

Assemblies of God Higher Educational Institutions: A Means to Develop the Indigenous Church Model Among Native Americans¹

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*I stood among the circular mounds and scattered logs, a small Indian boy in crude Navajo garb, and looked across a small canyon. I shouted into the vast emptiness and heard the echo shouting back. Wondering, I cried, 'Who is talking to me; who dares to mock Yel Ha Yah?' So began my long search for knowledge—not for knowledge alone, but for an understanding of life itself. I wondered what it meant, what was its purpose and what would happen when this life is over.*²

So begins the amazing testimony of the late Rev. Charles Lee, who served for over thirty-six years as the founding pastor of Mesa View Assembly of God (now Four Corners Christian Center) in Shiprock, New Mexico. During Lee's tenure as pastor, the church grew to over 250 congregants in a small, remote Navajo community in northwestern New Mexico. In the years subsequent to his retirement from the pastorate, Charles Lee served as a professor and board member at the American Indian College of the Assemblies of God in Phoenix, Arizona, and as a hospital chaplain after he returned to New Mexico. Lee, a renowned artist with paintings in the

Smithsonian Institute, also continued on in his work as an oil painter during his retirement years.

Charles Lee is remarkable for at least two reasons. First, he was the earliest Native American pastor of an Indian church in the Assemblies of God to bring the congregation into full-fledged indigenous status as a self-governing, self-supporting and self-propagating congregation. Second, he was a product of an Assemblies of God institution, Central Bible Institute (now Central Bible College) and learned the important pastoral and evangelistic skills that would help him to build a strong indigenous church in the heart of the Navajo reservation. Lee reported:

“ I inquired as to where or how I could best learn in order to be able to go out and teach my people. Bible school was the answer! I enrolled in Central Bible Institute in the fall of 1948. Now, having graduated from CBI, my eyes are turned toward the whitened harvest field of the Navajo Indians in Southwestern United States.”³

This article examines the impact of Assemblies of God Bible colleges on the development of indigenous church leadership among Native Americans and how this serves to undergird biblical

church planting principles articulated by missiologists such as Roland Allen and Melvin Hodges.⁴ It begins with an examination of the development of the indigenous church model Assemblies of God World Missions has embraced historically. Second, it will detail early attempts at establishing indigenous ministry among Native Americans, followed by a brief examination of present-day efforts by U.S. Missions to equip Native Americans through Assemblies of God institutions. Third, it will present data that suggests that the number of Native Americans pastoring Native churches has increased—in part because of Bible colleges. Finally, it will offer some suggestions on how our denominational institutions can be more effective at keeping Native American students from dropping out of school and properly equipping them for indigenous ministry.

Development of the Indigenous Church Model in World Missions

The Assemblies of God has a strong historical legacy of world missions and frequently uses Bible colleges to develop strong indigenous church leadership. In the years immediately following 1914, early Pentecostal leaders emphasized sending missionaries “to the field” as quickly as possible to evangelize the “unreached” people groups of the world. However, as the fledgling Assemblies of God movement matured, missionaries began to see the need to establish Bible institutes to develop indigenous leadership. By 1939, the Assemblies of God reported having 44 missionary institutions (including elementary schools, orphanages, as well as Bible institutes).⁵ This number burgeoned over the years, and by 2002 the Assemblies of God World Missions

reported 1,893 Bible schools and extension programs enrolling 90,534 students supported by the General Council and its fraternally related organizations around the world.⁶

Two nineteenth century missiologists, Rufus Anderson (1796-1880) and Henry Venn (1796-1893) independently developed the strategies of missionary church planting that called for the “raising up” of indigenous churches that were self-governing, self-supporting and self-propagating. In Anderson and Venn’s view, Protestant missionary enterprises were to focus on the propagation of the gospel of Jesus Christ and not be sidetracked by other worthy, but less crucial tasks (e.g. establishing hospitals and developing educational institutions). Both feared that these non-essential tasks might engender a Western colonial model that detracted from the true soteriological purpose of missionary efforts.

Despite Anderson and Venn’s efforts, in the years following their deaths, other missionaries began to espouse an alternative strategy to evangelize the world. This strategy presented Christ as Savior and the Western Christian culture as a “superior” worldview that would supplant the indigenous heathen cultures. During this time, missionaries began to isolate themselves in compounds and build microcosmic communities that espoused Western Christianity and promoted Protestant cultural hegemony that disdained all non-Western cultural expressions.

Roland Allen, a former Anglican missionary to northern China, decried the colonial model of missions and called for a return to the original biblical paradigm contained in the New Testament. Herein, Allen believed, lay

the secret to developing and maintaining successful churches that would be self-governing, self-supporting and self-propagating. He was concerned that as long as paternalism remained the predominant *modus operandi*, indigenous churches would not be forthcoming.⁷

In contrast to nineteenth century Protestant colonialism, the Assemblies of God has promoted the indigenous church principle. Interestingly, it was in northern China, Allen's former field, that the Assemblies founded its first overseas Bible institute in 1922 to train national workers to assume leadership positions within the newly established churches.⁸

Within the Assemblies of God, Melvin L. Hodges enthusiastically endorsed and promoted the indigenous church model by building upon the philosophical foundations Venn espoused. While serving as a missionary in Central America, Hodges became convinced of the viability of the indigenous church model rooted in Pauline practice:

After his three weeks' stay in Thessalonica, Paul wrote two epistles to the church that he had established there, epistles in which he had exhorted the converts to obey those that had the rule over them. In the short time of three weeks, he had been able to establish a church with its own government. They could carry on without him. In all of his missionary labors, we have no record of Paul's sending an urgent appeal to the home church of Antioch or Jerusalem requesting funds for the building of churches or for the support of the workers who were to pastor the newborn assemblies. Neither do we find him pleading for workers to be sent out to pastor the churches that he had raised up.

Furthermore, Hodges was also a strong advocate of the use of Bible institutes for short-term practical training for native leadership.¹⁰ Perhaps most importantly, he recognized the role of the Holy Spirit and Pentecostal power in transforming the indigenous leaders into empowered lay workers and pastors capable of carrying on the task of the Great Commission.¹¹ As missionary theory and practice matured, Assemblies of God leadership recognized the wisdom and veracity of the indigenous model of church leadership in its overseas work.

Early Attempts to Establish Indigenous Ministry Among Native Americans

Long before the Assemblies of God established work among Native Americans in the United States, other Christian groups sought to reach Indians for Christ using a mixture of both indigenous and colonial methods. For example, the legendary Pocahontas, one of the early Jamestown converts, was taken to England in 1617 and so impressed King James I that he declared that educational institutions should be established for "ye education of ye children of those Barbarians in Virginia" [sic].¹² Funds were then collected for a school to be located upriver from Jamestown, Virginia.

Sadly, the establishment of such a school never came to fruition. In 1622, an Indian uprising led by Chief Opechancanough killed 347 of the Virginia settlers, and the idea of establishing a missionary institution to serve Native people gave way to a policy of exterminating them!¹³ It would be nearly thirty years before another

attempt to create an institution of learning for Native Americans in order to reach them with the gospel was made.

The second attempt to provide training in Bible and evangelism for Native Americans began at Harvard.

Established in 1636 as America's first institution of higher learning, Harvard's original purpose was to provide a legacy of literate Puritan ministers to serve the recently established Massachusetts colony. By 1650, Harvard College had expanded its original charter to include not only the education of New England's young men, but the training of qualified Indian students as well. Caleb Cheeshateaumuck, an Algonquian Indian from Martha's Vineyard, distinguished himself by learning to read and write English, Latin and Greek as well as his native tongue. Unfortunately, Caleb died within months of his graduation, falling victim to one of the white man's diseases for which he had no natural immunity.¹⁴

In spite of these attempts to raise up Christian Indian leaders to reach non-Christian Indians, Harvard College failed miserably, partly because they did not contextualize their curriculum to the needs of the Native students.¹⁵ In those early years, very few Indian youth graduated from Harvard. This is evidenced by the fact that the dormitory built to house Native students never held more than six Indian students, though it could easily have accommodated twenty.¹⁶

Undaunted by Harvard College and the Virginia colonists' early failures, Eleazar Wheelock, pastor of the Second Congregational Church in Lebanon, Connecticut, established the Indian

Charity School. Here he focused on training and discipling young Native men such as Samson Occom, a talented and well-educated Mohegan Indian who distinguished himself a missionary and writer during the eighteenth century.

Occom assisted Wheelock in fundraising for his school and was singularly instrumental in helping Wheelock to move his Charity School from Lebanon, Connecticut, to Dartmouth, New Hampshire, where it would become Dartmouth College. In 1769, Dartmouth College was founded and chartered for:

The education & instruction of Youth of the Indian tribes in this Land in reading, wrighting [sic] and all parts of Learning which shall appear necessary and expedient for civilizing and Christianizing children of pagans. . . and also of English youth.¹⁷

Eventually, Wheelock's vision of educating both Native American and English youth gave way to a primary focus on the English. Realizing that he had been exploited to help build a college that would never serve his people, Occom parted company with Wheelock. Dartmouth's historical records show that fifty-eight Indians attended the College between 1769 and 1893. Of those, only eleven graduated.¹⁸ Occom later penned these bitter words in his unpublished autobiography, no doubt in part referencing his feelings of exploitation:

So I am ready to Say, they have used me thus, because I can't influence the Indians so well as other missionaries; but I can assure them I have endeavored to teach them as I know how; —but I must say, "I believe it is because I am a poor Indian." I can't help that God has made me So; I did not make my self so [sic].¹⁹

These examples typify the failure of colonial attempts to create a successful model of indigenous ministry to Native Americans. Though their desire to evangelize and disciple Native people was laudable, the approaches used did not cause the creation of self-governing, self-supporting and self-propagating Indian churches. Instead, these attempts merely served to eradicate Indian cultures and values in favor of Westernized thinking. Many seemed to feel that Native Americans were “incapable” of higher education, including any type of ministerial education.

In the years following the early failed attempts of schools such as Harvard, Dartmouth, the College of New Jersey (now Princeton University) and the College of William and Mary to equip indigenous Native American leadership to serve as ministers and missionaries, American secondary and higher education moved to an emphasis on vocational training that included teaching skills in farming, sewing and textiles. This era in Native American education, known as the Federal Period, extended from just after the Revolutionary War until just past the middle of the twentieth century. During this time, there was a proliferation of boarding schools such as the Carlisle Boarding School founded by Richard Pratt in the 1870s. Pratt’s practice was to remove young Indians from their home and eradicate all vestiges of their cultural background, including the speaking of their native tongue, dress, diet, and religious culture. All of this was done under the guise of “Christianizing” Indian youth.²⁰

There was at least one bright spot during this period. Almon C. Bacone, a

missionary educator with a tribal land grant from the Creek Nation in Oklahoma, established Bacone College, a Baptist institution, in 1880. Bacone College’s original purpose was to prepare Native Americans for ministry.²¹ However, with the exception of Bacone College, there was little emphasis on training Native Americans for the ministry during this time. Instead, the task of evangelizing and church-planting efforts among Native Americans fell primarily to white missionaries.²²

The Use of Bible Colleges to Promote Indigenous Ministry among Native Americans

This article began with the illustration of Charles Lee, a highly successful Navajo pioneer pastor. In classrooms and conversations, Pastor Lee often underscored the importance of the Bible college in his ministerial formation. At Central Bible Institute (now Central Bible College), he learned many of the principles involved in developing and sustaining a successful, indigenous work among his own people.²³ Yet, it was the vision of a female Anglo missionary-pastor (who never went beyond eighth grade) that brought about the first Assemblies of God Bible institute specifically dedicated to training Native Americans to reach their own people. In 1957, after having ministered among the Indians of Phoenix and the surrounding area for several years, Rev. Alta Washburn and her husband Clarence saw the need to create a Bible institute with a vision towards equipping Native Americans to pastor Indian churches.²⁴ It was a radical concept because many church leaders did not think that Native Americans were capable of managing their spiritual affairs or that the indigenous church concept would work

with them. At that time, the predominant approach used by U.S. missionaries working with American Indians was a strong adherence to the paternalistic “white missionary” model that Washburn and other progressive missionaries found outdated and ineffective.²⁵

Undaunted by critics and skeptics, Washburn was determined to establish a Bible school at All Tribes Assembly of God, her church in downtown Phoenix, Arizona. The need for a Bible institute for Native Americans became painfully apparent as Washburn observed the actions of an unscrupulous independent evangelist, who was successfully emptying out Assemblies of God churches on the reservations in order to gain his own following:

“As I saw what was happening to our people in Phoenix and other Indian folks coming from the reservation to attend the evangelist’s meeting, I was driven to my knees in travailing prayer and fasting. As I prayed, the Lord impressed me that a means to indoctrinate the people into the truth of the Word and following Christ, not a man, was desperately needed. The solution seemed to be immediately made clear: establish a Bible school right here at All Tribes Assembly.”²⁶

All Tribes Bible School (ATBS) (now American Indian College of the Assemblies of God) was born in 1957, through the faithful efforts of Alta Washburn and her staff. By the second year, students came from as far away as British Columbia, Montreal, Hawaii and nine other states throughout the United States.²⁷ Early graduates such as Jacob Escalante worked a day job to support his family and attended classes at night at ATBS. Because he had not yet been

filled with the Holy Spirit, he continued after graduation to attend services at ATBS until he received the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Washburn reports:

“His knees had hardly touched the floor when he began to speak in a beautiful heavenly language. It was a glorious experience of the Spirit’s infilling.”²⁸

Escalante went on to pastor successfully in the area around Yuma, Arizona, and ministered to his own tribe, the Papagos (now the Tohono O’odham Nation) and has had a successful pastoral and evangelistic ministry for many years, including time spent as an elected tribal leader.²⁹

In the years following the establishment of All Tribes Bible School, other institutions that had a vision to develop Native American indigenous pastoral leadership were founded. In 1968, Eastern Indian Bible Institute (now Native American Bible College) was founded in Shannon, North Carolina. Shortly thereafter, Rev. and Mrs. Leo Bankson established Good Shepherd Indian Bible Institute in Mobridge, South Dakota, in 1970.³⁰ Finally, the Alaska District has operated Far North Bible School in Anchorage for a number of years. It began as Bethel Bible Training Center in 1973, after ten years of “fly-in” classes organized by Arvin W. Glandon in 1962.³¹

Indeed, the creation of these institutions has helped to facilitate the development of indigenous ministry within the Assemblies of God. For example, Jim H. Lopez graduated from (then) American Indian Bible Institute in 1973, completing a diploma in ministerial studies. From there, he went on to Southwestern Assemblies of God College (now University) in

Waxahachie, Texas, and earned a bachelor's degree. Lopez pastored a church in White River, Arizona, on the White Mountain Apache reservation for several years before returning to American Indian College as instructor and dean of students. He eventually served as president from 1998-2004. During his tenure as dean of students, Lopez completed a master's degree at Fuller Theological Seminary. Resigning from the College in July 2004, he now serves as director of Intercultural Ministry for the Arizona District, working directly for the district superintendent to assist with the development of Native American and other cross-cultural ministries. Of his experience as a student at American Indian College as a student, Lopez relates:

"I will always be grateful for the educational opportunity and leadership training that was made available to me through the American Indian College. Due to the student teacher ratio, I received individual attention encouraging me to seek higher educational options. As a result, I was able to successfully complete my master's degree in biblical studies at Fuller Theological Seminary."³²

John E. Maracle, president of the Native American Fellowship of the Assemblies of God (NAF), also serves as a general presbyter representing Native Americans. Maracle graduated from Central Bible College and earned an M.A. from the Assemblies of God Theological Seminary. He is presently a Ph.D. student with the Oxford School of World Missions. John had this to say regarding his experience in Assemblies of God institutions:

"Central Bible College and the Assemblies of God Theological Seminary prepared me for the practical applications of ministry and leadership skills with sound biblical and theological teaching from professors who had experience and background in their area of discipline. Both institutions equipped me with leadership skills to preach, teach and practice the full gospel."³³

Perhaps just as significant as these two testimonials, Table 1 displays the number of Indian churches in the Arizona and New Mexico Districts pastored by Native ministers and shows how many of them were trained in Assemblies of God Bible institutions.³⁴ Two observations can be made. First, a significant percentage of the Native pastors in New Mexico and Arizona received their ministerial training in Assemblies of God Bible colleges. Second, indigenous pastors pastor a growing percentage of Native churches. This is evidenced by a 27% increase in the total number of Native American pastors serving Native churches in the Arizona and New Mexico districts between 1989 and 2004. Although Arizona and New Mexico are only two districts within the Assemblies of God, their 56 Native churches represent a sizeable percentage of the total number (187) of Native churches within the Assemblies of God (30%).³⁵

This table gives the reader a glimpse of the impact that Assemblies of God institutions have had on equipping indigenous Native American leadership as local church pastors within a specific region. The reader will notice that the numerical increase in Native churches pastored by Native pastors between 1989 and 2004 (7) is equal to the increase in the number of these pastors (7) who are

alumni of an Assemblies of God institution.

TABLE 1

The total number of Assemblies of God Native Churches postured by alumni of Assemblies of God Bible institutions within the Arizona and New Mexico Districts in 1989* 2004**

Shown as a comparison with the total number of native Assemblies of God churches in those districts.

	1989	2004	Increase/ Decrease
Total Native Churches in New Mexico & Arizona Districts	54	56	3.5% +
Total Native Senior Pastors Serving Native Churches in New Mexico & Arizona Districts	19	26	27%+
Bible College Alumni***	11	18	39%+

*Information compiled in 1989 from raw statistical data by former American Indian Bible College (now American Indian College) President David J. Moore.

**Information compiled from raw statistical data provided by Donald Keeter, professor emeritus, and Sue Comer, office of the academic dean, American Indian College.

*** Except for one alumnus of Central Bible College, all are American Indian College alumni.

Towards a Model of Successful College Persistence

Apparently, there is a connection between the number of Native pastors in (at least) the Arizona and New Mexico Districts and the growing number of Native Americans graduating from Assemblies of God Bible colleges. Therefore, helping Native Americans to remain in Bible college through degree completion may be an important factor in increasing the number of indigenous pastors of Indian churches. As a missionary educator and researcher in higher education, my specific academic and professional interests have centered heavily in the area of persistence (e.g., the ability to remain in school and complete one's academic goal) of Native American students in Bible college and in other types of academic institutions. My previous research has shown that Native Americans bring a considerable amount of "baggage" into educational institutions that make academic persistence difficult.³⁶ Nonetheless, I believe that Native American students are capable of persisting and the evidence suggests that there are a number of experiences that contribute to successful persistence--at least through the first year of college.³⁷ I offer some of these findings, along with other data grounded in the literature base.

Because the church's missiological imperative is to establish itself by reaching every nation and people group (Matthew 28:18,19), it is essential that the Assemblies of God institutions take seriously the responsibility of raising up indigenous leadership for the harvest, including Native Americans who can reach the more than 600 tribal nations residing on 311 reservations throughout the United States.³⁸ As the Assemblies

of God has done overseas by building upon the previous foundations of Venn, Anderson, Luce³⁹ and Hodges, we must now do so here in the United States among Native Americans.

Assemblies of God institutions desiring to serve Native American students must make cultural adaptations in order to assist them in being able to persist to degree completion. For example, 75% of all Native Americans drop out of college before completing their degrees—many of them during their first year.⁴⁰

Following are six ways the institutions that serve Native American students training for ministry can help increase their persistence towards degree completion. By no means exhaustive, the list is a preliminary effort towards increasing the retention of American Indians within our institutions so that we can educate and equip them for indigenous church leadership:

1. Consider hiring college recruiters that have an understanding of the specific tribal background of the students they recruit. Consider also that many students formulate their choices through interactive decision-making from family members that may include aunts, uncles, grandparents and cousins.⁴¹
2. Make sure that Native American students who need remedial help are not neglected. Many Native students are at “high risk” because they attend substandard schools that lack qualified faculty, a solid academic curriculum and state-of-the-art instructional technology.⁴² Although many Indian students arrive at our institutions with

educational deficiencies and challenges, they are capable of rising to the occasion, if given the opportunity.

3. Give Native American students opportunities to develop leadership skills while they are still in school.
4. Create opportunities for Native American students to contextualize the gospel in multiple settings by reaching out to other Native Americans living in reservation, rural and urban areas.
5. Place Native American persons in key classroom, staff and administration leadership roles. Role modeling is an effective means of developing leadership potential by showing Native students that it is possible for them to aspire to positions of leadership within the body of Christ—including the pastorate.
6. Create an awareness of the importance of undergirding Native American ministry that is indigenous in nature, and fully embracing the challenges of being self-governing, self-supporting and self-propagating. Assemblies of God institutions are uniquely poised to champion the cause of evangelizing unreached people groups around the world—including those in the United States. While our Movement has done an admirable job of raising up indigenous ministry in other countries, we are still in the formative stages of developing indigenous ministry among

American Indians. We seem to be making progress, but still have a long way to go.

Conclusion

The examples of Charles Lee, Jacob Escalante, Jim H. Lopez, John E. Maracle and others clearly demonstrate it is possible to have an indigenous ministry among Native Americans that follows the Pauline model found in Acts 14:23. Moreover, the equipping our institutions of higher learning afford has the capability of bringing this model into fruition. The challenges our Movement faces include reaching the multi-cultural mosaic of groups within our society and scattered around the globe. The data in this study suggest there is a connection between the increase in the number of indigenous pastors serving Indian churches and the number of Native American alumni coming from our Assemblies of God Bible colleges.

If our institutions of higher learning see what a tremendous opportunity they have, perhaps they will grasp the urgency of equipping Native Americans for the harvest. The sooner we recognize that we cannot accomplish the task of reaching each respective culture without the help of indigenous leadership, the

sooner we will be freed from the yoke of paternalism and colonialism that has marginalized indigenous ministry by and to Native Americans. Roland Allen succinctly articulated the need for viable indigenous ministry that would create an enduring work when he declared:

In this search, the example of the Apostle of the Gentiles must be of the first importance to us. He succeeded in doing what we so far have only tried to do. The facts are unquestionable. In a very few years, he built the Church on so firm a basis that it could live and grow in faith and in practice, that it could work out its own problems, and overcome all dangers and hindrances both from within and without.⁴³

¹ In this article, the terms “Native American,” “Indian” and “American Indian” refer to all the indigenous peoples of North America, including American Indians, Alaska Natives, and Eskimos. In the northern United States and Canada, the term “First Nations” often is the term of choice. In this article, these terms should be seen as synonymous in meaning and are interspersed only to provide variety of terminology or for special emphasis.

² “Charlie Lee’s Testimony,” *Pentecostal Evangel* (17 August 1952): 10. See also Gary B. McGee, *People of the Spirit* (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 2004), 387-390. McGee’s biography, written shortly after Lee’s death, provides a capsulated view of this great Navajo Christian leader’s life and ministry.

³ *Ibid.*, 11.

⁴ Roland Allen, *Missionary Methods: St. Paul’s or Ours?* Second Edition. (Grand Rapids: William. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1962). See also Melvin Hodges’s *The Indigenous Church* (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 1953) and Hodges’s *Growing Young Churches* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1970).

⁵ Gary B. McGee, *This Gospel Shall Be Preached* (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 1986), 152

⁶ McGee, *People of the Spirit*, 251.

⁷ McGee, *This Gospel*, 32-35 and Allen, 135.

⁸ McGee, *People of the Spirit*, 251.

⁹ Hodges, *Indigenous Church*, 12.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 56-62. Although Hodges was an avid supporter of Bible institutes for indigenous leadership development, he did express several caveats. For example, the institution must not be an end in itself. Its existence is tied exclusively to the need for developing strong pastoral leadership within the context of the local church. In other words, the desire to create a “showcase” institution must be avoided at all costs. Second, the teaching must be practical and tied to the specific needs of the local national churches. He enjoined Bible institute instructors to be conversant with the local needs and customs of the churches whose pastors they were training. Moreover, they had to be able to contextualize their teaching to the specific needs of the churches represented. Hodges also believed that Bible institute training should be decentralized through the establishment of extension sites where possible, so as to minimize lengthy travel far from home. Finally, Hodges believed that the curriculum should stress practicality and be of a length that the student could integrate the new learning effectively. He recommended giving students a four-month course of study and allowing them to have eight months to assimilate this new knowledge. He cautioned, “When knowledge exceeds spiritual growth, we develop a superficial worker—a man long on theory and ability, but short on experience in Christian living.” 58.

¹¹ Hodges, *Growing Young Churches*, 124-126.

¹² Cary Michael Carney, *Native American Higher Education in the United States*. (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Press, 1999), 23.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 24.

¹⁴ Bobby Wright and William G. Tierney, “American Indians in Higher Education: A History of Cultural Conflict” *Change* 23 (March/April 1991): 11-18.

¹⁵ Joseph J. Saggio, “Native American Christian Higher Education: Challenges and Opportunities for the Twenty-First Century” *Christian Higher Education* 3 (Winter 2004): 329-347. In this article, I attribute many of the failures of the American Christian higher education to the cultural hegemony of Western Euro-centric thinking that does not provide a platform for Native Americans to contextualize the gospel message within their cultural milieu.

¹⁶ Wright and Tierney, 12.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 13.

¹⁸ B. Peyer, "Samson Occom: A Mohegan Missionary and Writer of the 18th Century." *The American Indian Quarterly*, 6 (Spring & Summer 1982): 208-217. See also Wright and Tierney, 13.

¹⁹ Samson Occom, "A Short Narrative of My Life." Unpublished typescript. Hanover, New Hampshire: Special Collections, Dartmouth College Library. Reproduced in *Peyer, The Elder's Wrote*. n.p.

²⁰ Wright and Tierney, 14. See also Saggio, 2004.

²¹ Carney, 83-87. Although Bacone College has a historic mission of serving Native Americans, it has enrolled a large number of non-Native students also. Moreover, the school no longer maintains an exclusive mission to educate Native Americans, nor is it primarily a Bible college. Today Bacone College would best be classified as a Christian liberal arts college.

²² See Robert Craig's "Christianity and Empire: A Case Study of American Protestant Colonialism and Native Americans." *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 21 (Winter, 1997): 1-41. Craig, like many other historians, is critical of the colonial practices of many Protestant missionaries carried out during the nineteenth century. This article focuses on many of the cultural "blunders," howbeit well-intentioned, perpetrated by the White Man among the Lakota and Dakota Indians of the Great Plains. Craig believes that attempts to eradicate cultural emblems such as language, dress and indigenous religious practices among the Plains Indians have been responsible for a cultural genocide that has caused many Native Americans to reject the Christian gospel.

²³ I recall several occasions on which I talked personally with Charles Lee on the principles of building successful indigenous works. In addition, I attended a classroom lecture in 1993 in which he spoke of the importance of Bible college training that strongly emphasized the missiological principles embraced by Hodges and others. Lee was profoundly influenced by the concept of developing indigenous leaders and spent some of his latter years helping to train future Indian church leaders at American Indian Bible College (now American Indian College) in Phoenix, Arizona.

²⁴ Jim Dempsey, "Concluding Part: Assemblies of God Ministry to Native Americans," *Assemblies of God Heritage* 22 (Summer 2002), 18.

²⁵ Alta M. Washburn, *Trail to the Tribes*, (N.P., 48, 1990). Throughout her book, Washburn relates her belief that Native Americans could and should be able to pastor and evangelize their own people.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 48.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 53.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 59.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 59.

³⁰ Dempsey, 18. The name Good Shepherd Indian Bible Institute was later changed to Central Indian Bible College. Later, after the school moved its base of operations to Rapid City, South Dakota, the name was changed again to Black Hills Indian Bible College. In 2002, Black Hills Indian Bible College formally closed its doors, but some of the former faculty members remain active in training Native Americans for ministry through extension courses. Native American Bible College, located in Shannon, North Carolina, is currently seeking regional accreditation.

³¹ Ibid., 18.

³² Email communication from Jim H. Lopez, September 15, 2004.

³³ Email communication from John E. Maracle, October 11, 2004.

³⁴ Only students of traditional Bible colleges were included in this total. No Berean School of the Bible students were counted.

³⁵ Data obtained through phone conversation with John E. Maracle, president of the Native American Fellowship of the Assemblies of God, October 7, 2004.

³⁶ See, for example, Charles R. Colbert, Joseph J. Saggio, and Dawn Tato “Enhancing the First Year Experience for American Indians/Alaska Natives” in *Transforming the First Year of College for Students of Color* (Monograph #38) Laura I. Rendón, Mildred García, and Dawn Person, eds. (Columbia, S.C.: National Resource Center for the First-Year Experience & Students in Transition, 2004): 137-160. See Joseph J. Saggio and Jim Dempsey “Creating Positive Institutional Climates for American Indian/Alaska Native students.” In *A Collection of Papers on Self-Study and Institutional Improvement*. (Vol. 2 of 4) S.E. Van Kollenberg (Ed.) (Chicago: the Higher Learning Commission, A Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, 2003): 117-122. See also Saggio, 2004. This baggage includes inadequate academic preparation for college, Western cultural hegemony that creates an unfavorable cultural climate for Native American students, financial difficulties and inadequate family support systems,

³⁷ Joseph J. Saggio, “Experiences Affecting Post-Freshman Retention of American Indian/Alaskan Native Students at a Bible College.” (Unpublished Ed.D. Dissertation, Arizona State University, 2000).

³⁸ George Russell, *American Indian Facts of Life: A Profile of Today's Tribes and Reservations*. (Phoenix: Russell Publications, 1997), 20.

³⁹ McGee, 2004, 159-162. McGee regards Alice Luce (1873-1955) as the Assemblies of God's “first true missions theorist.” Reared as an Anglican, she initially served as a missionary in India under the auspices of the Church Missionary Society (CMS) where she came under the missiological teachings of Roland Allen. Influenced strongly by his *Missionary Methods: St. Paul's or Ours?* Luce, like Allen, determined that indigenous missions strategy was a biblical mandate, not an option. Resigning from the CMS, she later joined the Assemblies of God and served for many years in Latin American missions work, eventually founding the Latin American Bible Institute (LABI) in San

Diego, California, (later moved to La Puente, California) where she taught until her death in 1955.

⁴⁰J.J. Hoover and C.C. Jacobs, "A Survey of American Indian College Students: Perceptions Towards their Study Skills/College Life." *Journal of American Indian Education*, 31 (Spring 1992): 21-29. See also Saggio and Dempsey, 118, where we show that American Indian College attained a 76.4% retention rate for first-year students, a respectable rate that is approximately 30% higher than the national average for Native American students.

⁴¹W.E. Martin and K.K. Ferris, "A Cultural and Contextual Path Approach to Career Assessment with Native Americans: A Psychological Perspective," *Journal of Career Assessment* 2 (Summer 1994): 258-275. I concur with Martin and Ferris. In my decade of work with Native Americans, I noticed that there is a strong cultural leaning toward giving families a strong input into decision-making made by individual members because all major decisions are seen as having an impact on both the individual and the family unit, including extended family such as aunts, uncles, cousins, and grandparents.

⁴²See W. Sakiestewa Gilbert, "Bridging the Gap Between High School and College: A Successful Program that Promotes Academic Success for Hopi and Navajo Students." Paper presented at a national conference titled "Retention in Education for Today's American Indian Nations." Tucson, Arizona, 20-23 April 1996, ERIC, ED 398 039. See also Saggio, 2000, 45-46.

⁴³Allen, 7.