when the two boys, in disobedience to their father, follow him to a cave from where he always brought home their wild game each day. The boys came along after *Kanati* and accidentally let all the animals out. In both stories we understand food as a gift from the Creator. There are ceremonies and even festivals that accompany planting, harvesting, hunting rituals, etc. that formalize our gratefulness to the Creator. The idea of food as gift is obvious. *Kanati* was able to simply go to a cave to hunt one animal at a time. *Selu* was able to pull corn right from her side. After the children’s disruption of “The Harmony Way” it would now be much more difficult for them to find game and produce food. Hunting would become a chore for the Cherokee men and growing vegetables would be hard work for the women. The idea of Corn Mother sacrificing her body also shows that in order to retain the balance or Harmony Way, we must sacrifice our labor and skills to work for our food.

These two stories about First Man and First Woman encourage Cherokee men and women to work through gardening and hunting in order to keep the harmony, and to maintain the accompanying ceremonies and rituals. Among our Cherokee people, for



women to plant and men to hunt is what contributes in making us *Keetoowah*. In most of the seven Cherokee Festivals, corn is used and honored as that which gives us continual life.

**Work as needed.** Even though their hours state they are open, it is common knowledge among Indians to avoid trying to contact tribal offices early on Mondays or late on Fridays. There is a joke that goes around Indian country, especially as it applies to those working for the tribe, that Indian employees have Mondays and Fridays off! The humor is found in the fact that among most tribes, many employees either come in late or not at all on Mondays and on Fridays they are absent or they leave early. The most common reason is usually to attend a distant Pow Wow, which generally begins on Friday evenings and last through Sunday late afternoons. Other reasons for missing Mondays and/or Fridays include hunting and fishing seasons, going to weekend wakes or funerals, attending ceremonies, i.e., Native American Church meetings, and visiting relatives. Most of these are considered reasonable absences by the tribes.

The general ethos creating this value is that one should work as needed but not overwork for the possibility of missing out on life. Work is valued among Native Americans as a necessity but to overwork is foolish. Overwork creates a great opportunity for the Clowns to tease us back into harmony. To Native Americans the time and work categories of the dominant culture are arbitrary and usually don't fit with Native American life-ways. The *Teaching and Learning with Native Americans Handbook* by the Arizona Adult Literacy and Technology Resource Center, states it this way,

Indians often become frustrated when the work ethic [of the dominant culture] is strongly emphasized. The practice of assigning homework or in-class work just

for the sake of work runs contrary to Indian values. It is important that Indians understand the value behind any work assigned, whether in school or on the job. (Native American Literacy)

Work, for Native Americans, must have purpose and it must be related to present need. To become overworked, meaning spending time working for what one does not need, means that one's life is out of balance and it breaks the circle of harmony. To work primarily as needs arise may have developed throughout ancient times for reasons such as lack of creating surplus or environmental depletion, but it is as distinguishable as much by what it is not, as much as what it is. The characteristics of an American worldview are a remarkably different than Native American worldviews concerning work.

Anthropologist Paul G. Hiebert suggests an American worldview as it relates to work, is largely achievement oriented.

Personal achievement, not illustrious background, is the measure of an individual's worth and social position. Hard work, careful planning, efficiency, and saving of time and effort are intrinsically good. In a predictable world, the individual is ultimately responsible for failure. For example, a man may not be able to prevent all disasters, such as accident, illness, or death, but he can minimize their harm by means of insurance and a will... Achievement is closely associated tied to social mobility. People should be allowed to rise to their levels of ability and not be tied down to their kinsmen or past. The results, in part, are shallow social and geographic roots and insecurity. (Hiebert 1976, 362)

Hiebert's conclusion that the results of such a worldview actually ends up causing the opposite outcome is striking when one considers the goal of more work and more things to be security, not insecurity! According to several studies set forth by Mander, Americans work far more hours in a day than Native Americans ever worked (Mander 2004, 254). He asks the question of modern Americans,

So have things really improved? Those of us who enjoy the fruits of the technological juggernaut have more stuff in our lives... But if we compare ourselves to preindustrial societies, it is arguable that we work harder than they did. In addition, our devotion to gathering and caring for commodities has created

an extraordinary modern paradox: a scarcity of time, loss of leisure, and increase of stress amidst an environment of apparent abundance and wealth. A decrease in the quality of life and experience. (Mander 254-55)

**Identity in both doing and being.** The Values Project suggested that the Rim Rock Navajo and Zuni, motivation for behavior consisted of both internal and external values. In other words, the members of these two societies were motivated to activity from within the individual and also by concerns over how they felt the tribe viewed them. Others have found Indian identity associated with both an internal and external activity factor but I wish to focus on this factor as it relates to work. Native Americans, as compared with Americans, are motivated both internally and externally by and for the benefit of the group. Because of the shared community value that exists among Indian people, the external concerns have been internalized to encompass both being and doing. Perhaps an example in contrast will help illuminate what I am trying to describe.

I enrolled in my doctoral program with several other Native American colleagues. We discussed our decision to pursue our degrees with great consternation. We decided that each person would concentrate on a different area of study in order to better help our Indian people. During the orientation all the new students were asked to discuss, among other things, why they are pursuing post-graduate studies? For every American student they gave reasons that had to do with their career goals, desire to teach or write, etc. Each of their reasons was about themselves. The Native American students talked about the great need among our Indian people to advance so we will be taken seriously in the academic world, we spoke of how our studies and degrees would open doors for our Indian people that would not likely be open until we had advanced degrees, etc. None of us talked about our personal goals. During the tough times I had to draw strength in my

individual studies from my identity and commitment to my friends and our Indian people as a whole. I was motivated to action internally (being) but also by how I would be viewed by the group (externally). Generally, I think Indians work in order to participate in the group and the sense of Harmony that comes when we are together.

**Lifestyle with few constraints.** Native American unemployment figures are often difficult to determine as an early study in Alaska determined. The uncertainty they discovered had to do with subsistence hunting, expectations of sharing in the community, non-materialism and other factors. It seemed the Native Americans viewed wage jobs as something they could do in addition to other more traditional expectations and methods, citing, “significant numbers of Native Americans chose to work intermittently in the wage economy (Kleinfeld and Kruse 1982, 50). They concluded by stating,

This ambiguity, however, may reflect the actual vagueness of unemployment among individuals who maintain a lifestyle combining economic activity in both the modern and traditional sectors in the context of extended families who provide mutual economic support. It is perhaps unrealistic to expect that precise answers to questions on unemployment can be found in this cultural context.

One interpretation of this study’s findings might be that they are saying this category does not fit Native Americans! What they have realized is that the same cultural categories used to measure the dominant American culture, do not fit Native American culture. It all depends on what one means by “unemployment.” Here, the intersection of community values concerning sharing comes into view. When everyone is pitching in and sharing resources, each individual does not need to work every day. The intersection of a Native American view of freedom also comes into view here.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Remember the Cherokee story of how disease came into the world that I shared earlier.

If Native American spirituality is primarily concerned with maintaining harmony in cooperation with creation, the Creator and others it does not make sense to stock unneeded food to far ahead, therefore depleting natural resources and creating a storage problem. Neither does it make sense to hoard food away from the needs of others. Additionally, if the Creator is seen as the supplier of the food supply, it might seem presumptive and ungrateful to take more than one needs. When all of these components are considered in deference to one another, there is harmony and the freedom not to have to worry.

**Nonmaterialistic.** Materialistic values of Euro-American modernity imposed upon Native Americans are very different than our own indigenous values:

The Puritan work ethic is foreign to most Indians. In the past, with nature providing one's needs, little need existed to work just for the sake of working. Since material accumulation was not important, one worked to meet immediate, concrete needs. Adherence to a rigid work schedule was traditionally not an Indian practice. (Native American Literacy)

Indians are not materialistic. The differences between Native North American values and those of the dominant Euro-American society have been noted throughout our mutual history. Differences can be demonstrated in almost every area, like in the example of wealth used below:

The problems were those which arise wherever a stable, collective system and one based on expansion and individual profits collide. It was, for instance, impossible to run a store or plantation profitably without violating the way of reciprocity fundamental to most Amerindian societies. To obtain respect in the Native world, people had to redistribute wealth; for esteem in the white world, they had to hoard it. To a Cherokee, sufficient was enough; to a white, more was everything. (Wright 1992, 207)

The Cherokee concept of redistribution of wealth is at direct odds with the individualism of American values. Until the nineteenth century, the Cherokees were able, even after

removal from their homelands, to retain their communal values, as noted by Senator

Henry Dawes after touring Indian Territory in 1887. Describing the Cherokees he says,

The head chief told us that there was not a family in the whole nation that had not a home of its own. There is not a pauper in that nation, and the nation does not owe a dollar. It built its own capitol ... and built its schools and hospitals. Yet the defect of the system was apparent. They have got as far as they can go, because they hold their land in common.... There is no selfishness, which is at the bottom of civilization. Till these people will consent to give up their lands, and divide them among their citizens so that each can own the land he cultivates, they will not make much progress. (Malcomson 2000, 15)

Progress, according to Senator Dawes, is equated with individualism, materialism, and even selfishness. None of these are Cherokee values nor do they represent the values of other Native Americans.

The following e-mail concerning the Green Corn Dance was sent as a reminder to me by a Cherokee friend who attends the traditional Cherokee Stomp Dance Religion Grounds in Cherokee, North Carolina:

The Cherokee Ceremonial Festival of the Green Corn Moon (which coincides with when the first, thinnest crescent of the moon appears after the “new” or dark moon) will fall appear August 20th this year. Celebration in the southeastern nations traditionally includes a lot of preparation.

- Houses are cleaned but so are lives.
- Gifts of your extra or excess are given away.
- If you have more than 1 of anything-- any duplicated item-- you would give it away before green corn starts, preferably to someone who doesn't have that item.
- Extra food is also shared with those who need it.
- Debts are paid, and those who have grudges seek to end them before green corn begins.
- Weddings are planned—and divorces became final before green corns first day.

It was a time of celebration—so to make room for that, it was preceded by a time of reflection and contemplation—So now these days we find ourselves in the midst of preparing for green corn.

We are to prepare our calendars—clear time off to celebrate it correctly by planning ahead

- we are to prepare our minds—start choosing to do what is right

- we are to prepare our hearts—begin shedding ourselves of all that might tempt us to be miserly
  - we are to prepare our bodies—medicine is taken, bad habits dropped
  - we are to prepare our home—so our clan may visit and be welcomed
- It is solemn now—but the feast is coming!

The emphasis in this account is on not collecting too many material possessions. “Extra” “duplicate,” and “excess” things are given away as we shed ourselves from temptations to become “miserly.” Along with the material things being shed are sickness, bad feelings and grudges, and a general sense of restoration of “The Harmony Way” in our lives. Sometimes the Cherokees refer to this kind of living as walking the “White Path” with the idea being when we walk in “The Harmony Way” in all our traditions we are on a pure road or path.

### **Great Hospitality/Generosity**

“The worst thing that can be said about a Navaho is to say, He acts as if he has no relatives” (Kluckhohn and Strodbeck 1961, 320). When I moved to Western Oklahoma I had no relatives there. Libby, the woman who would become my adopted mother, had lost a son to cancer the year prior and the Creator had shown her that He would be sending her another son. I was adopted by her family and another family as a son. I was adopted as a nephew by a Kiowa/Comanche couple and as a brother by a Cheyenne family. I have also adopted an elder brother. The formal adoption process among Native Americans is an extension of a deep and profound sense of hospitality to others. Constant visiting among friends and relatives is a hallmark of Native American communities and no one ever goes away hungry. Complete strangers are often given special honor and gifts at Pow Wows and other social functions. Fern Cloud says,

How are strangers treated? One of our seven rites is making of a relative. We really believe that in our way of wo' dakota, no one should ever be alone. Someone would take you into their family and adopt you. But today, after so many times of that generosity being burned, we are not as open as we once were. We need to tap into this again and make others family, kinship, living together and supporting each other. (FC)

Fern makes a direct connection with hospitality and generosity to the Dakota Harmony Way. There is an insistence that no one should be alone. Alone, people have no protection. Alone, people have no fellowship. Alone, the tribe or clan does not exist and Harmony cannot therefore exist. Hospitality and generosity is the natural economy in "The Harmony Way" community.

I neglected to include this vital area on question five of the survey but in question four, when respondents had to think describe "The Harmony Way" without any prompts, twenty out of ninety responses included a direct reference to either generosity or hospitality.

Carl Starkloff notes the historic practice of the hospitality value among Native Americans,

On reading the various accounts and monographs by explorers and anthropologists, what strikes one is the almost universal hospitality shown by Indian tribes, especially to their White visitors. It is quite remarkable as described in David Bushnell's writings about explorers and missionaries among the Siouan, Algonquian, and Caddoan tribes west of the Mississippi.... There are practically no examples of inhospitality or harsh treatment rendered to Whites. On the contrary, the tribal leaders went out of their way to receive these visitors as special guest. There seems to have been a conviction among the Indians, at least until the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, that they and the newcomers could share the land equally, even if the land was sometimes thought to be the tribes sacred inheritance. (1974, 88)

Starkloff goes on to say that among Native Americans today, "Generosity ... is practiced ... almost to excess" (89). In many places throughout Indian Country, I have observed



what are considered by Euro-Americans to be exceptional acts of hospitality and generosity, practiced normatively today.

**Give one's best away to others.** During the interview Casey Church spoke of the primacy of care for elders he observed and was taught by his parents:

Sharing of food, caring for each other. I was taught that by my mom and dad. At their funerals people talked about them and I could see how they were valued and the things we were taught were valued. Like when an elder comes over, you get up and get them what they need and when a middle-aged person came you treat them a little different. And no one ever left our home without some food and water and a little money to help them on their way ... and we were taught to give our best not some old hand-me-down thing we don't want anymore. (CC)

Casey specifically connects generosity to the hospitality they experienced giving by sending visitors away from their home with food, water and some money. He mentions giving what is dear to you rather than something you value little. In this way we can see how Indian people are taught to give their best.

I was taught by my Kiowa father that any gift you give from your heart is a good gift. He also taught me that among the Kiowa, if someone compliments you on a piece of jewelry, a hat, or some other object you value then it is your obligation to give it to them, without begrudging the act. Gifts among Native Americans, are an act of the heart, regardless of their monetary value. The practice is an exercise in nonmaterialism.

**Better to give than to receive.** It is a cultural norm for Native Americans to have "Give-Aways" throughout the United States and Canada. Native Americans in the Northwest had a similar construct called a Potlatch. I have observed them in many places with only slight variations. Basically, a Give-Away is a formal public ceremony where an individual or family gives away any number of items to others. The Give-Away items may be expensive or not, they may be personally valuable or not. I have seen horses,

saddles, rifles, baskets, blankets and many other gifts given. They may even include sacred items such as drums or Eagle feathers. The gifts may be given to strangers, friends, elders, those in need, other honored guests, etc. but they are not supposed to be given to one's relatives.

The one thing that all Give-Aways have in common is that they are given *by*, and not *to*, the person who is being honored. The idea is that, it is the privilege of the person being honored to give things away. The honored person shows generosity by sharing his or her honor with others in this way, thereby spreading the honor around. Give-Aways are routinely done at certain times in Native American culture including, entry into the Pow Wow arena, the making of a chief, when a person is given an Indian name, and other celebratory occasions. Among other times, my wife and I had a Give-Away at our wedding and at my Ordination into Christian Ministry. Although the Give-Away is a formalized method of generosity the spirit of generosity pervades Native American communities.

**Giving secretly.** One of the respondents on the survey described a part of “The Harmony Way” in this way, “Give away the best that you have, do not let anyone know you are giving your best away.” Prior to reading this statement I had not stopped to remind myself that there is a quiet, almost secretive way in which Native Americans express generosity. “Give-Aways are always done in public but I can recall numerous times I have observed and even practiced the other very private side to individual generosity among Native Americans.

There is a place in the Indian community for public ceremony and there is a place for more subtle giving but this characteristic differs from tribe to tribe. I have seen people

give without any recognition, by leaving a gift in my home after a visit. More often I have seen straightforward and unencumbered giving when a person simply extends their hand with a gift and expects nothing except perhaps a handshake back. I have also observed occasions when acts of kindness are done for someone in need, especially for elders and all the while no one would know who did it. I have observed boxes of food being left on a person's porch, cut wood for the winter and yards cleaned all without anyone knowing who expressed the generosity. What all these forms of secret or quiet giving have in common is simple generosity from the heart, without fanfare or expectation.

### **Preliminary Summary**

Although called by various names among the tribes, Native Americans share a common understanding of a way to live and be in harmony and balance, namely, "The Harmony Way." Within "The Harmony Way" there are at least ten shared Native American values that I was able to identify through integrating literature, a survey, my own hunches and experiences and an interview with Native American elders/spiritual leaders. Although every tribe is distinct with individual histories, stories, ceremonies, traditions and cultures, there is a common dynamic that I refer to as "The Harmony Way" that is shared among all North American Natives. The values found within "The Harmony Way" may be expressed slightly differently depending on the tribe but there is more in common concerning "The Harmony Way" than there is difference among Native Americans.

The values posited in this project that make up "The Harmony Way" are not the final word on the subject. Although I tried to group data together coming from all sectors

and sources, I may not have grouped everything in the best way possible. In addition, it is possible that I have missed some values and/or components of those values altogether. Finally, because of the abstract construct of values, especially as it applies to a comprehensive life-way, such as I have attempted to put forth, the saying could not be more appropriate that, in the case of Harmony Way, the whole is greater than the sum of the parts. In other words, “The Harmony Way” understanding extends beyond the limitations of the values.

### **Implications of the Research**

In the process of compiling a my own set of Native American values I had to think long and hard about who should develop Native American mission models based on such a list of values. I did not want my project to be used as another tool for mission that ignores Native American values. My concern was that the values and worldviews are so very different for Western thinkers that the gap may be too wide for many non-Natives to cross. However, the emphasis on local theology done rightly, (namely with the indigene in charge of the process and the outsider as an invited guest) provided room for both insiders and outsiders in the process.

In light of the research, I concluded that Native North American mission models, charity models, and government programs should be developed primarily by the indigenous community. In order to establish models based primarily on Native North American values, I am making an argument that whites from the dominant society, (and those indigene or others promoting the dominant values) often cannot, and perhaps in most cases, should not attempt further works among our Native communities except

under a two stage process in which the insider's view is primary and the outsider's view secondary. I based my views on several criteria.

The organizational structures of our indigenous people have been deeply affected by Western values. These values had a strong influence in the structures of our indigenous societies at every level including family, education and work ethic. Freire makes a case that the structure itself is the carrier of the values used for implementing oppression (1997). Regardless of the particular values espoused, the very structure presents a major obstacle. In other words, the poison is not just in what the cup holds—but it is the cup itself. As soon as the “cup” of that which has passed as a normative view of mission, (steeped in Western values) touches our lips, we are doomed.

Euro-Americans have difficulty disassociating themselves from the deep-seated colonial meta-narrative of superiority, yet from this supposed superiority flow the values detested by traditional minded Native Americans. Mander lists the essence of this cultural construct as “profit, growth, competition, aggression, amorality, (masked in altruism), hierarchy, quantification, dehumanization, exploitation, anti-nature and homogenization” (1991, 128). I believe Mander's assessment does reveal many of the values in Euro-American dominant culture and we need to be concerned about non-indigene as an agent of change in indigenous mission models or strategies.

Alfred explains the contrast between Native North American values and what he calls the “framework of the imperial/colonial mentality, which has come to form the parameters of the Euro-American worldview ... in contemporary Settler societies” (2005, 110):

- *Sharing and equality are wrong.* This is made clear in the Settlers' rejection of all forms of socialism.

- *Selfishness and competitiveness are good.* This is evident in the Settlers' sacred attachment to money, material goods, and competition.
- *Science and technology are "progressive:* and therefore good, whereas human beings (being cursed with Original Sin or just being unwieldy) are bad and nature is fearsome. This is plain to see in the unremitting drive of white people to conquer the natural world and exploit it to impose predictability and order needed for capitalism to function smoothly.
- *Order is of higher value than truth and justice.*
- *Euro-American culture is the perfect form of human existence,* and every other way of life is a threat to civilization and freedom. This is made clear in the disrespect, denial, and outright hostility to other peoples' ways of seeing and being in the world. (110)

As a result of our observations of the values of the dominant American society during our shared history, Native people may never come to trust the word of Euro-Americans whether employed by governments, NGOs, or church agencies, nor will they ever give these agencies their full cooperation.

## Dependency

The dependency issue is so great in Native America. Even if the trust of White people were present from Native Americans, it may be impossible for Indian people to work with non-Native programs and not further an already present, crippling dependency. Unfortunately, the tendency of a dependent people is to continue dependency. Through the deliberate efforts of government and, the deliberate and accidental efforts of the church, Native Americans are sorely dependent upon the agencies of the dominant society.

Sometimes an abrupt and temporarily painful ending to dependency is what it takes for people to become healthy. In several places in his speech, Tenskwatawa aptly points out the dependency factor by stating "those things of the white men have corrupted us, and made us weak and needful," and "our women don't want to make fire without

steel, or cook without iron, or sew without metal awls and needles, or fish without steel hooks.” Native North Americans must move from dependency upon outside organizations to self-sustainability in order for us to regain our dignity. Certainly good mission should at least create and sustain dignity in any people.

### **Cultural Differences**

Non-native values tend to be misunderstood by North American Natives. These misunderstandings cause confusion when we allow the dominant culture’s expectations to rule our lives. Some of these breeches would not even be considered unusual or unethical among Natives but they might even be considered to be illegal to the dominant society. For example, certain forms of nepotism are considered taboo in the dominant society but among Natives, nepotism may be an action one takes in order to take care of one’s relatives. Family values concerning helping your relatives are very deep among First Nations.

### **Modernity and Dwindling Cultural Reinforcement**

Native communities continue to disintegrate. This has been the case for the past century and those who had a more direct connection to pre-modern values are almost all gone. Elders, and other spiritual leaders who are the living repository of the core Native values, continue to die out at a rapid rate. Our elders are always tentative to share the knowledge and experience they possess because they wonder if these cultural values have any place in the modern world. At the same time, our Native young people are assaulted daily with modernity’s many distractions that help to erode Native values. In a very real way, if these values are to continue (they must continue in order for Native Americans to

exist as who we are created to be), we must find ways to restore, preserve, and pass on these core values to future generations.

Given these implications I would suggest that the process of trying to create new mission models might look something like this:

1. **Insider:** During the initial first stages of development most of the involvement and influence should come from those of the culture in which the model is being formed. The inception and creation of the model should primarily come from the indigenous insider.
2. **Outsider:** Involvement from the members of the dominant society may be by invitation in later developmental stages of the process to serve as a means of diverse understandings and critique but in the spirit of a “Junior Partner.” In this way there will be a system of broad accountability but the ownership will be truly indigenous.



## CHAPTER 6

### SUMMARY: CORE NATIVE NORTH AMERICAN VALUES AND MISSION

In this chapter I will show the importance of my research and make suggestions of how it may be applied in developing future mission models among Native Americans. The concept of “The Harmony Way” which gives shape to the Native American value set provides both a critique on traditional mission models and a path for the way forward in Christian mission among Native Americans.

#### Conclusions

Having been active in Native American missions for over two decades, I was concerned about the historic reality of the failure of mission among Native Americans and, the current lack of well-being that exists among Native Americans in the United States. I researched and provided background information that would illustrate the failure of Native American mission and focus the need for a better context for future mission models. I provided a meaningful narrative for this purpose early in this work. I also wondered if this Harmony Way and its intrinsic values could contribute to a biblical and theological foundation for mission while still being consistent with core indigenous values. Furthermore, I speculated that a broad-based contextual model of mission that would be appropriate among many Native North American communities might be developed using the best theoretical framework from Native American theological and missiological models.

As I began this project I made a claim that few current mission models, known to me, are significantly using Native North American values in mission among Native Americans. Through illustrating the current need among Native Americans and by

historic recounting of Western mission failures, I demonstrated that colonial mission practices have contributed to the devastation of Native American communities. I have suggested that there is a better way of pursuing Christian mission among Native Americans. Specifically, I have asked if there is a generally shared concept or set of Native American values that could guide the construction of a model for mission in Native American communities.

I suggested that to enter the conversation I first ask some questions that set the framework for the research. Namely, what resources (particularly concepts or values) are available within the Native American communities themselves for developing appropriate models of mission? To what degree are similar concepts or values shared among Native American communities? Could such resources be developed into an authentic, integral mission model? How can a context for the development of new mission models, based on Native American values or a shared concept be established?

I began this project with a hunch that there may be a shared life-concept among Native Americans that is related to well-being or living a life of harmony and balance. I set upon the discovery of the literature by reading both Native American and non-Native literature in various areas of study, but primarily concentrating on religion, education, psychology and anthropology.

I found within the literature that others had attempted to group Native American values in an assortment of ways and by a variety of means. The Harmony concept I sought to find was reference often in Native American values lists, but less often and more ambiguously as a separate concept. After examining many of these attempts at grouping Native values I chose those that seemed to have the clearest ideas and which

constituted the broadest base possible, in an attempt not leave any values out of the study.

I settled on an integration of four groupings into one master list of fifteen values, including studies that I dubbed the *Jacobs* (J), *Kelley* (K), *Evergreen State* (E), and *The Sacred* (S) studies (see Appendix A). Later, after administering the survey and discovering the importance of an older study I had overlooked, I added the *Values Project* as a fifth group of Native American values grouped together by the anthropologists, Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck. I integrated all five sets of values together and made one list from the literature of what appeared to be eighteen values (see Appendix B).

Following the integration of the initial literature into what appeared to be fifteen Native American Values, I felt I needed more clarification about the well-being or harmony concept. In an effort to discover whether or not these values would be relevant to the harmony concept I created a survey that would:

- a. Query respondents about their familiarity with a harmony concept,
- b. Invite respondents to name some of the values that are found within the harmony concept with which they are familiar, without any prompting,
- c. Test respondents' familiarity with the values I had found in the literature with a harmony concept.

A preliminary look at the survey data convinced me that my hunch about a widespread Harmony Way concept among Native Americans had merit (see Appendix D). Prior to examining the Survey data more closely, I interviewed eight elder/spiritual leader types who I knew were familiar with their own tribal traditions, asking them to speak freely about any concept among their own tribe that helped them to keep life in

harmony and balance. Again, my hunch about the prevalent understanding of a Harmony Way was confirmed during each of the eight interviews. Not once did I need to clarify my initial question to the interviewees. I then grouped the responses of the interviews into categories of values that emerged from those interviewed (see Appendix C). These were broad categories that by and large, substantiated the values found in the literature.

Of secondary importance, a surprising personal phenomenon occurred during the research process. Although I was not raised in a traditional Indian community, I have had the fortunate experience of living and working closely among traditional Indian people from a wide variety of tribes. I have attended many ceremonies and I have been trained in some ceremonial ways. As I worked through the data, many of my own memories and experiences came to mind and they began to make much deeper sense to me in light of the discoveries within this project. Because of this, I was able to bring some of my own understanding and experiences to bear upon the research in the form of illustration.

Once I extracted the data from the survey, and grouped it into meaningful categories and percentages, I was able to get a clearer idea of the widespread understanding of “The Harmony Way” and the values that inform it. From the three sources, giving preference to the interviews and the literature, and less weight to the survey, I integrated the values into a single set of core Native American values that, I propose, constitute the Native American Harmony Way (see Appendix E). I then set about describing these values using the data collected, extant literature and my own recollections and experiences.

## Application

New mission models among Native Americans are desperately needed. Although Native Americans have been the target of missions for over 500 years, missions have done little to advance us as a people with dignity and as contributors to the world in which we live. Paternalistic mission models still represent the majority of outreach among Indians.<sup>42</sup> We are seen primarily as a people to be pitied, not as people with wisdom and value to add to the lives of others. True, the maladies in our Indian communities are numerous and staggering. Nevertheless, we must see ourselves and be seen by others, both as a people in need, and a people able to meet the needs of others. Several theoretical lenses were helpful in focusing my research into plausible mission structure.

One theoretical frame-work that I chose to guide me was the traditional understanding of indigenization by Native American (Mohawk) activist Taiaiake Alfred. Alfred insists that the answer to our own problems can only be found in our own Native Americans communities. Given the results of colonialism and the dire statistics concerning Native American health, housing, education and employment, I wanted to use a theory of indigenization that offered hope beyond temporal materialism. I saw the need for a harsh critique of our Native American well-being from an insider's view. Alfred cites colonialism as a process that worsens our situation, but he does not simply "blame the White man." He believes, along with Tenskwatawa, our problems are spiritual and the reason our values are fading from our cultures is because we have forgotten who we are.

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<sup>42</sup> This criticism may seem harsh in light of many denominational efforts to reframe the mission question in light of Native American dignity, sovereignty and inclusion. In the end, if it is not the Native American communities making the policy and using core Native values, then it remains a paternalistic system. Perhaps later, non-native efforts can be integrated back in to the paradigm,

Alfred feels that in order to pull out the resources needed to turn this tide it requires us to stop cooperating with colonialism and to begin resisting the lies of colonialism, replacing the lies with truth. Calling upon our memories of past experiences, Alfred urges Native Americans to stop believing and especially trusting the White man, and to reconnect with our lands and traditions. When Native Americans follow such a path, Alfred believes we will once again find our way of living harmoniously again.<sup>43</sup>

I found that some concept of well-being existed in the value set of all the Native American peoples that I used as case studies. In most cases, the well-being or Harmony Way concept was central to the rest of the values, in that it brought them together into a coherent whole. Alfred sees the goal of the reconstruction of Native American values as something akin to “The Harmony Way.” Some theories of change imply that Native American cultures have lost their coherence or have fallen apart completely, and it is true that they have been under great stress from one quarter or another for over 200 years now, but I was surprised (and pleased) to find that the value system has been preserved. Further, it is still being passed from one generation to the next, although nearly all my interviewees questioned how long this will continue. I was happy to find at least that there exists among Native Americans, a real sense of what those values are, as I identified them. Alfred’s theories give great clarification as to the agency needed to once again live out these values in harmonious ways but he tended to view Native Americans

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<sup>43</sup> If, according to Alfred, trusting the White man is a deterrent to Native American Harmony, this means it is also true in the development of Native American mission. I have advocated earlier in this paper that the colonial mission structures may play a limited role of a Jr. partner until they are invited back into the trust of full partnership in Native mission. The question still remains, what should non-native missiologists do next? In this regard, I take a phenomenological approach. I have no mission model to offer; our Native people have to go to our people and act in mission according to their own contexts. Then the answers will come. The responsible place in mission for mission sending agencies and missiologists is to offer support of the phenomenological projects in which Native Americans embark.

values as something to be recovered completely, whereas my research showed they are at least partially intact, in one form or another.

A theological construct I sensed early on that would make sense in this project was the concept of *shalom*, particularly as explained by Walter Brueggemann. *Shalom* was the theological concept that most resembled the Native American Harmony Way. Those who have a broad scope vision of biblical *shalom* will have the most in common with Native Americans' view of God. In most ways, *shalom* and the Native American Harmony Way are interchangeable. I found that only a broad-based, yet concrete theological concept would be able to compare with "The Harmony Way." For instance, love is broad based but it can be interpreted ambiguously.

Brueggeman's biblical/theological understanding of *shalom* is replete with meanings parallel to "The Harmony Way." In fact, I could not find any meanings of *shalom* that do not parallel "The Harmony Way."<sup>44</sup> Even in their nature as concepts they have much in common. *Shalom*, like Harmony Way is a concept that is made up of numerous notions and values yet, in the same way of "The Harmony Way," the whole is much greater than the sum of its parts. *Shalom* is more than love, justice, peace, restitution, happiness, in the same way that Harmony Way is more than the values and notions that construct it. Both are a way of living life in concrete ways that include more than all the terms found within the concept. They both set forth a vision and practical steps included within the vision for living.

Both *Shalom* and "The Harmony Way" express the Creator's preference for human living and they include the aspect of connectedness to all of creation, all of God's

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<sup>44</sup> With limited knowledge of Hebrew, I cannot claim the two concepts are exactly the same.

activity and not just for humanity. This has impacts in the way Native Americans view creation as being related. *Shalom* is not a theology that just addresses human shortcomings but it takes in the way we relate to the whole created order. As a result, it cannot be privatized in to the individual kinds of categories normally found in Western theology. *Shalom*, as with “The Harmony Way,” are for the whole community. Native Americans are communal people.

I found, in addition, that broken *shalom* is treated in a way remarkably similar to the way broken harmony is treated. Both require concrete acts of redress, which may include ceremony, along with restitution, reconciliation and restoration and whose ultimate goal is peace. Neither concept is satisfied with a personal peace alone but rather the kind of peace that must also addresses the structural changes needed to lift up the oppresses, bring dignity to the marginalized and create lasting peace for all parties involved.

If we are to take Jesus’ words in Luke 4:18 seriously, linking the Jubilee/Messiah passages referenced in Isaiah 61 and implied in Leviticus 25, then we must frame Jesus Christ as the once and for all *shalom* of God. This was the inspiration for the parallel concept among Native Americans of Jesus as “The Harmony Way” from the Great Spirit and the Great Spirit’s living message of “The Harmony Way.” The parallels I found were remarkable!

The missiological insights I used to guide me were chosen from several of those in the Anthropologically oriented missiology school of thought including Stephen Bevans, Robert Schreiter and Paul Hiebert, especially as it concerned their contextualization theory. The missiological construct from the Anthropological school



will likely be the most effective among Native Americans because it recognizes the truth that already exists in the receiver culture, and there is an extraordinary amount of truth in Native American cultures. One must be ready to be converted to truth, not just ready to convert others, in order to be effective among Native Americans.

One of the justifications for contextualization is the incarnation of Jesus Christ, but another is the statement that Jesus made: "I have come not to destroy the law, but to fulfill it." Given the place of the Torah in Jewish life, Jesus as much as said: "I have not come to destroy culture, but to fulfill it." In contextualization theory, missionaries and church workers alike assume that Christ will discover, transform and reveal the finest values and aspirations of each culture. Assuming such to be true, I am making the claim that the church's efforts toward constructing a community of the faith in Native America would do well to lift up "well-being" as a central and centralizing value for Native American communities. Given the paternalistic history of mission among Native Americans, the Anthropological model for mission is able to take seriously the cultural reality of Native Americans, including those values that constitute "The Harmony Way."

Some of the assumptions within the Anthropological mission model even parallel Native American values. For example, the creation-based approach used in the Anthropological model parallels the Native American value that all of creation is basically good but a redemption-based approach has tended to be used to replace Native American culture.<sup>45</sup> The following chart illustrates some common concerns between the Anthropological model and Native American assumptions.

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<sup>45</sup> A redemptive-based approach "is characterized by the conviction that culture and human experience are either in need of a radical transformation or in need of total replacement" (Bevans 1992, 21). According to Bevans, in the redemption-based model, grace replaces creation because creation is corrupt. This is foreign to Native American thinking and also (I believe) the Bible. According to how I read the

**Table 6.1. Anthropological Model/Native Value Comparison**

<b>Anthropological Model Assumptions</b>	<b>Native American Value Assumptions</b>
Creation is good, not corrupt	All creation is basically good
Being Christian is to be fully human	Being Native is to be fully human
Low/no cultural judgment factor	Highly tolerant
Emphasis on local theology	Revelation is local, not generalized
Christ/truth is found in culture	Christ/truth in Native culture
Takes local culture seriously-respect	Respect oriented culture
Community as theologian	Community as theologian
Spirit's role in community	Spirit's role in community
Importance of ceremony, story, etc	Importance of ceremony, story, etc

Finally, from the view of biblical theology, one of the claims that Christ made about his mission was that he had come “that they may have life, and have it abundantly.” A close textual analysis of the work of Jesus would show that his idea of salvation was centered on making people whole in community, thus giving them “abundant life,” a concept not far from the Native American notion of “The Harmony Way.”

In summary, there are several major conclusions that can be drawn from this study, these include:

1. Mission among Native Americans has failed largely due to a misunderstanding of Native American values and seeing the importance of both decolonization and indigenization.

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Scriptures, God created a good world—and nowhere does God ever rescind this view. Human sins, along with hurricanes and other “natural disasters,” are aberrations in a good world—not the norm. In fact, it is because of the bad that we can see how good God is and how good creation is.

2. More appropriate mission models should utilize Christian values by using theological constructs such as *shalom*, and missiological models such as contextualization in the genre of the Anthropological models of mission.
3. Even though the tribes may differ greatly, common expressions of at least ten similar values constitute a common value set for Native Americans.
4. Central to this value set, ordering and shaping all of the values, there is widely-shared Harmony Way concept among Native Americans from, perhaps, every region of the United States and Canada.
5. New mission models for work among Native Americans must arise from and be applied by those who are willing to face the pain of decolonization and indigenization themselves. This will likely disqualify Euro-Americans or at least minimize their involvement significantly from what it has been in the past.
6. Those Native Americans who have a semblance of a Native American Harmony Way values and a corresponding worldview are likely to be most effective in mission among Native Americans.

### **Significance of the Research**

I undertook this project for a number of reasons, chief among them being that I hoped my research can be of value, both to the Native American community and to the Missiological community.

### **Significance for the Native American Community**

Native Americans are both gifted and needy. We know we need something. We know it is spiritual. We do not have any reason in our historic experience that would

point to Christianity as a place to find the answers to our dilemma. Given this dynamic I feel my research may be of use to our people in several ways.

a. Internalized oppression from colonialism has created low self-esteem among Native Americans. There is a lot of self-degradation among us and we are always bemoaning the fact of how bad we are. This project shows that we are not as dysfunctional as we may think. On most occasions, the values I discovered were spoken of in the present tense, not simply in the past tense. It is good news to discover that we are not quite as bad, so to speak, as we thought. In other words, our values are more intact than most Native Americans might have initially guessed. This is a message of hope.

b. Although we may have understood some aspects of a common spirituality among most Native Americans, this research creates significant discovery of the common Harmony Way and it gives us a specific way to talk about our common spirituality through the common values. The study can offer a concrete means for intertribal unity.

c. The study is able to identify problems according to what is lacking in our Native American communities. The values I discovered create a positive target to make up what is lacking by pinpointing places of broken harmony and beginning a restoration process according to “The Harmony Way” values. For example, an abusive husband may have grown up in a dysfunctional situation and he may have not realized that women are considered to be sacred. He may then set out on a road of recovery in order to restore this area of broken harmony in his marriage.

d. Similarly, by lifting up the various aspects of the ten Native American values, this project creates a type of framework that can be used to judge ourselves and those in our community who aspire to be political leaders or spiritual leaders for example.

e. This study reminds us that our tribal ceremonies and traditions are essential to our overall spirituality, especially as it pertains to “The Harmony Way.”

f. The values discovered in this project are by and large adaptable to other cultures. These, along with our accompanying worldview, show us that we have something positive to offer the world and this process restores human dignity.

g. Because our communities have become a fusion of traditionalism and modernism, it is important to have a record of “The Harmony Way” and the values pertaining to it written down. This gives a means for urban Indians and other “disconnected” Natives to pass these things down to their children and reminds us all that we must stay connected to the creation.

h. It offers new ways of thinking about Christ and Christianity, suggesting that Jesus may actually be good news for Indian people.

i. For Native Christians it offers an opportunity to view Jesus through the lens of Native American values and in “The Harmony Way.”

### **Significance for the Missiological Community**

It is my sincere hope that this research will inform the missiological community. As I mentioned in the background, a proper understanding of Native American history, culture and values is critical for the understanding of mission among Native Americans. Matching concepts like Harmony and *Shalom* are essential if Native Americans are going to experience Christ in a real way. By the same token, I hope that Native American values will inform Western Christianity by providing a missing congruence and depth.

a. This study reveals just how seriously mission models must take Native American culture and theology. I have shown the significance of “The Harmony Way” in

Native American culture and chosen a corresponding theological construct in *shalom* and a mission model in the Anthropological school of contextualization.

b. The antecedent to the above is that models that are not based upon these concepts, especially those still steeped in paternalism, are not going to be effective Among Native Americans.

c. Following the suggestions I have laid out concerning who and how mission must be done, can give new definition to the concept of indigenous mission. The study offers a new way for Native Americans to relate to Christianity.

d. This study sheds some typical stereo-types of Native Americans, i.e. stoic versus a value of humor.

e. Through an examination of the values I discovered, missiologists and others can understand better, how Native Americans can be helpful to other peoples.

f. By discovering that Native American values are still present and somewhat intact, I have shown that Alfred's theory of indigenization may be tempered from his position of a complete re-institution of Native American values, to my discovery that they just need to be reinvigorated. I have aligned myself with his theory in every point except this one, which merely needs a more positive view.

g. The significance of the theological and missiological constructs that I have discovered is confirmed. Brueggemann's ideas of *shalom* fit incredibly with "The Harmony Way." Contextualization, as put forward by Bevans, Schreiter and Hiebert has shown itself to be very compatible with the possibilities of Native American reception to mission.

h. Certain philosophical assumptions are made in the West concerning history and civilization. Since “The Harmony Way” values are considered ancient, it behooves the West continually to rethink the paradigm of linear time moving from uncivilized to more civilized.

### **Suggestions for Further Development**

I have begun a research process into the values associated with the Native American Harmony Way. I feel I have only cracked the surface of what is partially my own Native culture. It will be exciting to find that others can utilize any aspect of this project and build upon it to the benefit of our Native American people. Further research might include the following:

1. A more comprehensive survey could be administered perhaps even nationwide, asking questions similar to mine, in order to get actual mass data from Native Americans concerning “The Harmony Way” and the values found therein. The survey should include the respondent’s own self identification on a compendium of culturally traditional to culturally assimilated (a component I neglected to include).
2. Interviews from a greater number of elders and spiritual leaders, including those who are not Christian, might yield helpful additional information.
3. Further examination of the theological concept of *shalom*, as it is known in Jewish culture and the Hebrew language, (preferably with the help of Hebrew scholars), compared to the Native American Harmony Way, would help to distinguish the similarities and differences between these concepts at a deeper level.

4. It would be interesting to discover whether the spirituality and values of “The Harmony Way” is simply a Native American construction or is more widely distributed among other indigenous peoples around the world.

5. Appropriate models of mission should be explored using the data from this project in order to, perhaps for the first time, share the good news of Jesus Christ among Native Americans.



**APPENDIX A**  
**INTEGRATION OF NATIVE AMERICAN VALUES**  
**FROM ORIGINAL LITERATURE**

**Jacobs (J)**

1. Cooperation not competition
2. Reciprocity guides living systems toward balance
3. Human decisions made from heart and mind
4. Humans in/with Nature-honoring relationship
5. Children sacred-possess inherent value
6. Great Mystery Spirit is within all its creations
7. Material possessions less important than generosity
8. Diversity gives strength and balance to world
9. Resolution of conflict about restoring harmony
10. Cognitive dissonance is a human frailty-best met w/humor and understanding
11. Women-naturally wise and powerful-vital for social harmony
12. Prayer & ceremony connect to invisible world-maintaining health/harmony
13. Fear a catalyst for practicing great virtue
14. True authority from personal reflection on experience in light of a spiritual awareness that all things are related
15. Words are powerful entities and should never be misused or used deceptively

**Kelley (K)**

1. Happiness and harmony between and within individuals, the society, and nature.
2. Generosity in sharing of self, resources, and possessions.
3. Transmission of knowledge through an oral tradition.
4. An orientation to the past which honors tradition, and to the present in taking life as it comes.
5. A fluidity of lifestyle which is without external constraints other than those voluntarily chosen.
6. Work which is in harmony with the individual and meets present needs.
7. Discrete and respectful communication with little eye contact and an emphasis on listening.
8. Universal spirituality which is integral to all life and every lifestyle.

## Evergreen State (E)

1. Personal Differences
2. Quietness.
3. Patience—all things unfold in time.
4. Open work ethic—always for purpose—done when needed; nonmaterialistic
5. Mutualism promotes sense of belonging/ solidarity with group
6. Nonverbal—prefer listening. Talk must have a purpose. Words have a primordial power
7. Seeing and listening. Storytelling, oratory, and experiential
8. Time orientation. flexible—not structured
9. Orientation to present. Being rather than becoming.
10. Practicality.
11. Holistic orientation.
12. Spirituality. integrated aspects
13. Caution.

## The Sacred (S)

1. Belief in or unseen powers/The Great Mystery.
2. Knowledge that all things in the universe are dependent on each other.
3. Personal worship reinforces individual, community, & great powers. Personal commitment to sources of life.
4. Sacred traditions and persons knowledgeable in them are responsible for teaching morals and ethics.
5. Trained practitioners responsible for specialized knowledge. Pass knowledge and sacred practices from generation to generation, storing what they know in their memories.
6. Humor is a necessary part of the sacred. Human beings are often weak—our weakness leads us to do foolish things; clowns are needed to show us how we act and why.

## Core Values

1. Belief in Great Mystery (S1, E12, K8, J6)
2. Seek Harmony & Balance (S2, E2, E5, K1, K6, J6, J8, J9)
3. Personal Worship Identity (S3, E12, K8, J12, J14)
4. Sacred Traditions & Practitioners (S4, S5)
5. Humor Sacred & Necessary (S6, J10)
6. Women Powerful & Vital (J11) Children Sacred (J5) Elder's Respected
7. Cooperation, Respect (J1)
8. Use Heart & Mind (J3)
9. Natural World is Spiritual (J4, K8, K1, E11, E12, S3)
10. Authority from Reflected Experience (J14)
11. Primordial Power in Words/Oral Tradition (J15, K3, K7, E6, E7, E12, E13)
12. Present & Past Time Orientation (K4, K5, E3, E8, E9, E10)
13. Open Work Ethic (E4)
14. Family Orientated, Relatedness
15. Practice Hospitality/ Generosity of self, resources and possessions (J7, K2)

**APPENDIX B**  
**INTEGRATION OF NATIVE AMERICAN VALUES**  
**WITH THE *VALUES PROJECT***

**Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck (KS)**

1. Humans are good with some evil
2. Humans should seek to live in harmony with Nature
3. Present and past oriented
4. Identity is found in both doing and being
5. Strongly community oriented

**Jacobs (J)**

1. Cooperation not competition
2. Reciprocity guides living systems toward balance
3. Human decisions made from heart and mind
4. Humans in/with Nature-honoring relationship
5. Children sacred-possess inherent value
6. Great Mystery Spirit is within all its creations
7. Material possessions less important than generosity
8. Diversity gives strength and balance to world
9. Resolution of conflict about restoring harmony
10. Cognitive dissonance is a human frailty-best met w/humor and understanding
11. Women-naturally wise and powerful-vital for social harmony
12. Prayer & ceremony connect to invisible world-maintaining health/harmony
13. Fear a catalyst for practicing great virtue
14. True authority from personal reflection on experience in light of a spiritual awareness that all things are related
15. Words are powerful entities and should never to be misused or used deceptively

**Kelley (K)**

1. Happiness and harmony between and within individuals, the society, and nature.
2. Generosity in sharing of self, resources, and possessions.
3. Transmission of knowledge through an oral tradition.
4. An orientation to the past which honors tradition, and to the present in taking life as it comes.
5. A fluidity of lifestyle which is without external constraints other than those voluntarily chosen.

6. Work which is in harmony with the individual and meets present needs.
7. Discrete and respectful communication with little eye contact and an emphasis on listening.
8. Universal spirituality which is integral to all life and every lifestyle.

### **Evergreen State (E)**

1. Personal Differences
2. Quietness.
3. Patience-all things unfold in time.
4. Open work ethic-always for purpose-done when needed ; non-materialistic
5. Mutualism promotes sense of belonging/ solidarity with group
6. Nonverbal-prefer listening. Talk must have a purpose. Words have a primordial power
7. Seeing and listening. Storytelling, oratory, and experiential
8. Time orientation. flexible-not structured
9. Orientation to present. Being rather than becoming.
10. Practicality.
11. Holistic orientation.
12. Spirituality. integrated aspects
13. Caution.

### **The Sacred (S)**

1. Belief in or unseen powers/The Great Mystery.
2. Knowledge that all things in the universe are dependent on each other.
3. Personal worship reinforces individual, community, & great powers. Personal commitment to sources of life.
4. Sacred traditions and persons knowledgeable in them are responsible for teaching morals and ethics.
5. Trained practitioners responsible for specialized knowledge. Pass knowledge and sacred practices from generation to generation, storing what they know in their memories.
6. Humor is a necessary part of the sacred. Human beings are often weak—our weakness leads us to do foolish things; clowns are needed to show us how we act and why.

### **Native American Core Values from Literature**

1. Belief in Great Mystery (S1, E12, K8, J6)
2. Seek Harmony & Balance (KS1, S2, E2, E5, K1, K6, J4, J6, J8, J9)
3. Personal Worship Identity (S3, E12, K8, J12, J14)
4. Sacred Traditions & Practitioners (S4, S5)
5. Humor Sacred & Necessary (S6, J10)
6. Women Powerful & Vital (J11)
7. Children Sacred (J5)
8. Cooperation (J1)
9. Use Heart & Mind (J3)
10. Natural World is Spiritual (KS2, J4, J5, K8, K1, E11, E12, S3)
11. Authority From Reflected Experience (J14)
12. Primordial Power in Words/Oral Tradition (J15, K3, K7, E6, E7, E12, E13)

13. Present & Past Time Orientation (KS3, K4, K5, E3, E8, E9, E10)
14. Open Work Ethic (E4)
15. Family Orientation Relatedness (KS5, J5, J11, J14, S5)
16. Human beings mostly good with some evil (KS1)
17. Identity is found in both doing and being (KS4)
18. Practice Hospitality/Generosity of self, resources and possessions (KS5, J7, K2)

## APPENDIX C

### INTEGRATION OF NATIVE AMERICAN VALUES FROM INTERVIEWS

#### KEY to Interviewees Identity:

- Vincent Yellow Old Woman (VY)
- Fern Cloud (FC)
- John GrosVenor (JG)
- Casey Church (CC)
- Lora Church (LC)
- Adrian Jacobs (AJ)
- Dale Tsosie (DT)

#### Categories of Values that Emerged from Interviews:

- Children are Important
- Creation is Central to Harmony
- Humor is essential to Balance
- Females are Sacred
- Family is Integral to Harmony
- Community is Egalitarian and Shared
- Elders are Respected Repositories of Knowledge and Wisdom
- Symbols/Ceremonies/Societies/Traditions are important to Spirituality
- Balance/Harmony/Circle/Peace is the Standard for Everyone and Everything
- Respect/Consensus/Dignity Express “The Harmony Way”
- Hospitality/Generosity are Normative Behaviors
- Oral Stories/Teachings are an Important Part of Understanding Life

#### Children

You go to their home, you see how they love their children (VY).

So that’s one aspect where we are really understanding what is happening to me-I might get angry too easily or punish [sic] my kids too hard-then I feel that and I have to apologize to my kids and it brings me back to a life of compassion. This includes my siblings as well and my marriage-we all help each other to stay in harmony or balance. balance right now-in my personal life (CC).

We have 5 children and I hope that we can model to them-how to live a life-how to live an honest life-and you get tired and run down, stressed out and cranky and they see you fail but if they see another side when you at peace as well and trying to maintain balance. Some of the things that we do we run, work on shawls, etc. when I don't feel well-who can I trust? My sisters, relatives, extended families. It's a journey-there really no end. You need to know dis-harmony, and imbalance to know harmony (LC).

### **Creation**

You see how they treat nature with respect (VY).

In harmony with the Creator and in harmony with the creation. That's what it means to be Dakota (FC).

Land comes out of balance or harmony. How do they deal with it. The earth, *Makah Enah*, we all see that this is happening. My uncle told me the earth is poisoned 10 feet down because of the chemicals and whatever else. Really, there is a big problem-the hoop is broken but the only way we know how to do things is through prayer. We pray in our ways and its going to take a miracle, really. We are the land also, we are made by Creator and we all need to heal, look inside our hearts and get right. It's critical (FC).

### **Humor**

Like you gave me this tobacco and, money and a Wal-mart card.... There better be more than \$10. on this thing...eyee! You see because we've been talking about such a deep subject, I had to keep things in balance by making a joke..laughter is a medicine-it heals people and helps us...when I said that little joke it brought us back to some balance. I seen too many people too serious, and you don't want to hear them anymore ...It's part of the balance (CC).

### **Females**

It's no coincidence that WBCW was the messenger and Mary was a woman. Women are sacred and have a lot of respect because they have been given the gift to create. We have to go back in order to learn because those ways make sense (FC).

We have the balance of the east and west which are female directions and north and south are the male directions and how you have balance there and one is not over the other. You need both to stay in balance (LC).

## Family

What makes these good values? The family structure, the community, you don't want to go too far to tip the scale but you keep that balance. You don't want to go too far from where you come from (VY).

We are all a family in a circle the life cycles, the four seasons the four directions, you know that's our philosophy on keeping harmony and balance. It's a real simple way of life (FC).

We have 5 children and I hope that we can model to them-how to live a life-how to live an honest life-and you get tired and run down, stressed out and cranky and they see you fail but if they see another side when you at peace as well and trying to maintain balance. Some of the things that we do we run, work on shawls, etc. when I don't feel well-who can I trust? My sisters, relatives, extended families. It's a journey-there really no end. You need to know dis-harmony, and imbalance to know harmony (LC).

## Community

North American Indian people are spiritual already. What makes these good values? The family structure, the community, you don't want to go too far to tip the scale but you keep that balance. You don't want to go too far from where you come from (VY).

The mark of a successful balanced community is a group who prays together, sings together, eats together, etc. (JG).

The chiefs both know the stories and how the ceremonies are conducted and the values that they represent. There's different elements of community values, etc. all tied into the great peace. Values are based on the fundamental idea of consensus, everyone is valued that way. When the people come together and talk, then it goes farther to the particular groups and each one has a role to play-making sure that consensus can be reached, keep the fire going, protocol, etc. Each nation has its own autonomy but when the larger group has issues facing it then they all come together. The strength was unity. Two row wampum...a white belt with two parallel darker lines-symbolized the common river of life. One represented our people with our laws, our leaders and our people. One represented the British ... like a big equal sign-equality. We refused to call king or father or queen our mother we used terms like brother (AJ).

These are agreements between nations—we agreed that neither of us will interfere with the other or we would tip the boat and become unstable (AJ).



## Elders

You go to their home, you see how they love their children. You see how they treat nature with respect. My grandfather showed me people and say you see how they treat one another, you see the respect. and said these are good people, he'd show me other ones and say the same. Once in a while he would say these people, you be careful of. My grandfather was a leader in the society, and he always had people in his home, he was always called upon to help. We had good values (VY).

I grew up with traditional Cherokee older people, this has mainly been my influence (JG).

Sharing of food, caring for each other—I was taught that by my mom and dad. At their funerals people talked about them and I could see how they were values and the things we were taught were valued. Like when an elder comes over—you get up and get them what they need and when a middle aged person came you treat them a little different. And no one ever left our home without some food and water and a little money to help them on their way (CC).

An elder said to me recently—this is your time to take care of him—there may come a time when he will take care of you but we all need this in our families and communities. It may not always be a spouse but it will be someone who will have compassion and cares for your family and—it doesn't feel good but we need to trust those people. We need those times and those people to restore the balance. Restore that peace through the tears, through the anger and all those kinds of emotions that will come out—that's part of the healing process and I think for balance—or hozoo, that's all of life. I don't think it just comes here and then you are all right. It's fluid and it comes and then you are in state but its living day in and day out and that's the balance (LC).

We have the wampum belts and people who are committed to passing on the story, there are numbers assoc. with it and people [chiefs/elders] give detailed accounts of the story. One wampum is a complete circle beaded in wampum with 50 strings going to the center to represent the system of fifty chiefs which was settled upon. One of those strings goes farther than the rest and it represents the peacemaker. System of consensus allows everyone to come together for one voice. Each of the original names is preserved and passed down to the person who takes that position. This all happened likely about 1151 AD. All of those positions are fulfilled except for the peacemaker (AJ).

So when I asked people, what is Sá'ah Naaghái Bik'eh Hózhóón? They say, no I don't know it's just our life ,the way we live in harmony and beauty (DT).

## Symbols/Ceremonies/Societies/Traditions/Spirituality

We had certain societies, like sundance and only those society members would know fully what was going on in those meetings. Our society members also kept that harmony, even though only they knew what was going on inside their circle, it was okay. Each has

a different role.... Not everybody can be ministers or go to seminary, right? Maybe half the people are in those societies and the rest are not-but they all come to learn. So the people from each area they have their circles to keep, their rituals and ceremonies that they have to do. I think it's the prayers that go on, and what they learn from each other that keep things going well. They bring out our values. Unless you are initiated you won't really know. For the most part it's the prayers. When they come out of there, those ceremonies they would tell us about the prayers made for everyone and how to be strong and so forth (VY).

When you look at the history of our people and how they were treated by the white man. They saw the land and had greed but our people had balance and a way of life. In one front they tried to take away those dances and those songs. As a political leader I tried to work and undue the wrong that was made. And also from the religious people who came. They were ignorant and confused and condemned us. We were spiritual already. Fear in the minds of people will drive them to do the wrong thing. Rather than just embracing and being a part of the circle. I'm home-where I belong. This is the way the Creator has made me (VY).

North American Indian people are spiritual already. What makes these good values? The family structure, the community, you don't want to go too far to tip the scale but you keep that balance. You don't want to go too far from where you come from (VY).

Another element on our reservation, out of 13 different bands and I've talked to them all and told them about our Cherokee harmony way,... and they all say they had something similar except they were very peaceful people. When people got out of hand they had whip men and women who dealt with the disciplinary stuff. For them-this brought things back into balance. When there is balance there is peace. My wife is both Yankton Sioux and Wintu/Walaki from California. These were basically peaceful people. They had different bands and each band had a chief who were peacemakers (JG).

We call ourselves Oyate, we are the people of the seven council fires. This includes the Dakota, Nakota and Lakota. It is about a way of life. Oyate just means the people. Thousands and thousands of years ago White Buffalo Calf Woman, she brought the pipe to our people and gave us the seven rites along with the seven teachings for us to live by. Through the ways of our people we have to go way back, back to that point in time when everything was in harmony (FC).

When our ways were working for us and we had societies and structure for the good of all the people. Those seven rites, there [sic] moral principles, they all had a meaning. Males and females, every aspect of our life-there was a meaning to it (FC).

The Christians have the Bible and so forth and we have our ceremonies and they're the same. There are so many things to help those who are searching or for healing or whatever ways-they are there. We have the keeping of the soul, which sounds way out there but its really all about mourning (FC).

The four colors represent the four directions, black is in the west, red is in the north, yellow is the east and the white is in the south. When we die we believe we follow the Milky Way so we go south along those white stars. Each has a meaning. Some say it represents the four kinds of people. And then you go to different tribes and many times they have these same colors but maybe different directions and different stories (FC).

If it's a ceremony, a celebration whatever we help each other in the community. It's also going to come around, someone will end up helping you when you need it. [Casey gets out his ceremonial pipe and begins to talk about it] For someone to use this-they have to live a life that is an example of "The Harmony Way." A pipe carrier does not call themselves a pipe carrier. The life I leave shows this-like before I left from home-I cleaned it and it's the same with my life-I need to take time to clean myself up. You never take money for using the pipe but you use it to bless people in ceremonies and other functions. I learned these things when I was younger and know I am at a place where I can use it and teach others. As the pipe is-so I try to carry my life too. I just wanted to mention this. Like our lives are given away (CC).

You know with the teachings of balance and harmony comes, you know, those teaching come from our hearts and it also takes commitment, it takes time to prepare for ceremonies and there is teachings behind the ceremonies and all the different things that happens in community. If there is chaos, it takes someone who has the discernment to say "we've got to take care of this chaos before we go on-our it won't be of any help. Everyone in a ceremony has different responsibilities and they contribute in different ways. If t one person say. Has the responsibility to keep the fire, then that person may see something, like someone coming in anger or in a drunken state, then that person has the authority to ask them to leave. Same with a arena director at a Pow Wow. This can't be taught in books, like we just had a precious time of learning with some of the elders in our family-I told my girls-you just received a very precious gift (LC).

There was cannibalism. Story of Hiawatha who lost his daughters and he became very distraught in his actions as a murderer and a cannibal. When you become hurt and damaged you close your heart and even strike out. Dagonawitha found him and was able to bring him peace and consolation. The great law and the great peace restores dignity by giving comfort ceremonially by helping that person through your grieving process (AJ).

Hiawatha traveled with Digonawitha and spoke to the people about these things. The cannibal lives in the swamp with hair like snakes-the image of divination-man in pain-numb I suppose. Living away from the people. Hiawatha make a cross and a string with wampum and he begins a healing ceremony so the people can feel, hear and see again. The wampum is a reminder of what we should be doing to help those remember and it becomes a condolence ceremony (AJ).

These two people were an influence in the five nations originally. Teaches us to listen to each other, pain and grief and death—this condolence is like coming home-to be with people who dignify you and embrace-and they ceased the cannibalism and I can just see

the whole society opening up to this peace which is, with this conversion of the chief, turns the whole community around. Hiawatha and cannibal conversion. Sees what he is doing is wrong and the revelation comes through this peacemaker. He is made the head of this confederacy...even though everyone has a voice. But what is foundational is that people can turn from this other way-of imbalance or out of harmony, what have you and embrace each other in peace (AJ).

We have the wampum belts and people who are committed to passing on the story, there are numbers assoc. with it and people give detailed accounts of the story. One wampum is a complete circle beaded in wampum with 50 strings going to the center to represent the system of fifty chiefs which was settled upon. One of those strings goes farther than the rest and it represents the peacemaker. System of consensus allows everyone to come together for one voice. Each of the original names is preserved and passed down to the person who takes that position. This all happened likely about 1151 AD. All of those positions are fulfilled except for the peacemaker (AJ).

My daughter went to Dine' college which is situated in Tsaile, Arizona. She took a lot of Navajo cultural classes. One of the things that she said is that the classes there are based on a lot of Navajo religion and ceremonies and so they really stress traditional and culture and so they will not mention this name in full term, Sá'ah Naaghái Bik'eh Hózhóón. They keep it very sacred and very holy. They don't speak it. They will call it SNBH... Sá'ah Naaghái Bik'eh Hózhóón. SNBH is all they will say. We live by SNBH. Our ceremonies are based on SNBH. So my daughter asked people there, also. Saying, who is this, what is this? They said, I don't know we just know him, SNBH. Even the president of the college, she asked him and he said, I don't know. So here he is, our traditions and our culture is based upon this name. So the Navajos know who the creator is (DT).

### **Balance/Harmony/Circle/Peace**

When I got older, the circle got out of balance, out of harmony because of alcohol, dysfunction, infant mortality, you name it. He was firm and talked strongly to us when we misbehaved. My grandfather told me-there are things you just don't do, you'll understand them when they come (VY).

North American Indian people are spiritual already. What makes these good values? The family structure, the community, you don't want to go too far to tip the scale but you keep that balance. You don't want to go too far from where you come from (VY).

We had certain societies, like Sundance and only those society members would know fully what was going on in those meetings. Our society members also kept that harmony, even though only they knew what was going on inside their circle, it was okay. Each has a different role.... Not everybody can be ministers or go to seminary, right? Maybe half the people are in those societies and the rest are not-but they all come to learn. So the people from each area they have their circles to keep, their rituals and ceremonies that they have to do. I think it's the prayers that go on, and what they learn from each other

that keep things going well. They bring out our values. Unless you are initiated you won't really know. For the most part it's the prayers. When they come out of there, those ceremonies they would tell us about the prayers made for everyone and how to be strong and so forth (VY).

I went too far in religion for awhile, and then I came back to the circle and I found out there was nothing wrong with that circle. Today I enjoy the dances and pow wows and all the things in the circle and I feel like for me, I'm home (VY).

When you look at the history of our people and how they were treated by the white man. They saw the land and had greed but our people had balance and a way of life. In one front they tried to take away those dances and those songs. As a political leader I tried to work and undue the wrong that was made. And also from the religious people who came. They were ignorant and confused and condemned us. We were spiritual already. Fear in the minds of people will drive them to do the wrong thing. Rather than just embracing and being a part of the circle. I'm home-where I belong. This is the way the Creator has made me (VY).

We have to keep things in balance. If you get out of balance there is no harmony. So the thinking of our people is that when things get out of balance you have to do something to bring things back into harmony. And you know these things about our people probably as good as me (JG).

Now the people I live with have a similar system with peace chiefs who make decisions for these kinds of things. Another element on our reservation, out of 13 different bands and I've talked to them all and told them about our Cherokee harmony way,... and they all say they had something similar except they were very peaceful people. When people got out of hand they had whip men and women who dealt with the disciplinary stuff. For them-this brought things back into balance. When there is balance there is peace. My wife is both Yankton Sioux and Wintu/Walaki from California. These were basically peaceful people. They had different bands and each band had a chief who were peacemakers (JG).

I grew up with traditional Cherokee older people, this has mainly been my influence. Like if there was something done against me by a fellow out there, my family would either fix things or take revenge-not out of spite but to bring things back in balance. So, in whatever way-I think there is this way of maintaining balance for the harmony of everything (JG).

Now everything is out of balance because the Government has come in and dissolved all our traditional structures and ceremonies and everything. So it's difficult now to get things back into harmony as compared to how it was in our traditional days. So I have asked myself—why isn't the church playing a role in restoring this balance and they have actually, through cooperation with colonialism been one of the causes of creating the imbalance. So, we see our role as helping to facilitate this the best way we can (JG).

Indian people by and large didn't have a word for sin, but there was peace-making and restoration but then the church came in and along with these concepts they brought in whole truckload of guilt and condemnation that they never needed to bring (JG).

Like if there was something done against me by a fellow out there, my family would either fix things or take revenge-not out of spite but to bring things back in balance. So, in whatever way-I think there is this way of maintaining balance for the harmony of everything (JG).

Through the ways of our people we have to go way back, back to that point in time when everything was in harmony (FC).

When our ways were working for us and we had societies and structure for the good of all the people. Those seven rites, their moral principles, they all had a meaning. Males and females, every aspect of our life-there was a meaning to it. That word wo-dakota means to be a Dakota, wo-dakota means to be in harmony with everything around us. In harmony with the Creator and in harmony with the creation. That's what it means to be Dakota (FC).

So how do we do that? Our teaching show us that. We had seven, uh, virtues I guess you would call them. For us, the way that we can comprehend it is within the sacred circle. That sacred circle is a way of life. Like, the number four is also a very important thing for us or a life way, I guess you would call it. The four seasons, the four stages of life, the four directions and each has a way or virtue with it, for example compassion. These are not just words but a way we order and live our lives. Like compassion, generosity, we follow the circle around to know how to keep these. Another is fortitude or bravery, patience, wisdom, these keep us on that path, those are our guidelines (FC).

Mitakwiasen, means we are all related, these things are for all people and it includes, really everything. I think right now we are out of balance. Our people are really out of balance because of the attempt of the settler people to assimilate us. But we are coming back. The seventh generation is bringing us back. We need to show more of these things, more generosity, like from the heart. We should always be humble. A true leader is generous and humble. Sometimes I think we have become ignorant of who we are. It's true for all native people-we have a really good heritage to draw from. But we are coming back (FC).

Wo 'dakota. It's not a philosophy it's a path of life we do, looking at what creator gave us, in that whole circle of life and living it (FC).

My life as I understand it-being Anashnabe, is to really try to live in a good way. I am personally out of balance now because I just lost my mother and two and a half years ago I lost my mentor. This way of balance is important-physical and spiritual. It's all on the medicine wheel. If I'm off on one side or the other then I have to watch myself and. Like my emotional self is out of whack now so I have to watch my physical health-and she helps me to watch these things (CC).

I have this picture here of the medicine wheel with its quadrants-emotional, physical, spiritual and you see the balance this way (CC).

I think living in harmony and balance you have to know what it means to not be in balance or out of harmony-to know discord. And if you've experienced that in life, in life situations then you know how you feel about your relationships at home, or work, or you just don't have a peace-then you are not well-what does that mean-well? It is being in harmony or balance. I think for us a people-our life situations are so different from one season to another-that's a test for us to stay in balance and there are teaching on these things (LC).

You know on the medicine wheel you have the medicine wheel for the east the west, the south, the north and then you have medicines for the east, the west, the north, the south, and then you have animals for each of those directions. You have the colors and each tribe has its own colors for each direction. We have the balance of the east and west which are female directions and north and south are the male directions and how you have balance there and one is not over the other. You need both to stay in balance (LC).

We need those times and those people to restore the balance. Restore that peace through the tears, through the anger and all those kinds of emotions that will come out-that's part of the healing process and I think for balance—or Hózhóón, that's all of life. I don't think it just comes here and then you are all right. It's fluid and it comes and then you are in state but its living day in and day out and that's the balance (LC).

The great peace was a result of what we view in our culture, what currently we call the great law understanding its not just some statement but it is the codifies consensus of the six nations people. It's difficult to translate or make sense of in American terminology and culture. What's interesting is we remember our failures in our own oral history. Part of the story is that there was a harmony in the beginning that we lost touch with (AJ).

There was cannibalism. Story of Hiawatha who lost his daughters and he became very distraught in his actions as a murderer and a cannibal. When you become hurt and damaged you close your heart and even strike out. Dedondikwa found him and was able to bring him peace and consolation. The great law and the great peace restores dignity by giving comfort ceremonially by helping that person through your grieving process (AJ).

The Navajo harmony way like the one you mention is usually referred to as Hózhóón. who is God is Navajo in the Navajo language? We had a group of Navajos that used to come to our Bible study that we had in our home and we talked about certain things and then I asked a question to them. I asked, what was God's name, or was there a name given to God in the Navajo? Because we never really had a name for God and that would be really personal to the Navajos and so my father in law and he kind of thought and then he said, I think it used to be called Sá'ah Naaghái Bik'eh Hózhóón. It didn't go any further he just mentioned that and then the topic went to something else different and so we never really talked and pursued it. As I was starting to look for this after reading these accounts of Abraham, and John and things like that. So I started thinking back, who is God? And

that memory came back to me. Could it be that God in our language and God that people already know, could it be that his name is Sá'ah Naaghái Bik'eh Hózhóón? And I thought does the character of this name and of this person, does it fit the character of God? In Navajo ceremonies are done for different things, "The Harmony Way", everything being back into harmony for healing, the blessing, the beauty way ceremony. There is so many of them. There is also the dark side, the evil way, many also where it becomes witchcraft and cursing and sickness and all of these things. But here was the beauty way ceremony is based upon this name Sá'ah Naaghái Bik'eh Hózhóón. When people are asked, you know, what is Navajo life... Sá'ah Naaghái Bik'eh Hózhóón? Could it be that our people know the Creator already? Because in every ceremony, most of the ceremonies when a song is sung (Dale singing ... name is heard in song) this is a name that is referenced all of the time (singing and repeating song). When the song is sung it is back to the Sá'ah Naaghái Bik'eh Hózhóón, everything pointing back to him. The base of life is Sá'ah Naaghái Bik'eh Hózhóón. So I started thinking about the name of this, and is it a person? So when I asked people, what is Sá'ah Naaghái Bik'eh Hózhóón? They say, no I don't know it's just our life, the way we live in harmony and beauty. I said no, it has to be more. So I broke the name down, actually I read somewhere the breakdown of this name. What it means, Sá'ah Naaghái Bik'eh Hózhóón, Sá'ah means old, old age is what that means. Sá'ah meaning around old age. Naaghái means somebody that is living, a person. That is what that means. Bik'eh Hózhóón means his way or Bik'eh Hózhóón is the beauty way. So I said, you know what, this is Jesus. This name belongs to Jesus. This is not just a name or a lifestyle or anything else. This name is a person, because Naaghái describes a living being. So I said, wow.... The Navajo do not realize that they know God already, that they know the creator already (DT).

### **Respect/Consensus/Dignity**

My grandfather showed me people and say you see how they treat one another, you see the respect. and said these are good people, he'd show me other ones and say the same. Once in a while he would say these people, you be careful of (VY).

I really think they key for me is respect. I don't always agree with the things that they do, but from different groups and religions, I must have respect. Not necessarily from within their circle but they should always respect my beliefs (VY).

There was a man who crossed the great water in a stone canoe. He brought people to a place of making decisions and listening which dignified listening to one another's stories and it is an affirmation of that dignity to gain consensus among differing views (AJ).

The community-today there is a lot of factionalism but every has a sense of this longing for the peacemaker to return to come back and help us. That's our understanding of peace and dignity. It begins with creation in harmony-the sin is an intrusion upon a good system. Whole relationships-trinity. Gen. There is whole relationships and an interloper comes in to destroy the harmony of the community (AJ).



### **Hospitality/Generosity**

My grandfather was a leader in the society, and he always had people in his home, he was always called upon to help. We had good values (VY).

How are strangers treated? One of our seven rites is making of a relative. We really believe that in our way of wo' dakota, no one should ever be alone. Someone would take you into their family and adopt you. But today, after so many times of that generosity being burned, we are not as open as we once were. We need to tap into this again and make others family, kinship, living together and supporting each other-but it's changing as far as the outside (FC).

Sharing of food, caring for each other-I was taught that by my mom and dad. At their funerals people talked about them and I could see how they were valued and the things we were taught were valued. Like when an elder comes over-you get up and get them what they need and when a middle aged person came you treat them a little different. And no one ever left our home without some food and water and a little money to help them on their way (CC).

### **Stories/Teachings**

Thousands and thousands of years ago White Buffalo Calf Woman, she brought the pipe to our people and gave us the seven rites along with the seven teachings for us to live by. Through the ways of our people we have to go way back, back to that point in time when everything was in harmony (FC).

So how do we do that? Our teaching show us that. We had seven, uh, virtues I guess you would call them. For us, the way that we can comprehend it is within the sacred circle. That sacred circle is a way of life. Like, the number four is also a very important thing for us or a life way, I guess you would call it. The four seasons, the four stages of life, the four directions and each has a way or virtue with it, for example compassion. These are not just words but a way we order and live our lives. Like compassion, generosity, we follow the circle around to know how to keep these. Another is fortitude or bravery, patience, wisdom, these keep us on that path, those are our guidelines (FC).

The sacred rites that calf woman brought to us are more that ceremonies they are teaching. So we did the ceremony for a young gal for womanhood and we go there and we support her and we go through sweat with her and we all tell her how to be a woman, how to be respectful. That's the key I think. Nobody else has told them these things. This is our duty, you can't read it in a book or something, it's coming back to our people and this is also healing. People are coming back in the circle again. Its very powerful. The boys do something similar.... We are coming back to the way the Creator meant us to be-back in harmony (FC).

You hear these themes in our stories and you know if you go to Lakota country, they all have the same ways, sometimes things change a little but basically it's the same (FC).

You know on the medicine wheel you have the medicine wheel for the east the west, the south, the north and then you have medicines for the east, the west, the north, the south, and then you have animals for each of those directions. You have the colors and each tribe has its own colors for each direction. We have the balance of the east and west which are female directions and north and south are the male directions and how you have balance there and one is not over the other. You need both to stay in balance (LC).

You know with the teachings of balance and harmony comes, you know, those teaching come from our hearts and it also takes commitment, it takes time to prepare for ceremonies and there is teachings behind the ceremonies and all the different things that happens in community. If there is chaos, it takes someone who has the discernment to say "we've got to take care of this chaos before we go on-our it won't be of any help. Everyone in a ceremony has different responsibilities and they contribute in different ways. If t one person say. Has the responsibility to keep the fire, then that person may see something, like someone coming in anger or in a drunken state, then that person has the authority to ask them to leave. Same with a arena director at a Pow Wow. This can't be taught in books, like we just had a precious time of learning with some of the elders in our family-I told my girls-you just received a very precious gift (LC).

There was a man who crossed the great water in a stone canoe. He brought people to a place of making decisions and listening which dignified listening to one another's stories and it is an affirmation of that dignity to gain consensus among differing views (AJ).

In our Iroquois origin story there is this tree of life which symbolized peace and harmony-everything works together well and then someone divides the community. In western Christianity it is either or and it ends up being cooperation with colonialism and destroy communities. Tour story is the codification of human dignity (AJ).

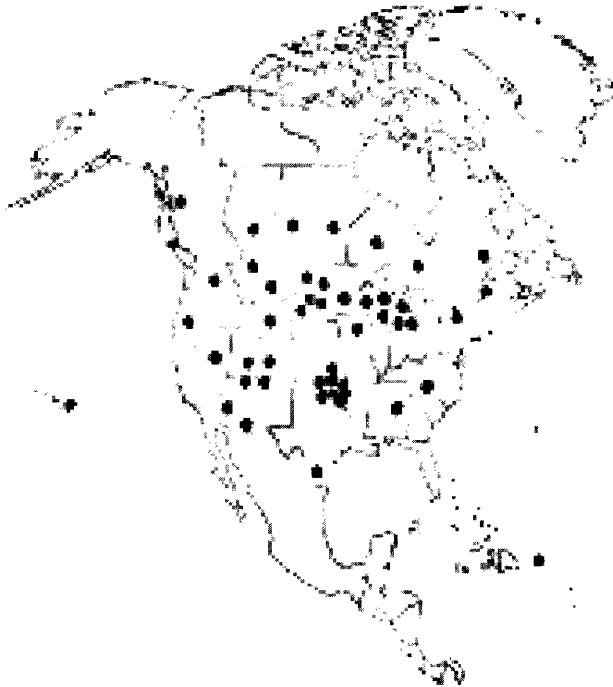
We have the wampum belts and people who are committed to passing on the story, there are numbers assoc. with it and people give detailed accounts of the story. One wampum is a complete circle beaded in wampum with 50 strings going to the center to represent the system of fifty chiefs which was settled upon. One of those strings goes farther than the rest and it represents the peacemaker. System of consensus allows everyone to come together for one voice. Each of the original names is preserved and passed down to the person who takes that position. This all happened likely about 1151 AD. All of those positions are fulfilled except for the peacemaker (AJ).

My daughter went to Dine' college which is situated in Tsailé, Arizona. She took a lot of Navajo cultural classes. One of the things that she said is that the classes there are based on a lot of Navajo religion and ceremonies and so they really stress traditional and culture and so they will not mention this name in full term, Sá'ąh Naaghái Bik'eh Hózhóón. They keep it very sacred and very holy. They don't speak it. They will call it SNBH.... Sá'ąh Naaghái Bik'eh Hózhóón. SNBH is all they will say. We live by SNBH. Our ceremonies

are based on SNBH. So my daughter asked people there, also. Saying, who is this, what is this? They said, I don't know we just know him, SNBH. Even the president of the college, she asked him and he said, I don't know. So here he is, our traditions and our culture is based upon this name. So the Navajos know who the creator is (DT).

## APPENDIX D

### HARMONY WAY: TRIBAL GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION



#### **Tribes Represented**

Ojibway of Ontario, Navajo, Cherokee, Hidatsa, Arawakan-Taino, Keetoowah Cherokee, Blackfeet, Crow, Tsimshian, Cayuga, Iowa, Pueblo, Oneida Nation of Wisconsin, Hunkpapa Lakota, MicMac, Oglala, Mohawk, Paiute, Choctaw, Eastern Shoshone, Fort Mojave Indian Tribe, Lac Courte Oreilles, Ojibwe, Cree, Lenape, Cheyenne, Cheyenne River Sioux, Dakota, Lac Du Flambeau Band of Chippewa Indians, Wyandot, Little River Band Ottawa, Shawnee, Lipan Apache, Eastern Band Cherokee, Gros-Ventre, Mescalero Apache, Echota Cherokee, Yaqui, Potawatomi, Klamath, Kiowa, Abanaki, Prairie Band Potawatomi, Osage, Muscogee, Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation, Pohegan Band of Pottawatomie, Siksika

The dots on the map correspond to the location of tribes who are represented in this research project as interviewees or survey respondents

**APPENDIX E**

**INTEGRATION OF HARMONY WAY**

**WITH NATIVE AMERICAN CORE VALUES**

1. Tangible Spirituality (L1, L3, L4, L11)
  - Belief in the Great Mystery/Creator
  - Creation, (including land and water) is Natural and Spiritual
  - Ceremonies and Traditions Are Practiced
  - Societies Are Vital
  - Heavily Symbolic Culture
  - Authority Often Comes from Reflected Experience
  
2. Life is Governed by Harmony (L2, L16)
  - Seek to Maintain Balance in All of Life
  - All of Life is Interconnected
  - Life in Harmony is Expressed as a Circle or Hoop
  - Seek Peace
  - Humans are Mostly Good with some Evil
  - Fear is a Catalyst for Virtue
  - Imbalance Results in Ill Health
  
3. There is a Natural Connectedness to All Creation (L10)
  - Reciprocity
  - Stewardship (Keeper)
  - Gratitude Expressed in Ceremony
  - Learning with the Creation is a Dynamic Process
  
4. Community is Essential (L6, L7, L11, L15)
  - Community is Often More Important Than the Individual
  - Women are Sacred
  - Children are Loved
  - Elders are Respected
  - Family is Vital
  - Everyone is Integrally Related

5. Humor is Sacred and Necessary (L5)
  - Humor is Part of the Balance
  - Humor Impromptu and Designed in Ceremony
6. Cooperative/Communality (L8, L9)
  - Consensus gives Dignity
  - High Tolerance—Dissension is Respected
  - Process includes Both Hearts and Minds
  - Diversity Gives Strength and Balance to Life
7. Orality as the Primary Method Communication (L12)
  - Traditions are passed Orally
  - Spoken Words Have Primordial Power
  - Stories Are A Main Vehicle for Teaching and Sustaining
  - Quiet, Respectful Communication
8. Present and Past Time Orientation (L13)
  - Present Engagement Overrides Future Scheduling (“Indian Time”)
  - Future is Determined By Looking to the Past
  - Fluidity between Past and Present
  - Present Reality Affects Future Generations
9. Open Work Ethic (L14, L17)
  - Meaningful Work
  - Work As Needed
  - Identity is in both Doing and Being
  - Lifestyle with Few Constraints
  - Non-materialistic
10. Hospitality/Generosity (L18)
  - Give Your Best Away to Others
  - Better to Give Than Receive
  - Give Secretly

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