CHAPTER 6

The Enduring Dilemma

Where Do We Go from Here?

All evangelism is in some sense subversion involving a change of loyalties from blood ancestors among whom historically and physically Jesus Christ is not.

—John Pobee, African theologian[1]

As Jack Forbes says of Western civilization, "Might makes right is the wétiko [Euroamerican conquest of the Americas] slogan, but it is often accompanied by self-serving doctrines of 'divine will,' 'manifest destiny,' 'the march of civilization,' or 'doing God's work.' "[2] Unfortunately, the missionary history of Christian churches among American Indians during the past five hundred years is filled with examples that attest to Forbes's point. Both implicitly and explicitly, wittingly and unwittingly, European and Euroamerican missionaries of all denominations have been a part of Europe's conquest of the Americas.

While these chapters have described four missionary stories that are quite different in their particularities, they are structurally similar. Each of these missionaries arrived with a genuine interest in the well-being of Indian people and an announced commitment to bring them the gospel message of salvation. At the same time, all came with implicit, largely unspoken commitments to their own cultural values and social structures. In the final analysis, these latter commitments proved to be the stronger and more pervasive. In every case, even for those like Bartolomé de Las Casas in Mexico and the Caribbean, Samuel Worcester who went to prison in the 1830s for his support of Cherokees in Georgia, or Samuel Kirkland among the Iroquois in eighteenth-century New York, the cultural commitments of the missionary leave even those with the best of intentions complicit in the European conquest of Indian people and complicit in the destruction of Indian societies, economies, and self-determining freedom.[3] Their own Euroamerican cultural blindness and self-righteous sense of cultural superiority meant that all missionaries inevitably assumed this posture. This inevitability, however, cannot excuse them from the devastation and death they caused. Perhaps the most fearful aspect of the missionary history of conquest and genocide is the extent to which it is a history of good intentions. None of the missionaries discussed here listed cultural genocide among his goals, yet the genocidal results are patently obvious in retrospect.

A recovering alcoholic, jokingly referring to the origins of his alcoholism, suggested that he had started with three strikes against him: he was, he announced, a priest, Irish, and the son of an alcoholic father. About the latter

two he could have done nothing whatsoever, yet he readily acknowledged that he and only he was ultimately responsible for his actions. Every missionary who has served among native Americans, both past and, unfortunately, present, has been caught in a similar bind that has predicated his or her behavior in the mission context. Whether preaching to, disciplining, interpreting, or making judgments about Native Americans, the missionaries' concerns and actions have been shared by their European and Euroamerican cultural context and institutional commitments.

The missionary efforts of John Eliot, Junípero Serra, Pierre-Jean De Smet, and Henry Benjamin Whipple have demonstrated in some detail how the cultural values of the missionaries regularly became confused with the gospel they proposed to preach to Indian peoples. To the missionaries, conversion to Christianity meant conversion to Euroamerican economic and political structures, structures that entailed the long-term subjugation of tribal peoples to a conquering people. To Native Americans, it meant conversion to new and destructively alien social structures and patterns of behavior; conversion to alien concepts of morality that more often than not resulted in the erosion of native cultural values and community structures; and conversion to alien structures of intellectual thought and to religious understandings that left native people even weaker in their struggle for parity with the conqueror.

How did this happen? The question remains a complex puzzle, yet it is important for understanding ourselves and our contemporary context. As George Santayana is reputed to have said, "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it." The question of how well-intentioned missionaries of the past could be so blind must eventually translate into an introspective questioning of our own modern blindness. It can be demonstrated that the cultural imposition of the missionaries continues today, even among the more sensitive and liberal-minded missionaries of our own time. Indeed, the problem is so systemic and so deeply ingrained that it has become part of the unarticulated foundation of all Western thought and behavior and goes unrecognized even by those whom one would expect to be most acutely sensitive.

Two important general observations emerge from the case studies of the missionaries presented here, raising issues for theological, moral, spiritual, and political reflection. The first involves the cultural reasons these missionaries were unable to see beyond their own culture and cultural commitments. The second concerns the effect of all-encompassing, systemic structures in determining peoples' (such as the missionaries' or our own) responses to the world.

Culture and the Missionary Impetus

To begin, we must come to an understanding of the pervasiveness of culture in determining structures of intellectual development as well as other, more physical patterns of behavior. This pervasiveness of culture comes to light if one assumes a definition of culture offered by Clifford Geertz: Namely, culture consists of habitual responses to the world.[4] That is, a culturally integral community of

people will have a rather discrete, if enormously large, set of habitual responses to the world that function first of all to give social, spiritual, and intellectual cohesion to that community. Moreover, it is that set of habitual responses that makes the community identifiable as a discrete entity to those outside the community—e.g., to anthropologists and missionaries. The vast majority—perhaps nearly all—of the habitual behaviors that make up a community's culture remain unexamined and undifferentiated by the community as a whole. Rather, they are naively presumed to be "normal" behavior and "normal" perceptions of truth. As such, they form the foundation for what Wittgenstein identifies as "common sense knowledge." This is even true of the narrow subculture of the missionaries. Theirs was a culture of a people who for centuries had been given to careful theological and philosophical reflection on their perceptions of the world. That the missionaries, like the politicians and the soldiers, found their perceptions of the world to be definitive and universally true resulted from generations of ingrown isolation and should not be surprising. That Europeans became powerful enough to impose their notions of universality on the rest of the world was.[5]

At both lay and scholarly levels, cultural study too often is presumed appropriate only for people other than contemporary Euroamericans or for minority cultures (and subcultures) in the Euroamerican midst.[6] Thus, in academic fields such as anthropology, history of religions, or ethnohistory, scholars develop tools of critical analysis for intense reflection on culture at a theoretical level, while usually relying on some exemplary non-Euroamerican culture to demonstrate their case. Yet such studies rarely include any reflection on the cultural rootedness of the scholar's own methods, analyses, and conclusions.[7] At a more popular level in the United States, of course, culture is a category referencing the lifeways of nonwhites and is applied to white society only as a collective referent for museums, operas, and orchestras, excluding even rock concerts, let alone fork placement, dating rituals, and academic modes of discourse. Yet all of these, including "intellectual traditions," are discrete sets of habitual responses to the world.

The pervasiveness of a culturally ingrained sense of white superiority persists in the contemporary missionary context in spite of the best intentions of many modern, more sensitive missionaries. At the same time, the old, nineteenth-century style of colonial missionary endeavor also continues. Most so-called main-line denominations in the United States today still maintain one or more mission outposts that are committed to separating Indian people from their traditional cultures as quickly as possible. Much more common today, however, is the gentler liberalism that nevertheless takes paternalism as its most common form and functions to subvert and co-opt the culture of an Indian community. Perhaps the most blatant example of this mission posture is the proclivity for "liberal" and "open" white missionaries to usurp native cultural forms into their own repertoires. On many plains reservations, for instance, a sacred pipe can be found customarily placed on the altar next to holy communion on Sunday mornings. While this may seem sensitive to the needs of the community at a surface level, two deep structure messages are being spoken that are less than empowering, even disempowering, to Indian people.

First, placing a native religious symbol adjacent to the Christian focus of worship elevates the white religious expression of the gospel as superior to traditional native spiritual forms. The pipe is being used in this case to enhance the power of the missionary spiritual form, that is, holy communion. Most often, the pipe is used not as a sacrament in and of itself, but as a mere symbol of comfort to the people as they focus on the true sacramental presence in bread and wine. The behavior here is more subtle than that of missionaries a century ago, but white superiority is still implicitly emphasized even as the missionary attempts to affirm native culture.[8]

Second, since this misappropriation of native spirituality is usually performed in a context where the pastoral leadership is characteristically non-Indian, another very powerful message affirming white leadership is being demonstrated to the people. Namely, by placing the pipe, the native sacramental presence of spiritual power, on the altar, the priest is implicitly presenting himself as the new "traditional" spiritual leader of the people, the new "medicine man." Again, white priority is affirmed. It begins with a Euroamerican interpretation of the gospel, which is inherently culturally biased, and ends actualized in a white missionary presence, a person who is empowered as a white, who becomes the authority figure for an Indian congregation or even a whole tribe. For better or for worse, the role model taught to Indian peoples and internalized by them is that spiritual leadership, like economic leadership, has passed to white people.

Missionaries and Systemic Causation

A more powerful corollary to the cultural rootedness of the Euroamerican missionaries and the results of their preaching has to do with the role of all-encompassing, systemic structures in determining a people's existence. At stake here are those structures of Western, Euroamerican societies that generated the attitudes of the missionaries, as well as the attitudes of the political and military leaders who shared so many of the missionaries' beliefs and ultimate goals for dealing with the aboriginal inhabitants of North America. We can now begin to identify the structural web of a systemic *causal nexus*[9] in which these missionaries were firmly entrapped, even as we are more or less entrapped in it today.

Simply engaging in missionary bashing—the judgmental condemnation of missionaries, either individually or as a group—is to miss the point entirely. We dare not stop with an historical critique or moral judgment of the missionaries. Such a focus is simply too narrow. The trees, as it were, get in the way of seeing the forest. The missionaries were, after all, only a part of a much larger systemic whole that escaped their notice in large part even as they naively but clearly acted on behalf of significant objectives of that systemic whole.

By systemic I mean here the whole constellation of institutional and social structures that determine much of who we are individually and collectively. Of

course, the systemic includes those gross institutional superstructures that are readily recognized by nearly all members of a society, but it must also encompass the more subtle and complex interconnections that might only be recognized at first by specialists. Perhaps we can begin to grasp the overwhelming nature of the systemic if we reduce it paradigmatically to economic and political terms.

From the renaissance world of ideas, Europeans were empowered to begin the ongoing process of imposing their political and economic structures on the rest of the world for their own political and economic gain. The beginning of this colonial process coincided with the voyage of Columbus and with the emergence of a new, and now pervasive, political idea, that of the modern nation-state. The old feudal kingdoms of medieval Europe gave way to a new world of centralized political order, which was capable of managing increasingly larger populations and territories. Over the past five hundred years, European colonialism and the emergence of the modern state as a political unit together have generated what Immanuel Wallerstein calls the "modern world-system."[10] The development of that world system, primarily an economic system with a strong political infrastructure, has continued to this day and is demonstrably experienced by most of the world as oppressive. The entire southern hemisphere today lives in immense poverty, even as North Americans enjoy unprecedented wealth. The fact that this wealth has been generated by the United States' exploitation of cheap labor and natural resources pillaged from the southern hemisphere is all too often ignored by U.S. citizens or excused with some rationalized line of argumentation.

Yet the wealth and comfort produced by this system, however oppressive to others, are a powerful sedative to the consciences of those who benefit directly from it. Indeed, if there are any doubts, the system itself becomes increasingly persuasive as it becomes more entrenched. The answers it offers finally become so much a part of a national community's larder of common sense knowledge that to question the system's propriety becomes unthinkable. At both conscious and subconscious levels, Euroamerican missionaries have, sometimes unthinkingly, found the political, social, and economic world system of European hegemony to be irresistible. Religious and theological reasoning became inevitably entwined with the political and economic. Even though most missionaries personally stood to gain little economically or politically, the political and economic well-being of the system continued to hold their allegiance.

Of course, one reason the systemic is so durable is that it cannot be limited so easily to the realm of the political and economic. To begin to grasp the full spectrum of the systemic, one must plot everything from cultural patterns of social behavior to institutional development and economic interaction, political structures and processes, and especially to intellectual patterns of thought. As such, the social structures of cognition that are the basis for all academic disciplines and theoretical reflection participate in the systemic whole. That is to say, the very theological discourse that propelled well-intentioned people into missionary outreach was already so systemically committed that it is unrealistic to expect any missionary to have acted apart from the common wisdom of the day. But two questions persist: How are our actions and thoughts today controlled by this same systemic whole? And how can we begin to stand apart from it with some intentionality?

Indian Dysfunctionality: The Continuing Legacy of the Missionary Effort

> *Western Christian theology has been and is a most pernicious religious version of capitalist ruling-class ideology.*
>
> —Itumeleng Mosala, South African theologian[11]

"The gospel," an acquaintance once suggested, "has not worked very well for native Americans." The continuing legacy of Indian evangelization can be traced today in the horrifying statistics of social well-being that chronically plague Indian peoples in North America. American Indians suffer a level of poverty marked by a per capita income that is the lowest of any ethnic group in the United States and an unemployment rate that hovers around 60 percent. In health statistics, longevity, rate of alcohol addiction, and educational achievement, American Indian peoples consistently rank far worse than any other ethnic community in the United States.[12] This *litany of woes* is part of the legacy of the missionary tradition and its participation in the conquest of Indian peoples. That traditional values and spiritual strengths continue at all is a testament to the endurance and will to survive of our tribal nations.

Yet native peoples have not survived intact. Each of our reservation or urban Indian communities is consistently plagued with individual and community dysfunctionalities that eat away at the well-being of the people. With far too much assistance and complicity from the missionaries, the U.S. government has carefully manipulated our nations into relationships of total dependence that are today best described as co-dependent. The economic viability of most reservations today depends not on natural resources, and certainly not on manufacturing, but rather on U.S. government-funded projects associated with tribal government, especially those that deliver social services, provide for health and education development, and pay the actual day-to-day expenses of running a tribal government. As a result, each reservation community is divided into the hopelessly unemployed have-nots and the few who live on more than ample government salaries.

Likewise, the various denominations that are present on reservations or in urban Indian communities are also hooked into co-dependent relationships with the Indian people they intend to serve. Very few of the hundreds of main-line denominational ministries in these contexts are self-supporting. Rather, they depend on outside charitable funding which continues to root Indian peoples in self-defeating co-dependency. While many denominations have successfully developed something of indigenous leadership, the actual power, which ultimately determines how Indian people will interpret Christianity and how they will function as churches, is almost always a white authority structure. Hence,

the importance of native traditional faith ways, ceremonies, and teachings is always minimalized, even or perhaps especially by indigenous ministers.

This co-dependency takes its greatest toll on American Indian health and well-being, but its most pernicious elements are too often overlooked by both Indian and non-Indian observers. As a result, both all too often play the blame-the-victim game. One aspect of this dysfunctionality is apparent in the long excerpt from Leslie Silko's novel at the beginning of this book. In no small measure, Tayo's healing involves a self-confrontation with the *lie* of white superiority. At an intellectual level, of course, neither Indian people nor well-intentioned white friends would admit their belief in the superiority of white people. The problem is that both Indian and white act implicitly as if white culture, religion, economics, and political systems were superior, even as they both attempt to deny that they live out of this reality. Even those New Age adherents who tout the superiority of Indian spirituality finally reduce it to a commodity for individual consumption available in the white world's supermarket of spirituality.

In terms of Indian dysfunctionality, this reality can best be expressed as addictive behavior. Indian people, who suffer an interminable rate of alcohol addiction, suffer an even greater addiction. It is an addiction to the color white. More than Tayo's inability to recognize white thievery, this addiction to the color white involves a deeply ingrained need to be affirmed by perceived white authority figures and institutions. The erosion of Indian self-esteem, at a community-wide level, has meant that subconsciously and implicitly Indian people have acted as if Bureau of Indian Affairs policy, the word of a white bishop, or the affirmation of a New Age interloper into our traditional ceremonies were the critical ingredient for our well-being. So we all too readily submit to white hierarchies and cater to white friends and authority figures, hoping to win their support or approval, usually for the benefit of our own self-esteem.

A more critical form of missionary devastation exists in the modern context. Strangely enough, those denominations that have had the most success in recruiting and training Indian pastors for their congregations may also have been the most successful in blunting the cultural claims of traditional tribal existence. The conservative or even fundamentalist posture of many Indian-led congregations in nearly all Protestant denominations is a prime example of what Robert Thomas called "internal colonialism" and Annette Jaimes identifies as "autogenocide."[13] Psychologically, both at the level of the individual and communally, American Indian people have so internalized the missionary critique of Indian culture and religious traditions and so internalized our own concession to the superiority of Euroamerican social structures that we have become complicit in our own oppression. Today, an Indian pastor is more likely than a white missionary to criticize the paganism of traditional spirituality. Just as the Euroamerican missionary cannot help but be bogged down in her or his own cultural reality, too many Indian leaders have likewise become stuck in the affirmation of white power and white structures, even to the point of strongly articulating

self-criticism of traditional culture. Several generations of oppression and conquest, along with persistently hearing the recitation of the superiority of all white forms of existence, have taken their toll on the cultural self-confidence of Indian peoples.

In spite of this recognition of Indian dysfunctionality, it should be apparent that the failure of the missionaries is not an Indian failure but the result of white, Euroamerican racism. This is not to presume that Europeans and North Americans of European descent have an inherent hatred of other people. More to the point, we are dealing with an inbred ideology that is systemically instilled from birth in both Indians and whites, although in different ways and with different results. As Robert Williams has so thoroughly demonstrated, the ideology has theological and juridical theoretical roots in the white European world that go back at least to the medieval European church and its enunciation of such foundational doctrines as that of "infidel dominium."[14] The resulting triumphalism of Christianity is directly responsible for European and Euroamerican systemic notions of superiority and becomes a very useful cover, concealing and at the same time fueling the avaricious impetus for power and wealth. The notion of superiority, thoroughly infused in the Western psyche, becomes a rationale to justify colonial conquest at a political, economic, social, and religious level.

Missionaries and Colonialism

Colonization names a complex category. Historically, it identifies a political subunit of people who moved away from their home territory to a territory some distance away but nevertheless remain under the political jurisdiction of their home territory. This notion implicitly presumes that the colonizers moved to an unoccupied territory. Roman legends, for example, attributed the origins of Rome to a colony of Trojan peoples from a Greek-speaking cultural world. As such, the Romans often described themselves as having settled in an economically ideal but unoccupied site in Italy.[15] By the fifteenth century, colonization was explicitly associated with conquest, as the papal bulls so aptly attest.[16] The contemporary discussion focuses on the continuing legacy of fifteenth-century European colonization. With the benefit of hindsight, colonization is now identified as a process involving an unhealthy relationship between two distinct peoples, the colonizer and the colonized.[17] More than just a convenient economic relationship, colonization has necessarily meant and continues to mean the domination of a people by another people. Furthermore, colonization has necessitated and continues to necessitate the political, military, social, psychological, and economic domination that virtually requires the elimination of the culture and value system of the colonized and the imposition of the values and culture of the colonizer. For the sake of economic control, the main impetus behind any colonization, the colonizer must devise ever new means of oppressing the colonized.

By and large, the Christian missionaries entered the fields of pagan harvest as an integral part of the colonizing effort of one European power or another.

Liberation theologian Justo Gonzales has argued that it has not always been the case that the missionaries functioned as agents of the colonial enterprise. Although he acknowledges that the expansion of Protestant missions in the west coincided with colonial expansion, he maintains that the complex relationship between the missionaries and colonialism has resulted in the two sometimes abetting and sometimes impeding each other. The relationship is complex, as he notes, and there are plentiful stories of missionaries of all denominations who sided with Indian peoples in disputes with governments and seemed to oppose the colonial impetus.[18] Against Gonzales, however, it must be recognized that the best of the missionaries, even when they may have avoided functioning explicitly as agents of colonialism, were always implicitly and de facto crucial to the success of colonial expansion. As Casely Hayford noted with respect to African missions nearly a century ago:

> It is the favorite practice with European nations to precede the Flag with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. . . . The missionary points to the cardinal lessons of truth, love and brotherhood as proclaimed by the Gospel, which are in accord with the higher impulses of the Native, and commands his ready respect and obedience. In the course of time, the Flag makes its appearance, and with it boldly emerges the merchant and tradesman, who before were merely sneaking round the corner.[19]

The argument of this book has been that Europe's colonial conquest of the Americas was largely fought on two separate but symbiotically related fronts. One front was relatively open and explicit; it involved the political and military strategy that drove Indian peoples from their land to make room for the more "civilized" conqueror and worked to deprive Indian peoples of any continuing self-governance or self-determination. The second front, which was just as decisive in the conquest if more subtle and less explicitly apparent, was the religious strategy pursued by missionaries of all denominations. In many instances, the missionaries arrived first, to be followed in due course by the flag, armies, farmers, and merchants. Yet it should be noted that the missionaries also stayed on and continue to this day to exert their more subtle social control over Indian communities. Williams argues that the colonial impetus means an impetus toward ensuring that the conquest is complete and decisive.[20] In the end, the conquest is not the conquest of a people by another people, but the systemic conquest of us all. In this conquest, as in the European conquest of Indian peoples, theology becomes a crucial ingredient, and the missionaries become an important strategic phalanx.

New Age and the Continuing Colonial Conquest

American Indian peoples need their white friends today more than ever. What we need, however, are genuine friends, not self-proclaimed friends who know what is best for us. We do not need so-called friends who would invite themselves in to pillage the remaining treasures of Indian spirituality, or well-meaning liberals who would try to show us how to make the system work for Indians. Rather,

we need friends who will join us in the struggle against the continuing imperialism of Western, European-American culture. Genuine friends do not invade one another, physically or spiritually. Genuine friends do not prescribe for one another. But genuine friends do stand beside one another, supporting one another in times of need and crisis.

Yes, American Indians need friends today, but we need friends who will fight political battles within their own political system, not friends who have abandoned the political struggle in favor of a retreat to some reservation nirvana where all their problems dissipate into a cloud of spiritual smoke.

A curious reversal has seemingly occurred in the attitudes of many white Americans and Europeans toward Native American peoples. One of the more significant problems faced by Indian peoples today is not the intentional and overt imposition of European culture in the guise of Christianity. Nor is it the federal legislation or policy that made many tribal ceremonies illegal or the official church and state displeasure that made nearly all ceremonies difficult to sustain.[21] Rather, our modern problem is just the opposite of the problem the tribes confronted a century ago in the presence of the missionary. Nevertheless, in a subtle way, the systemic imposition of Euroamerican culture on Indian peoples persist. Paradoxically, the modern appeal of Indian spirituality to many white people has, I believe, become a major destructive force in our Indian communities. The withering of white Christian spirituality has so disillusioned people that many have engaged in a relatively intense search for something to fill the spiritual void, from Buddhism, Sufi mysticism, or Hindu meditation to Lynn Andrews hucksterism[22] or the so-called "men's council" movement, with channeling, astrology, and witchcraft falling somewhere in between. In this time of spiritual crisis, Indian spirituality, which just a short while ago was the anathema of heathenism, has now become an appealing alternative to many of the seekers.

The main difficulty is that Indian spiritual traditions are still rooted in cultural contexts that are quite foreign to white Euroamericans, yet Euroamerican cultural structures are the only devices Euroamericans have for any deep structure understanding of native spiritual traditions. Hence, those native traditions can only be understood by analogy with white experience. To use a paradigm devised by linguist Noam Chomsky over three decades ago, Indian and white people may see an identical surface structure, yet understand that surface structure in radically different ways because they are rooted in culturally disparate deep structures.[23] To make matters even more confusing, the two may go along for a long time without recognizing the deep structure differences in understanding. A simple example may suffice to demonstrate the potential for complex cultural differentiation. The sentence, "The girl hit the boy with the bat," is a single surface structure, yet it equally represents two quite different deep structure perceptions of reality. Without further investigation, one is left wondering whether the boy was struck with the bat or was holding the bat when he was struck. While this sort of confusion is a part of the intrinsic ambiguity of human

language that becomes the basis for much humor and joke telling, it also has caused destruction and radical cross-cultural misunderstandings.

There is a New Age, liberal equivalent of this deep structure/surface structure dilemma. Both well-meaning New Age liberals and hopeful Indian spiritual traditionalists can easily be swept up into a modern process of imposed cultural change, without recognizing deep structure cultural imposition even when in its midst. The first Indian casualty today in any such New Age spiritual-cultural encounter is most often the strong deep structure cultural value of community and group cohesion that is important to virtually every indigenous people. As adherents of Western cultures, Europeans and Euroamericans live habitual responses to the world that are culturally rooted in an individualist deep structure rather than communitarian. In this "meeting" of cultures, the communal cultural value of Indian people is transformed by those who do not even begin to see the cultural imposition that has occurred, however unintended. Hence, dancing in a ceremony in order "that the people might live" gives way to the New Age, Euroamerican quest for individual spiritual power. What other reason would a New Yorker have for rushing out to South Dakota to spend eight days participating in a Sun Dance ceremony? Yet well-meaning New Agers drive in from New York and Chicago or fly in from Austria and Denmark to participate in annual ceremonies originally intended to secure the well-being of the local, spatially configured community. These visitors see little or nothing at all of the reservation community, pay little attention to the poverty and suffering of the people there, and finally leave having achieved only a personal, individual spiritual high. "That the people might live" survives as merely an abstract ideal at best.

The transformative, coyote twist here involves three things. The first is the impact of white participants on the thinking of younger Indians, many of whom are learning their own ceremonial traditions through increasingly individualist eyes. A second impact is the temptation of many Indians to convert their spiritual tradition into career and economic development opportunities. A certain wealth can be generated by catering to the individualist needs of white New Age aficionados, and the phenomenon has created a large number of what Churchill calls "plastic" medicine people.[24] The third effect is less immediately perceptible, but just as observable over time. It involves the shift in the thinking of the "traditional" people in an Indian community. Little by little, usually without them even perceiving it, their language about spiritual practices changes both to accommodate the participation of whites and to translate discrete cultural idiosyncracies for an alien culture in ways that can be more easily understood and appropriated (or rather, misappropriated).

Indian dysfunctionality—a result of the conquest, including the missionary endeavor—means in this case that Indian people are all too ready to participate in our own oppression and continuing conquest. Craving the approval of white acquaintances and hoping for a broader understanding of and appreciation for the validity of traditional ceremonial life, Indian people often rush to invite this new European invasion, the invasion of what remains of tribal ceremonies.

I am convinced that this meeting of cultures is in the final analysis harmful to Indian peoples and their tribal traditions. Yet, I would argue that it is equally harmful to those well-meaning white seekers who, having lost themselves back in some white community or white church, hope to find themselves on some Indian reservation. The conquest has always been spiritually harmful to Euroamericans, even when the damage has gone largely unrecognized due to the systemic camouflage of wealth and physical comfort. To their credit, many New Age adherents have seen through this part of the lie, yet they are so systemically ingrained that they fail to recognize their continued participation in acts of conquest.

34. Whipple, "What Shall We Do with the Indian?" Written for the public press, in *Lights and Shadows*, 514.
35. Letter to President Grant, in ibid., 558–61.
36. Francis Paul Prucha, ed., *Americanizing the American Indian: Writings by the "Friends of the Indian," 1880–1900* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1973), 3. By the 1880s the reform theme could be summarized in this outline of doctrine as Prucha recites it: ". . . first, to break up the tribal relations and their reservation base and to individualize the Indian of a 160 acre homestead by the allotment of land in severalty; second, to make the Indian citizens and equal with the whites in regard to both the protection and the restraints of law; and third, to provide a universal government school system that would make good Americans out of the rising generation of Indians." Prucha omits Christianization here, but it is implicit in the whole of the reform discussion and explicit in the Grant Peace Policy.
37. U.S. Senate, *Executive Documents: Second Session of the Forty-Fourth Congress, 1876–1877*, vol. 1, document 9.
38. Ward Churchill, "The Earth Is Our Mother," in *The State of Native America*, ed. Annette Jaimes (Boston: South End Press, 1992), 139–88, provides a compelling political analysis of the Sioux peace commission of 1876 and its explicit task of dispossessing Sioux peoples from their landholdings.
39. Ibid., 8.
40. It should not go unnoticed that "friends of the Indian" was a self-proclaimed title assumed by the reformers of the era. See Prucha, *Americanizing the American Indian*, 1 and *inter alia*.
41. Whipple, *Lights and Shadows*, 166ff., 307ff., 519f., 530–46.
42. U.S. Congress, Joint Special Committee, "Condition of the Indian Tribes," 39th Cong., 2d sess., 1866–1867, Senate Rep. 156, 3–10.
43. "Indian Peace Commission, Report to the President, January 7, 1868, *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1868, Annual Report of the Secretary of the Interior*, 40th Cong., 3d sess., 1868–69, House Executive Document 1 (Serial 1366), 502 (full report, 486–510). Also quoted in the Sioux commission report in 1876.
44. "Indian Peace Commission," 503f.
45. Lydia Maria Child, *An Appeal for the Indians* (New York: William P. Tomlinson, 1868).
46. Prucha, *The Great Father*, 1:490.
47. Ibid., 1:492.
48. Quoted from Whipple, *Lights and Shadows*, 167.
49. U.S. Indian Commission, "Memorial, July 14, 1868," *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1868, Annual Report of the Secretary of the Interior*, 41st Cong., 2d sess., 1869–70, House Executive Document 1 (Serial 1414), 538.
50. U.S. Indian Commission, "Memorial," 10f.
51. H. B. Whipple, Preface to Helen Hunt Jackson, *A Century of Dishonor: A Sketch of the United States Government's Dealing with Some of the Indian Tribes* (New York: Harper, 1881), viii–ix.
52. General Sibley, an old friend and ally of Whipple's, had to decline service due to his health. See his letter attached to the commission's report, Senate, *Executive Documents, 1876–77*, 86–90.
53. Ibid., 31.
54. Ibid.
55. Prucha, *The Great Father*, 1:191–213, and William McLoughlin, *Cherokees and Missionaries: 1789–1839* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1984), 239–99.
56. Implicit in the discussion here is the fact that if Indian tribal sovereignty was admitted up to this point in U.S. and North American history, then Americans must face the realization that an important part of their history is false. Namely, they must confront their denial that, "We never conquered other peoples whose land and fate we now control."
57. Executive Document 9, 2.
58. Remember that the Red Cloud/Powder River War of 1866–68 had been fought over the building of a single road, the Bozeman Trail. While this road does not seem to have been in violation of the 1851 Fort Laramie Treaty, the government's cessation of annuities in 1866 was.
59. The terms of the agreement are spelled out in brief in Smith's letter to Chandler (Executive Document 9, 2) and in more detail in the "Articles of Agreement" signed by the commissioners and the Sioux leaders who participated (pp. 21ff.).
60. Again, Whipple repeats a theme sounded already by Eliot in seventeenth-century New England and by Finley in the early nineteenth century in Ohio as he encouraged Indians to "abandon the hunt."
61. Zanger, "Straight Tongue's Heathen Wards," 182; and Whipple to H. H. Montgomery, July 1, 1901, H. B. Whipple papers, Minnesota Historical Society.
62. The struggle of the Sioux peoples to regain aboriginal landholdings, the Black Hills in particular, is analyzed in numerous books and articles. See Churchill, "The Earth Is Our Mother"; Russell Means, "The Black Hills: They're Still Not For Sale!" *Oyate Wicaho* (May 1980); and Steven C. Hanson, "United States vs. Sioux Nation: Political Questions, Moral Imperative and National Honor," *American Indian Law Review* 8 (1980): 459–84. See also the materials prepared for the 1986 Senate hearings on the proposed Black Hills Bill.
63. Report of the Board of Indian Commissioners, 1883, 34f.

CHAPTER 6: The Enduring Dilemma

1. African theologian John Pobee, quoted from Ogbu U. Kalu, "Church Presence in Africa: A Historical Analysis of the Evangelization Process," in *African Theology Enroute: Papers from the Pan African Conference of Third World Theologians*, ed. Kofi Appiah-Kubi and Sergio Torres (Maryknoll: Orbis Press, 1979), 20.
2. Jack Forbes, *A World Ruled by Cannibals: The Wétiko Disease of Aggression, Violence, and Imperialism* (Davis, Calif.: D-Q Univ. Press, 1979), 24. Forbes actually applies *wétiko* to every historical urge to empire and conquest, from the ancient Assyrians to the Aztecs and Incas in the Americas.
3. Leonardo Boff, *New Evangelization: Good News to the Poor* (Maryknoll: Orbis Press, 1991), 15, offers a firm corrective against heroizing Las Casas (see chap. 1, n. 49. For Worcester, see William McLoughlin, *Cherokees and Missionaries: 1789–1839* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1984), 239–99. A man of considerable courage who defended the Cherokees in the face of removal and willingly served time in the Georgia state penitentiary for the Cherokee cause, Worcester nevertheless was firmly committed to the missionary goal of "civilizing" the Cherokees. For Kirkland, see Donald A. Grinde, Jr., *The Iroquois and the Founding of the American Nation* (San Francisco: Indian Historian Press, 1977), 43–94. Kirkland was loved by many

and respected by most of the Iroquois, yet Grinde reports, "This New England Puritan, with 'New Light' principles, was a patriot to the core" (43). Grinde describes the extent to which Kirkland functioned as an American agent in his capacity as missionary among the Iroquois to facilitate Iroquois cooperation in the American revolution. See also Samuel Kirkland Lothrop, *Life of Samuel Kirkland* (Boston, 1847).

4. Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic, 1973); and *Local Knowledge: Further Essays in Interpretive Anthropology* (New York: Basic, 1983). Geertz's definition builds by extension on the classic definition offered by E. B. Tylor in 1871: ". . . that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society." *Primitive Culture* (New York: Holt, 1889), 1.
5. For an accessible and useful description of European desperateness on the eve of the conquest in the fifteenth century, see Kirkpatrick Sale, *The Conquest of Paradise: Christopher Columbus and the Columbian Legacy* (New York: Penguin, 1990), 28–46 (also 74–91). Pre-Columbian Europe was fractured into a multitude of small, relatively insignificant feudal fiefdoms that were only beginning to coalesce into larger, more centralized nation-states.
6. E.g., the work of Mary Douglas on the substrata of British and London society.
7. For a brilliant exception, see Lawrence E. Sullivan, *Icanchu's Drum: Orientation to Meaning in South American Religions* (New York: Macmillan, 1988).
8. William Stolzman, *The Pipe and Christ* (Pineridge, S. Dak.: Red Cloud Indian School, 1986), makes this relationship perfectly clear. Stolzman, the paradigm of the modern, sensitive, liberal missionary, argues for the validity of the native Lakota religious forms and attempts to show that they are not necessarily at odds with Christianity, especially Catholicism. At the same time, he is clear that Catholic doctrine, Christ, and the Catholic sacraments are implicitly superior to native expressions of spirituality. The latter are to be accepted where they do not contradict or come into opposition with the former. And by the former, we should note, he implicitly means not just Christianity, but a Euroamerican interpretation of Christianity.
9. The term here refers to that interconnected systemic whole that in itself has become causative or determinative of subsequent actions, where all actions are to a significant extent determined by all previous actions. Who each one of us is as a human being is not a matter of complete freedom; rather, the parameters of our behavior are determined by our culture, the structures of society around us, when we live, who our parents are, and so forth. I am not arguing here for complete determinism, either. The limitations to human freedom, however, must be recognized in order to press those limits to allow for greater freedom.
10. Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Modern World-System* (New York: Academic Press, 1974). Wallerstein, however, believes the world economic system is now threatening the sovereignty of the nation-state. See also his essay, "The Rise and Future Demise of the World Capitalist System," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 16 (1974): 387–415.
11. Itumeleng Mosala, "African Independent Churches: A Study in Sociotheological Protest," in *Resistance and Hope: South African Essays in Honour of Beyers Naude*, ed. Charles Villa-Vincencio and John W. De Gruchy (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985), 101.
12. See G. Tinker and Loring Bush, "Native American Unemployment: Statistical Games and Cover-ups," in *Racism and the Underclass in America*, ed. George W. Shepherd, Jr., and David Penna (New York: Greenwood Press, 1991); Tinker, "Does 'All People' Include Native Peoples?" in *God, Goods and the Common Good*, ed. Charles Lutz (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1986), 125–36; and "American Indian Unemployment: Confronting a Distressing Reality," A First Friday Report, issued by the Full Employment Action Council and the Lutheran Council U.S.A. Office for Governmental Affairs and the Rural Coalition, et al., ed. John Lillie, Taly Rutenberg, Sarah Shella, and Janice View, Washington, D.C., October 4, 1985.
13. See Ward Churchill, "Indigenous Peoples of the United States: A Struggle Against Internal Colonialism," *Black Scholar* (1985): 29–35; and M. Annette Jaimes, "La Raza and Indigenism: Alternatives to Autogenocide in Native North America," *Global Justice* (October, 1992).
14. Robert Williams, *The American Indian in Western Legal Thought: Discourses of Conquest* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1990), especially 29–47.
15. See J. Whatmough, *The Foundations of Roman Italy* (London: Methuen, 1937); and H. H. Howard Hayes Scullard, *The Etruscan Cities and Rome* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell Univ. Press, 1967).
16. See Williams's chapter, "The Perfect Instrument of Empire: The Colonizing Discourse of Renaissance Spain," *The American Indian in Western Legal Thought*, 58–118.
17. Ashis Nandy, *The Intimate Enemy: Loss and Recovery of Self under Colonialism* (Delhi: Oxford Univ. Press, 1983).
18. Jeremiah Evarts, *Cherokee Removal: The William Penn Essays and Other Writings*, ed. Francis P. Prucha (Knoxville: Univ. of Tennessee Press, 1981), and McLoughlin, *Cherokees and the Missionaries*, give examples of missionary courage in supporting an Indian cause at the time of the Cherokee removal in the 1830s.
19. J. E. Casely Hayford, *Gold Coast Native Institutions, with Thought upon a Healthy Imperial Policy for the Gold Coast and Ashanti* (London: Cass, 1970), 232. Cf. Glyndwr Williams, *The Expansion of Europe in the Eighteenth Century: Overseas Rivalry, Discovery and Exploitation* (New York: Walker, 1967), 34–38; and now the very fine analysis of Luis N. Rivera, *A Violent Evangelism: The Political and Religious Conquest of the Americas* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1992).
20. Williams, *The American Indian in Western Legal Thought*, 193–205. Williams implicitly demonstrates the deep, symbiotic relationship between theology and both European and English civil law and the beginnings of international legal theory in the sixteenth century. Both the Catholic Franciscus de Victoria in Spain and the Protestant Alberico Gentili in England accepted the fundamental principle that "Europeans could lawfully wage war against *normatively divergent peoples* who violated Eurocentrically conceived natural law" (195f.). It was only a small step from such a European discourse of conquest to a liberal, well-intentioned missionary discourse of conversion that identified Native American societies as culturally divergent and in need of conversion to the gospel of their own superior European culture and social structures.
21. Francis Paul Prucha, *The Great Father: The United States Government and the American Indian* (Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 1984), 2:646f., 800–05; Vine Deloria, Jr. and Clifford M. Lytle, *American Indians, American Justice* (Austin: Univ. of Texas Press, 1983), 230ff. For an example of explicitly articulated federal policy, see

Prucha, ed., *Documents of United States Indian Policy* (Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 1975), 186ff.

22. Ward Churchill, *Fantasies of the Master Race: Literature, Cinema and the Colonization of American Indians*, ed. M. Annette Jaimes (Boston: South End Press, 1992), 187ff. and 215ff., describes the charlatanism of the likes of Lynn Andrews and Carlos Casteneda with their made-up, pseudo-Indian affectations, as well as the charlatanism of Native American would-be spiritual leaders like Sun Bear and Wallace Black Elk who purport to sell access to Indian ceremonies to non-Indian people. See also Alice B. Kehoe, "Primal Gaia: Primitivists and Plastic Medicine Men," in *The Invented Indian: Cultural Fictions and Government Policies*, ed. James A. Clifton (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Books, 1990), 193–209.
23. Noam Chomsky, *Syntactic Structures*, Janua Linguarum, Series Minor, no. 4 (The Hague: Mouton, 1957); and *Aspects of the Theory of Syntax* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1965).
24. See his essay, "Spiritual Hucksterism: The Rise of the Plastic Medicine Men," in Churchill, *Fantasies of the Master Race*, 215–30.

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CHAPTER 2: John Eliot

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