Mission and ministry with Native American Peoples:  
*A Historical Survey of the Last*

*Three Centuries*

From the “Comprehensive Strategy for Ministries with Native Americans"

**Introduction**  
  
The General Assembly Task Force on Native American Ministries, appointed in 1995 by Overture 95-34, was directed to "study and review mission and ministries with Native American tribes and peoples" and then to develop a "comprehensive strategy for ministries with Native Americans." The Task Force report, entitled "Comprehensive Strategy for Ministries with Native Americans" contains a brief historical summary of the relationship between the Presbyterian Church and Native American peoples. However, in the process of gathering information on Native American ministries, it became clear to the Task Force that a more complete historical survey would be helpful to the larger PC(USA) which is not familiar with much of this history. Hence the decision was made to publish this historical survey as an addendum to the official Task Force Report.   
  
Three major themes emerged as the Task Force surveyed the historic relationship between the Presbyterian Church and Native American peoples. First, at least 200 years of the Presbyterian relationship with Native American peoples have been years in which the Presbyterian Church was active in the formation and implementation of government policies affecting Native American peoples. Because major Indian policy in the United States has focused on the land rights of Native peoples in these 200 years, Presbyterian work among Native Americans is largely linked to Native American land. Second, it is difficult to distill peculiarly Presbyterian work among Native peoples, as much of it was done in cooperation (and sometimes in competition) with other denominations. Third, it is only within the last 40 years of this approximate 300-year relationship that the Presbyterian Church as an institution has extended full decision-making and financial responsibility to Native American congregations.   
  
As this historical survey developed, the Task Force examined policies and theologies that have affected Native American peoples, as well as assumptions, beliefs and government policies and legislation. While it is not possible in this document to provide an exhaustive history of the Church's relationship with Native American peoples, the Task Force believes this survey will help the larger Church to appreciate many of the deep historical roots underlying many of the findings of the Task Force. Until the Church, at all levels, understands these historic issues, it will be difficult to authentically address the challenges of Native American Ministry today.   
  
This survey is not meant to be a substitute for the vast rich body of oral history that exists among Native American congregations. We hope this report will serve to encourage others to gather more oral histories, for these are living stories that come from the communities themselves and not out of history books. Indian people were an oral people for centuries and their story cannot be completely told by others.   
  
**Each Native Church Has Its Own Story**  
  
Establishment of Presbyterian ministries among Native American peoples closely followed the movement of European settlers from the East Coast to the West, and eventually Alaska. This survey covers mission in the Northeast and East, and then moves to mission in the Southeast among the Cherokees and other "civilized" tribes, then to the Midwest among the Plains tribes, then to the Northwest, the Southwest, and then to Alaska. The largest number of Native American churches was founded in the late 1800's to the early 1900's. 

**Early Protestant Mission in the East**   
  
The earliest Protestant mission work with Indians began in the seventeenth century by Puritans, for whom the conversion of the natives was an avowed purpose. Most charters of the early explorers to the New World included language highlighting the need to "convert the heathen" and extend God's kingdom to all. For example, the Charter of Massachusetts charged the governor and company to "Wynn and incite the Natives ... [to] the onlie true God and Savior of Mankind," while the Governor's oath required him to "doe your best endeavor to draw on the natives of this country ... to the true God." Although there was some missionary work beginning in the1620's, it did not take root until decades later.   
  
Early sermons and writings reflected a debate over whether to kill the Indians or convert them. William Crashaw in 1610 preached that the inhabitants not be killed but converted, and thereafter "profits will flow into the pockets of both company shareholders and the colonists if they put first the carrying out of God's plan for the colony. The principal aim of the colony is the conversion of the heathen, the second the creation of a Protestant bulwark against the Papist."   
  
The first American bible was called John Eliot's Bible because he helped translate it into the Algonquin Indian language in 1661. He organized communities of Christian Indians into "praying towns" at Natick, Massachusetts. They were to be a buttress against bad settlers or pagan influences. However, they did not prove to be safe sanctuaries, for Indians were later killed, dispersed or interned. The towns were broken up by 1676.   
  
At the time the first Presbytery was established at Philadelphia in 1706, by Francis Makemie, it is believed that there were 37 Indian Protestant pastors. They had received language training to speak English, interpret and translate in their ministry. They also taught missionaries their native languages.

  
 A society in Scotland for "propagating Christian knowledge" included Presbyterians and Calvinist Congregationalists by 1730. Prominent names were David and John Brainard, John Sargeant and Azariah Horton, the first commissioned Presbyterian minister, who organized the first Indian Presbyterian Church (L) in 1741 among the Shinnecock Indians. Eleazar Wheelock established a seminary named More's Charity School in Connecticut, his idea being to teach Indian youth in his boarding school, to train along with them white missionaries who would learn the language from them and then to send both white and Indian evangelists among the tribes. In 1770 this was moved from Connecticut to New Hampshire where he had founded Dartmouth College. John Brainerd sent the first students. Wheelock raised funds to support the school in England and Scotland. He tutored Samson Occum, a Mohegan who was ordained in 1759 by Suffolk Presbytery. Occum is believed to be the first Indian ordained in the Presbyterian Church.   
  
Another of Wheelock's students, Samuel Kirkland, was the first white student, entering in 1760. In 1764 he was sent on a mission to the Iroquois in central New York, with the intention of recruiting students for the school. After failing miserably among the Seneca's during a ten-month period, he was dispatched to Oneida territory. He spent the rest of his life among the Oneidas. Gaining the trust of some Oneida leaders, he helped to persuade the Oneidas to sell their lands in 1788. He was convinced that the Oneidas would never become farmers unless forced to by the loss of land for hunting.  
  
In 1787, the United States sought to seal alliances with Indian tribes in the Midwest through policies such as the Northwest Ordinance which contained language promising "the utmost good faith to Indians." At this time in history, when Indian tribes presented a serious military threat, the government was attempting to sort out its legal responsibility and ethical commitment. Secretary of War, Henry Knox saw a special role for the churches. In a letter to President George Washington, he wrote:   
  
"Missionaries, of excellent moral character, should be appointed to reside in the [Indian] nations, who should be well supplied with all the implements of husbandry, and the necessary stock for a farm.   
  
These men should be made the instruments to work on the Indians; presents should commonly pass through their hands or by their recommendation. They should in no degree, be concerned in trade, or the purchase of lands, to arouse the jealousy of the Indians. They should be their friends and fathers."  
  
Protestant mission among the Seneca's in upstate New York was not established until the early 1800's.   
  
**Presbyterian Mission in the Nineteenth Century**  
  
Prior to President Grant's Peace Policy, beginning in 1869, denominational work focused on evangelism and education. The Presbyterians were among some of the strongest advocates for Indian land rights in the first half of the nineteenth century, often criticizing and resisting government policies toward Indians, albeit with paternalistic motives. By the end of the nineteenth century the Presbyterians were among the "Christian Reformers" who not only influenced the formation of federal policy toward Indian tribes, but also participated in the implementation of policy. While there may have *First Indian Presbyterian Church, Kamiah, Idaho, Nez Perce*

Been altruistic motives behind many of these policies, they proved to

be some of the most threatening to the existence of Native peoples.    
  
The American Board for Foreign Missions was established in 1810 and the United Foreign Missionary Society (Presbyterian, Reformed, and Associate Reformed) was organized in 1816; these two merged in 1826. The Old School Presbyterians questioned the nondenominational stance of the American Board and began a Western Foreign Missionary Society in 1831. New School Presbyterians remained with the American Board. Together, they had worked among forty tribes.   
  
In Presbyterian mission work, all non-English speaking people were assigned to Foreign Missions, including Indians. Foreign Mission boards recognized the uniqueness of each tribe and culture as they did with nations overseas. Missionaries usually learned the languages and lived among the people, thereby learning about Native cultures. Some missionaries became strong advocates of Indian rights. Prior to the transfer of Indian missions to the Board of Home Missions in 1883, the Board of Foreign Missions described their past work:   
  
"Before concluding the report of these Indian Missions, the Board may well restate the principles on which they were founded and have been conducted for many years; note in a few words the results already gained; and briefly consider the proposed transfer of these missions. They were established in view of the spiritual state of the Indians. Their condition as lost sinners and their need of Christ as their savior, led our churches to seek their salvation. It was soon perceived that as a heathen people, and as speaking languages of their own, the same kind of missionary efforts were required for them as for the people of Africa and China. Their case was subjective rather than geographical in its leading features. In our church system of "Boards," each from the beginning had its own work; and evangelistic work for the heathen was assigned to the Board of Foreign Missions without reference to the particular region where they lived. Organized Christian efforts for them fell naturally into the province of Foreign Missions. These efforts took the form of preaching, teaching in schools, training native missionary laborers, translating portions of the scriptures, etc., very much as if they lived in Syria or Persia. The missionaries were appointed to work for life, if Providence should permit, and to work exclusively for the Indians. They were not placed under the care of superintendents, by whatever name called, any more than is the work of our brethren in China or India, while the supervision of Presbyteries was in all cases welcomed and prized. This work was distinctively reported by the Board, with an account of the expenses of each mission, as in the case of other missions. Under this general line of proceeding for fifty years, such men as Dr's. Kingsbury, Byington, Williamson, Wright, Spalding and others, to refer only to men who have finished their course, have been honored by the churches as missionaries to the Indians, equally with their brethren in other foreign fields. It was to be expected that the work of such men, conducted on these principles, should grow in favor with God and His people. The results of their labors were eminently blessed. Many hundred of the Indians were brought to their Savior by his grace, lived exemplary Christian lives and triumphed at death in the hope of the Gospel. A number have been ordained as ministers of the Gospel and others are in training for the ministry. Education and the ways of Christian life have been adopted in several tribes. As to temporal matters, the civilization of the Seneca's, Cherokees, Creeks, Choctaws, Omaha's, Dakotas, Nez Perces and others must be ascribed largely to these missions — indeed, for more to them then to all other agencies combined."  
  
Several features of mission work among Indian tribes in the 1800's are noteworthy. The Church provided a program designed for the entire community, for all ages, oftentimes inter-generational, teaching in schools to children and youth, and training native missionary workers to lead worship and translate scriptures. Adults were trained and ordained to proclaim and administer the sacraments. Missionaries were appointed for life, working exclusively for the Indians. A commitment to Christian community meant the active participation of the missionary and his whole family in the life of the community. They were often dependent on the hunters of the village to provide deer or elk meat and fish from the river, lake or sea. As they learned the language, they learned about the culture and world view of the Indian people. After Indian mission work was placed under the Board of Home Missions in 1883, missionaries did not follow a lifelong calling to a particular tribe.   
  
Evangelism by Christian tribes and native pastors was at its zenith at the time the Church moved Indian work to home missions in 1883. Many tribes had established their own evangelistic outreach to other tribes. Each body planned its internal and external outreach program. The Dakotas established their "Wotanin Waste Fund" (Good News Fund) over a hundred years ago, designed to support mission work among the Dakotas. The Nez Perce evangelized among the Shoshone, Makahs, Paiutes, Spokanes, Umatillas and Pima's. Mission work among the Papagos (Tohono O'odham) was started by the Pima's. Additionally, a number of Tribal Christian camp meetings were established and continue today. These were planned by the Indians, for purposes of evangelism and outreach and financially supported by the Indian people themselves. Among the present day camp meetings are the Sioux Mission Meeting in Dakota Presbytery, Nez Perce Camp in Inland Northwest Presbytery, Pima-Maricopa Camp in Grand Canyon Presbytery, the Tohono O'odham in De Cristo Presbytery and Ft. McDowell among the Yavapai in Grand Canyon Presbytery. Camp meetings among the Navajo and are often inter-denominational. Choctaw Churches have a tradition of Singing Conventions, usually held on weekends.   
  
When Congress in 1819 authorized an annual appropriation of $10,000 to support educational establishments among the Indians, the American Board became the largest beneficiary. By 1929 it had 21schools among the Five-Civilized Tribes, compared with seven for all other denominations combined. When Georgia began to seek removal of the Cherokees, the American Board defended the right of the Cherokees to remain on their lands.   
  
By 1845, Manifest Destiny, a credo that (white) Americans were destined by divine providence to expand their national dominion by whatever means necessary, spurred the race to populate the western frontier. General Sherman wanted to bring about submission and acculturation "at the point of a bayonet," suggesting that only the army was capable of dealing with the western Indians. In 1849, with the East nearly free of tribal nations, the Bureau of Indian Affairs was transferred from the War Department to the Department of the Interior. This administrative move provided the backdrop for numerous political appointments of Indian Service agents in the west.   
At the time of the Civil War, some Indian tribes fought on the confederate side and some on the union side. When the confederates lost, those tribes on the southern side were penalized as well. In the forward to his book, "Confederate Cherokees, " W. Craig Gaines writes:   
  
"Although many Indian nations fought in the Civil War, historians have given little attention to the role Native Americans played in the conflict. Indian nations did, in fact, suffer a higher percentage of casualties than any Union or Confederate state, and the war almost destroyed the Cherokee Nation."  
  
The Southern Presbyterian Church, which was located in states that had supported removal of Indians to west of the Mississippi, had approximately twenty schools before the Civil War, but they had to be closed. Few were re-opened. An unpublished document in the Indian files at the Montreat Historical Society states that the Southern Church turned over some of its Indian work to the Northern Church, stating that it had no funds to continue its Indian Work. The Good land Presbyterian Children's Home in Oklahoma began in 1850, added an orphanage in 1894 and since 1972 has provided group living, emergency care and counseling for children. In the 20 or so years following the Civil War, the resistance of the Indians to the invasion of their homelands by miners and settlers as well as the wanton destruction of the buffalo, led to wars that dominated discussion of Indian policy.

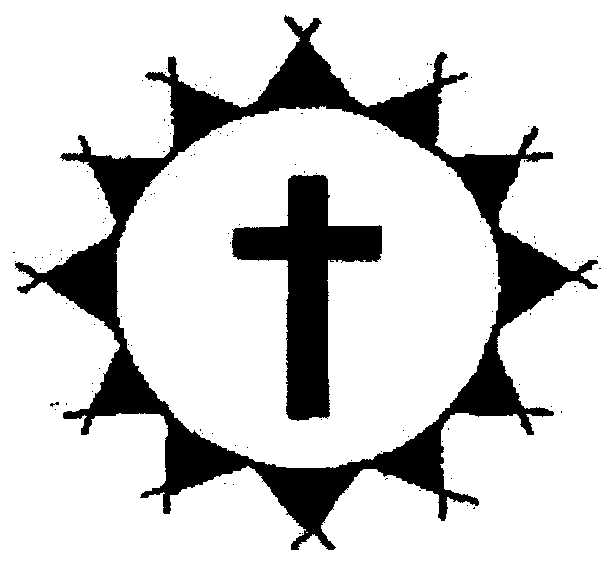
President Grant in 1869 inaugurated his "peace policy," designed to promote peaceful relations with Indian tribes. He appointed Ely Parker, a Seneca who had served in the Civil War, to be Commissioner of Indian Affairs. One aspect of this policy was a new system of choosing field personnel to serve as government agents after numerous allegations of fraud and corruption. Missionary boards of the various churches agreed to provide agents and other personnel to manage the Indian reservations. The Board of Indian Commissioners, created by Congress in 1869 as part of the peace policy, served as a liaison between the government and the churches. In order to promote cooperation, the Board held a meeting each January to provide a forum to discuss Indian affairs; they invited the secretaries of the mission boards to report on their work as well as the Commissioner of Indian affairs and other government officials. Missionaries were appointed as field agents until the 1880's.   
  
Under the Peace Policy, Christian missionaries were to be recommended by their denominations for appointments as Indian agents on reservations, beginning with the Quakers, then Protestants, then Catholics. Because of the Civil War, three Southern Church Boards were not included, namely, Southern Baptist, Southern Methodist and Southern Presbyterian. They represented southern states who had advocated the removal of the Southern Indian tribes from the Southeast to Oklahoma. The government assigned separate denominations to different Indian reservations, attempting to avoid denominational conflict on any one reservation. In 1872, out of seventy-three agencies assigned, the Presbyterians had nine, including a census of 38,069 Indians. Hence, Indian people by and large did not have a personal choice about denomination, theology or polity. If they decided to accept Christianity, they had to select the denomination assigned to their reservation.   
  
The Peace Policy raised a number of Church-State questions about the religious freedom of Indians. However, the emphasis was more on freedom for churches to exercise their doctrinal positions than Indian people to have a choice of faith or denomination:   
  
By religious freedom they meant liberty of actions on the reservations for their own missionary activities. "The Indians have a right, under the Constitution, as much as any other person in the Republic," one Catholic statement asserted, to the full enjoyment of liberty of conscience; accordingly they have the right to choose whatever Christian belief they wish, without interference from the Government.  
  
Although Protestant and Catholic groups professed a sincere regard for the well-being and advancement of the Indians, their concern was chiefly that of transforming the Indians into "acceptable Christian citizens." As Prucha puts it, "Catholics and Protestants alike saw nothing worth preserving in the Indian groups they sought to convert and civilize.  
  
In the 1870's and 1880's a system of mission schools supported in part by government funds emerged. In 1875, the General Assembly passed a resolution to "Christianize and civilize the Indians." (Minutes, UPCUSA, 1875, Part I, p. 541.) Presbyterians and other denominations supplied the buildings and teachers, and the government paid an annual amount to each school for each child enrolled. By 1878 the government began to sponsor its own boarding schools with the intent of assimilating Native people.   
  
Hampton Institute School for Blacks enrolled Indians in 1878, where Booker T. Washington was a housefather to students. This began the federal boarding school experience for Indians. The Carlisle Indian Training and Industrial School, Carlisle, Pennsylvania was founded by Capt. Richard Henry Pratt whose philosophy was to "kill the Indian, save the man." Other schools were added: Chemawa Indian School in Oregon (1878), Genoa Indian School, Nebraska (1884); Haskell Institute, Kansas (1884); and Chilocco Indian School, Oklahoma (1884). After years of denominational bickering over which denomination was to receive funds, Congress voted to end appropriations to sectarian schools in 1899. Among the denominations, the Catholics proceeded most strongly after 1900 with mission schools. Conflict arose among the churches about allowing religious instruction in the government schools. Mandatory religious instruction was questioned. Schools continued to provide meeting rooms for religious instruction. The Council of Women for Home Missions supported Protestant chaplains at federal boarding schools.   
  
President Grover Cleveland, Presbyterian, was present at the Presbyterian General Assembly in 1887, where denominational executives and missionaries met to request that Cleveland enact a federal policy that would prohibit Indians from practicing their ceremonies, dances, songs, languages, arts and crafts. The elimination of language, the heart of culture, would have eradicated heritage and religion. These assimilation policies were implemented especially in federal boarding schools where students were punished for speaking their own languages.   
  
In 1871 Indian treaty making came to an end as a result of a drawn-out conflict of authority between the House of Representatives and the Senate. Land cession had been the major purpose of most of treaties with Indian tribes. The Supreme Court had held in the 1830s that Indian nations are "distinct political communities, having territorial boundaries, within which their authority is exclusive, and having a right to all lands within those boundaries." Christian reformers attacked the system of treaty-making as part of their movement to end tribal organization and make the Indians wards of the state and then ultimately individualized and absorbed as citizens. Bishop Whipple declared that it was "impolitic for our Government to treat a heathen community living within our borders as an independent nation, instead of regarding them as our wards" in an 1862 statement on Indian reform by the General Conference of the Episcopal Church. Since 1871, Indian reservations have been established by executive order and acts of Congress. However, reformers remained dissatisfied as the government continued to recognize tribes.

Presbyterian Mission: A Regional Survey

**Protestant Mission in the Northeast**  
  
From 1805 to 1811 the New York Missionary Society began mission work at the Cattaragus reservation. In 1821 the mission was transferred to the United Foreign Missionary Society and in 1823 a church was organized on the reservation. From 1832 to 1875 the Rev. and Mrs. Asher Wright worked at Upper Cattaragus. He is said to be the only male missionary to have acquired a satisfactory knowledge of the Seneca language. He translated the four Gospels into Seneca. In 1843 the church at Jimmersontown, on the Allegheny Reservation, was established. In 1868 a church was established on the Tonawanda Reservation. In 1870 the work was transferred from the American Board to the Presbyterian Board.   
  
Shinnecock Church on Long Island, New York, over 250 years old, continues as a Native American congregation in Long Island Presbytery. Holly Haile Smith, a Shinnecock woman ordained in the 1985 was the first Native American woman to be ordained by the Presbyterian Church.   
  
**Southeast Mission**  
  
In 1803, Gideon Blackburn was assigned by the Presbyterian General Assembly to serve as a missionary among the Cherokees. Cyrus Kingsbury, missionary, followed to the Cherokees in 1810. He persuaded President Madison to consider appropriating funds for the "civilization" of Indian people. In 1819, Congress passed the Civilization Fund providing $10,000 annually to "moralize Indians." The funds were "for the purpose of providing against the further decline and final extinction of the Indian tribes...and for introducing among them the habits and arts of civilization." The government wanted to civilize and the Church wanted to "Christianize" the Indians. The money funded schools which began to educate Indian students away from their culture while providing skills in black smithing and agriculture. In 1820, the Presbyterian General Assembly endorsed the "gospelizing of the Indians on the frontiers of our country, connected with a plan for their civilization..."  
  
The Civilization Fund supported the schooling of Indian children in partnership with several denominations. For some tribes, this was a positive experience. Because some states would not provide schools for Indian children, the churches believed that education and civilization would improve the lives of Indian people, so they built and staffed denominational mission schools. But when boarding schools were introduced and children were forced to attend school whether their parents gave permission or not, it became less positive. Families were broken up and parents no longer had primary responsibility for their children. Subsequent graduates of the school had little or no parenting skills because they had not been a part of a nuclear family. They had not experienced the necessary bonding for a nuclear family to become strong against adversity and trial. For many years the federal government did not emphasize higher education, only vocational training.   
  
The American Board developed a model school at Brainard in 1817 and other schools. They sent young men to schools in New England, but racism intervened when Elias Boudinot and John Ridge, both Cherokee, courted white women while attending Cornwall Mission School. It was closed in the fall of 1826 because of the incident. Later the women married these Cherokee men who became outstanding leaders. The outcry against Cherokee intermarriage was heard back in Cherokee territory and it shamed and frustrated the missionaries who had been working among them.   
  
Elias Boudinot spoke before the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in 1821 and sought credentials for Cherokees as civilized citizens. He was told that because the Cherokees were "nomadic" and not able to describe the metes and bound of their property, they could not be fully civilized. In 1826, Boudinot addressed the First Presbyterian Church of Philadelphia, describing the Phoenix, a Cherokee-published newspaper which used Sequoyah's Cherokee syllabary of 86 characters, their unicameral system of government, Supreme Court, library, churches, grist mills, thousands of cattle, sheep, swine and horses. Yet the Cherokees were not considered "civilized."   
  
On December 8, 1829, President Andrew Jackson (a Presbyterian) in his first annual message to Congress proposed removal of the Cherokees from their land in Georgia. In 1830 Congress passed the Indian Removal Act forcing Indians to move west of the Mississippi River. In 1835, Jackson rationalized, that "all preceding experiments for the improvement of the Indian have failed. It seems now to be an established fact that they cannot live in contact with a civilized community and prosper."  
  
Jeremiah Evarts, a Christian lawyer, traveled extensively into Indian communities becoming very knowledgeable about treaty rights. He became a fervent advocate of Indian rights against Indian Removal. He became treasurer of the American Board of Commissioners and believed that if America did not manifest moral courage and justice towards Indians, the soul of America would be compromised. Writing under the pen name, "William Penn," he prepared many legal documents and tracts arguing against the policy of removal. When he died in 1831, much of the struggle died with him. The Choctaws were most directly affected and removed in 1831.   
  
Georgia had enacted laws against the Cherokees. The Cherokee in 1831 sued the State of Georgia for intrusion of their sovereignty. The Cherokees argued that the Supreme Court could render a judgment over "Foreign nations and states." The Supreme Court ruled that the State of Georgia had no jurisdiction over the Cherokees, but that the Cherokees were not a foreign nation and defined them as a "domestic dependent nation."   
  
In 1832, Samuel Worcester, a Presbyterian missionary, was arrested and sentenced to four years of hard labor for violation of a state statute which required that all non-Indians obtain a state license to work with Indians. He sued the State of Georgia. In Worcester v. Georgia, the Supreme Court studied the treaties signed between the United States and the Cherokee Nation and recognized the Indian right to self-government and the Cherokee right to provide sanctuary to Worcester, and the obligation of the United States to protect the sovereignty of Cherokees.   
  
The Cherokees and Choctaws had been Jackson allies in the War of 1812 and at Horseshoe Bend in 1815. In spite of a victory before the Supreme Court, they remained victims of political chicanery. Jackson stated that "treaties are an absurdity." In 1836, the Cherokees were removed over the "Trail of Tears," to Indian territory in Oklahoma. The Removal Policy, under a mask of benevolence, sent other eastern tribes to Oklahoma. The American Board had supported the Indians but Removal Laws settled the matter for them. Missionary Worcester joined the Cherokees on the Trail of Tears and continued to print Christian literature.  
The Seminoles were also removed to Oklahoma Territory in 1832. In 1849 a boarding school was opened with 11 pupils at Oak Ridge; it was suspended in 1861 due to the Civil War. In 1866 the Rev. J. Ross Ramsey resumed missionary work, reopening the boarding school in 1870. Of the Seminole churches established, Cheyarha was the main church, with chapels at Maud (Achena, established in 1884), Tallahassee and Wewoka First.   
  
**Mission in the Great Plains**  
  
Under the American Board of Commissioners (who worked with Congregationalists and New School Presbyterians) the Dakota mission was opened by the Reverend Thomas S. Williamson in 1831 near Lac Qui Parle, Minnesota and was later joined in 1837 by the Rev. Stephen Return Riggs. They developed teaching materials written in both Dakota and English.   
  
The Civil War began in 1861 and lasted until 1865. Meanwhile, treaty promises of the United States were unfulfilled, leading to near starvation and the Great Sioux uprising in 1862. In Mankato, Minnesota, 303 Sioux Indians were to be hanged, but churchmen and concerned citizens persuaded President Abraham Lincoln to review the cases and consequently 265 people were given lesser sentences. Thirty-eight (38) were hanged. Presbyterian John P. Williamson and Catholic Fr. Augustine Ravoux visited Indians frequently in prison and most of them converted to Christianity. The Santee Sioux were sent to Bazille Creek in Nebraska and later traveled to an area near present day Flandreau, South Dakota where they became the first Indians to homestead. John Eastman, Santee Sioux, became a Presbyterian minister, while his brother Charles Eastman became a famous surgeon, author and one of the founders of the Boy Scouts of America.  
  
The Ft. Laramie Treaty of 1868 accorded the Sioux all the land west of the Missouri river in South Dakota, but the United States broke the treaty in 1874 when gold was discovered in the Black Hills of South Dakota.   
  
"Wounded Knee" in southwestern South Dakota has been called the last of the Indian wars, but in truth it was a massacre of mainly women and children in the winter of 1890 when Chief Bigfoot, deathly ill of pneumonia, surrendered under a flag of truce. Dr. Charles Eastman, Santee Sioux surgeon, had the burden of being the coroner for the ill fated Indian people.   
  
While denominations were asked to administer and educate on their assigned reservations, a question arose in 1874 about a Native Missionary society. Dakota Christians had organized their own missionary society and called David Renville and his wife to serve among the Devils Lake Sioux community in North Dakota. Other missionaries questioned this action, arguing that only those denominations assigned by the government could minister to that tribe. Dakota Christians, who viewed this as a rejection of their right to minister to their own people, protested and appealed to the government. The American Board and the Presbyterian Board supported the Renvilles. Beaver, in his book, writes, "the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church sent a petition to President Hayes stating ...We would strongly insist upon giving to the Indians the same religious liberty which we claim for ourselves; that reservations should be open to all religious societies who sincerely work for the elevation of the Indians."  
  
Dakota Presbytery, the only Indian non-geographic presbytery, has carried on mission until the present. There are 21 churches in Montana, South Dakota, North Dakota and Minnesota. Dakota Presbytery and the Dakota Conference of United Church of Christ carry on the historic work of the American Board of Commissioners.   
  
**The Northwest Mission, Opening of the Oregon Territory**  
  
In 1803, President Jefferson negotiated the Louisiana Purchase with France. He wanted land west of the Mississippi in which to remove the Southeastern Indians. The "Oregon Territory" was not part of the purchase, but Jefferson appointed Meriwether Lewis and George Rogers Clark to explore lands to the Pacific Ocean.   
  
The Nez Perce Indians sent four men to St. Louis in search of the "Whiteman's Book of Heaven" in 1831. News articles of the event announced the call for missionaries to go to the Northwest. The American Board sent men to Oregon, Washington and Idaho. Jason Lee founded the Mission in the Pacific Northwest near Fort Vancouver, Washington. In 1835, Marcus and Narcissa Whitman went to the Oregon Territory and Henry and Eliza Spalding went to the Nez Perce in *Spalding Presbyterian Church, Spalding, ID,*  Idaho. Kamiah First and the Spalding Church were the first churches organized among the Nez Perce in 1871. Ahsahka, Kamiah Second, Stites and Meadowcreek came later.   
  
Chief Joseph of the Nez Perce successfully fought the United States army over a 1300 mile "rear guard action" in 1877. The "Thief Treaty" in 1863 reduced the original reservation by six million acres of Nez Perce land including Joseph's beloved Wallowa homeland. Chief Joseph who had been baptized as a Christian, then returned to his traditional religion.   
  
American Board missionaries, especially Whitman continued to work and lobby for the Oregon territory to be part of the United States, while the British also claimed the territory. There was a race to populate the Northwest in order to substantiate the claim to the region.   
  
The United Presbyterians of North America opened work at Warm Springs reservation in Oregon in 1866. Neah Bay in Washington was originally assigned to the Disciples in 1872, but Presbyterians later assumed responsibility. The Tutuilla Church among the Umatillas in present day Oregon was begun in 1822. The American Missionary Association, organized in 1846, took over the Indian work of the Board of Commissioners in 1883. The Church of Indian Fellowship served Indian patients at Cushman Hospital located near Tacoma, Washington.   
  
In 1873 Henry Spaulding visited the Spokanes at their invitation. He received 253 members and he was later appointed a missionary but died in 1874. In 1882 a church was founded at Wellpinit, Washington. In the next four years 146 persons were added to the church rolls.   
  
**Southwest Mission**  
  
From 1848 to 1853 the United States boundary was expanded to include Arizona, New Mexico, Texas and California through the Treaty of Guadalupe Hildago. The Gadsden Purchase added the remaining lands of Arizona, New Mexico and California.   
  
Ft. Defiance was built in Arizona in 1851 to "control" the Navajos. Manuelito retaliated for the killing his livestock and attacked the fort. The Navajos were forced on the "Long Walk" of 350 wintry miles and imprisoned at Bosque Redondo, New Mexico from 1863 until 1868. After the Long Walk, and the establishment of the Navajo reservation, Presbyterian missionaries were assigned to the Navajo reservation as part of the Peace Policy. *Cook Memorial Presbyterian Church, Sacaton, AZ, Pima*  
  
The mission among the Navajo included Ganado, a mission school, church and hospital began in 1901. The Presbyterian ministry included healing as well as preaching. The Sage Memorial hospital at Ganado provided a powerful presence for healing, especially when tuberculosis hit the tribe in the 1930's. Ganado had one of the first nursing programs for Indian students in the southwest. Navajo missions were assigned shortly after the Peace Policy in 1870-71. Today there are churches at Tuba City, Kayenta, O'jato, Chinle, Indian Wells, Leupp and Fort Defiance.   
  
The Pima Indians, known as the best farmers in the Southwest, were courted by both the North and South during the Civil War for food stuffs, wheat and vegetables. People heading for the gold fields in California detoured to the Pima's in order to secure food before traveling west.   
  
Charles H. Cook, a school teacher in 1870 began work among the Pima's as a teacher. Persuaded by Sheldon Jackson to become a Presbyterian minister, he officially began Presbyterian work in 1878. He began 11 churches among the Pima-Maricopa and Yavapai. The "Mother Church of the Pima's," organized in 1879, is the C. H. Cook Memorial Church in Sacaton, Arizona. Cook Bible School, now Cook College and Theological School, began in 1911 in Tucson, moved to Phoenix a year later and then to Tempe, Arizona in 1965. Central Presbyterian Church began in 1915 and is the only organized urban Indian church in the Presbyterian denomination. "Escuela" a Presbyterian High School in Tucson, Arizona, established in 1888, was a central place for many southern Arizona tribes. It was closed in 1960. The two schools developed native church leadership in Arizona during this time.   
  
A boarding school was established among the Papagos (now Tohono' Odham) in 1890, by the Presbyterian Home Mission Board, twenty eight years before the reservation was established in 1918. In 1912 Presbyterians, following their successful work among Gila Pima's, began to extend their programs to the Papagos. By 1920 they had set up work in Topawa and Choulic. There are five chapels on the Tohono' Odham reservation with the church at Sells, Arizona, being the headquarters. The chapels are located at Vamori, Santa Rosa, Topawa and San Miguel.   
  
In Texas, the Alabama Coushatta Church was established in 1884, not as an incident of directed mission, but as a result of a Presbyterian minister getting lost and rescued by the Coushattas. Dr. S.F. Tenney a minister from Crockett, Texas, was on his way to visit churches in Beaumont when he got lost. Indian people found him and took him to their home until he became well enough to continue on his journey. On April 3, 1880, Tenney brought the "plight of the Indians" to the attention of his Presbytery and asked that the Evangelistic Committee look into the situation and employ a missionary. On November 1, 1880, Dr. L. W.Currrie and his wife from North Carolina were sent to work with the Alabama Coushattas in Polk County. He built a school, and in 1884 he officially organized the Indian Presbyterian Church. The church survived a fire in 1886, said to have been set by "lawless white men," and continues to this day.   
  
In New Mexico, the Rev. John Menaul began work as a government school teacher at Laguna Pueblo in 1875. The Laguna Presbyterian Church was founded in 1897. The church at Jemez Pueblo, established in 1878, was closed in the 1970's. The Ute Mountain Church is located near Towoac, Colorado. Menaul School in Albuquerque, New Mexico, originally was a school for Indians, and has been turned over for Hispanic students while still enrolling Indian students.   
  
Churches were also established among the Paiute in the Eastern Sierras of California (Valley Presbyterian in Bishop), and in Northern California among the Hupa at Hoopa. In 1912 a church was reported with four mission stations. There were 108 communicants. The founding minister was the Rev. W. N. Price. Eventually the mission work in the Owens Valley included churches at Bishop, Lone Pine, and Big Pine.   
  
**Alaska Mission**  
  
Alaska was purchased from Russia in 1867 for $7.2 million, but citizenship and Alaska native rights were not considered in the land transaction. The Russian Church was first into Alaska in 1794. Sheldon Jackson began his ministry at Spencer Academy in Oklahoma among Indians. He had organized several churches in Midwestern and Southwestern states. He recruited Amanda McFarland for Alaska and she began a school for girls at Ft. Wrangell in 1877. In Alaska, he became General Agent for Education while simultaneously serving as superintendent of Presbyterian Missions. He established a comity agreement in Alaska and depended on the Protestant churches to provide him with teachers and finances. He traveled to Barrow in 1890, but the church did not begin until 1897. From the base at Barrow, the churches at Wainwright, Barter Island, and Kaktovik were begun after 1913.   
  
The Wales Church was given over to Presbyterians by Congregationalists and in 1954 it was traded to Mission Covenant Church in return for the church at Yakutat, Alaska. Anaktuvak Pass received instruction and began a church in the 1950's. The churches at Gambell and Savoonga on St. Lawrence Island were not organized until 1942. Jackson established Presbyterian mission points including schools, one named after him, Sheldon Jackson College in Sitka, Alaska. The school served many of the southeastern villages where Presbyterian Churches are located such as Juneau, Kake, Hoonah, Angoon, St. Petersburg, Sitka, Wrangell, Ketchikan, Hydaburg, Craig, Klukwan and Metlakatla.  William Duncan led the Tsimshian from Ft. Simpson, British Columbia, to Metlakatla, Alaska. He had been an Anglican in Canada but did not believe his denomination supported him enough. Congress established the Annette Islands Reserve in 1891. The Tsimpshian later voted whether to remain with a non-denominational church or establish a Presbyterian Church at Metlakatla. On October 18, 1920 the Presbyterian Church was organized. While the native people respected Duncan for his early leadership, they were dismayed when he attempted to rule as if the community and its property belonged to him. Duncan especially lost favor when

he dissolved the Metlakatla Industrial Company, turning the assets over to himself.

*Peter Simpson, Sheldon Jackson (seated) and Edward Marsden, ca. 1896-1913.*

Edward Marsden was a Tsimshian who championed Indian rights, sought educational opportunity in theology and ministry. He had great respect for missionary Duncan, but when he returned after his long tenure of education, it is said that Duncan refused his hand shake. Duncan had advised against his leaving for an education, but received encouragement from Dr. Sheldon Jackson. He was rebuked in his ministry and on one occasion replied to the Board of Home Missions in 1919 when he wrote his philosophy. Multitudes of testimony supported his selfless ministry.   
  
"I believe, Sir, that my Indian race, especially those that are here, should receive all the benefits of the plain and pure gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, worship all the advantages of education, engage in honorable business, bear the burdens of their own progress against being treated as words and nursing babes, be under representative rule and authority, practice the requirements of Christian freedom and conform themselves to the duties and mandates of the national government under whose protection and flag they are living today. This is my platform and is one on which I propose to deal with them in the years to come, if my poor life is spared."  
  
In Southeast Alaska, the Alaska Native Brotherhood (ANB) and Alaska Native Sisterhood (ANS) were very strong native organizations that involved tribal leadership in social and legal concerns while the churches dealt with the ecclesiastical and spiritual concerns. But it must be understood that all of the meetings were opened with prayer and often had a worshipful emphasis to their meetings. Members were inspired at each meeting when they sang their theme song, "Onward Christian Soldiers." Presbyterians and the Salvation Army gave the initial support to these organizations, as well as provided important leadership.   
  
**Presbyterian Policy 1880's to 1930's**   
  
Perhaps the largest loss of Indian land occurred as a consequence of the Dawes Act, which was strongly supported in 1884-1847 by Christian denominations who gathered yearly at Lake Mohonk Conference grounds in New York. Under the Dawes Act "solution," each Indian was to be given an allotment of land, thereby undermining the concept of communally held tribal land. Christians rationalized, "Let the Indian have the same right to personal possession of his land as any American citizen or immigrant." They will leave their nomadic ways, settle down, become farmers and responsible citizens. The Dawes Act opened the way for the federal government to declare all un allotted land as surplus and open for sale. More land was lost because Indians did not understand tax laws relative to property. Many lost their land and others sold land because they were not accustomed to individual ownership of land.   
  
Lands were allotted from 1887 to 1934. Lands not allotted or designated tribal were considered surplus and opened for sale. By the time the policy ended in 1934, with the passage of the Indian Reorganization Act, Indians had lost 90 million acres of land.   
  
Churches became beneficiaries of the Dawes Act when in 1922, all denominations that had used land given under the terms of the Act were granted title to the property. The Board of National Missions was established in 1923. Some tribes believed that they had a treaty with a denomination assigned to their reservation. It raises the question as to what "trust responsibility" does the Church have for the land which has been entrusted to their care? Some tribes actually believe that they have a "treaty" with the Presbyterian Church, whereby they have given up land for a Presbyterian church and ministerial leadership.   
American Indians were made United States citizens in their own country in 1924. By 1928, Lewis Merriam completed a study of Indian Affairs which documented the failure of federal Indian policy during the allotment period, and provided impetus for sweeping changes in federal Indian policy. The Indian Reorganization Act (IRA), passed in 1934, ended the practice of allotment, thereby offering protection for the land base of tribes. The IRA also encouraged tribes to adopt a constitutional style of government; while many tribes did so, a good number resisted, insisting on maintaining their traditional forms of government. John Collier, the new Indian Commissioner, followed recommendations of the Merriam study and supported the return of Indian culture and heritage, much to the chagrin of various church denominations. They feared a return to traditional ways, thus subverting their assimilation ethic. The social science approach adopted by Commissioner John Collier was clearly at odds with the Christian motivation behind the Christian reformers of the late 19th century.   
The National Fellowship of Indian Workers was organized at Madison, Wisconsin in 1935 by the Protestant Churches who had historic missions. This organization brought together Christian Church workers and federal government employees to seek mutual solutions to Indian issues. The emphasis was on fellowship for it prompted church workers and federal employees to meet and develop acquaintances and friendships. The Presbyterian Church provided limited travel grants so Indian families could participate in this ecumenical conference.   
  
In 1953, Congress adopted "termination" legislation during the Eisenhower (a Presbyterian) administration. Its express aim was to "make the Indians within the territorial limits of the United States subject to the same laws and entitled to the same privileges and responsibilities as are applicable to other citizens of the United States, [and] to end their status as wards of the United States." H. Con. Res. 108, 83rd Cong., 67 Stat. B132 (1953). While this language may sound, neutral, the intention of some members of Congress was clearly to terminate tribes' existence as tribes, a reiteration of the assimilation ethic of the late 1800's. The results were devastating for thirteen tribes whose relationship with the federal government was terminated; they were subjected to state laws, and their lands were converted into private ownership and in most instances sold. This federal policy threatened all tribes as it sought to chip away at Tribal government and sovereignty. The church response was mixed. Some thought that this was a way by which Indians could enter the "mainstream society," not fully understanding the importance of tribal sovereignty. The 1949 PCUSA General Assembly had earlier "recommend[ed] that an enlightened government Indian policy limit ward ship." The UPC in 1954 issued a general policy statement against forced termination of tribes (Minutes, 1954, UPC, Part I, p. 193).   
  
**Contemporary History: 1960's to Present**   
  
Beginning with the National Indian Goals Study in 1964, denominations attempted to work ecumenically through the Joint Strategy and Action Committee, the National Council of Churches Fifth Commission, Fellowship of Indian Workers, Cook School, Native American Theological Association and later the Council of Native American Ministries (CoNAM). In contrast to the stark paternalism of the 1800's, national Presbyterian Church actions in the 1970' s and 1980's reflected the concerns and requests of Indian nations. Creation of a national Native American consulting body in the church has been instrumental in giving the Church direction in addressing current issues. This has resulted in more General Assembly overtures addressing tribal social, legal and ecological issues. There have been more Indians trained in biblical and theological studies. The Commissioned Lay Preacher program has been adopted by many Presbyteries. Programs for the youth have been added, yet there is much to be done.   
  
From 1964 to 1967, the Presbyterian Church led in the Indian Goals Study, which included eleven denominations with historic Indian work. Sponsored by the National Council of Churches, Division of Christian Life and Mission, it was the first time that Indian people participated in an evaluation of Indian ministries. In the process of the Goals Study, Robert Bennett, Commissioner of Indian Affairs, invited the Indian Goals committee to participate in national tribal field hearings he conducted. Despite some attempts by church executives to use this as a vehicle to recommend closure of Indian churches, the study came out in strong support of self-determination, employment of Indian executives and the creation of national Indian Boards to advise on program for Indian Churches. It broadened the definition of the Churches' mission to include issues confronting Indian people such as education, health, housing, stereotyping, Christian curriculum and training. The adoption of the Goals by the eleven participating denominations supported the concept of Indian self-determination by Indian people in government and church policy definition. Each denomination was challenged to establish a national Indian Board and employ Indian executives in the Church. There was also a strong emphasis on support for Indian youth.   
  
Cook Christian Training School, with an ecumenical Board of Trustees, adopted the Indian Goals and revised its curriculum to implement the Indian Goals recommendations. Cook had been designated as the official center for training Indian Church leadership by the Board of National Missions in 1968. In 1974 Cook conducted a study of Native American Church Careers, and thereafter introduced Theological Education by Extension as a method by which the reformation theme, "Priesthood of all believers" could be implemented in training laity for ministry. The Native American Theological Association (NATA) was formed including the Presbyterian, United Church, Methodist, Baptist and Lutheran denominations. Seven theological seminaries from those denominations were members. From 1975 to 1985, NATA assisted 21 Indian students to graduate from seminary. With the support of the Fifty Million Fund, the Native American Theological Educational Consortium (NATEC) trained 810 laity and 11 clergy while it participated with NATA in developing theological studies. NATEC included Cook Theological School, Huron College, later University of the Ozarks and Dubuque Theological Seminary.   
  
In 1969, the General Assembly provided $100,000 in seed money for Indian church projects. An Indian Consulting Panel was established to review Indian church proposals for funding of projects. In 1970, an Indian commissioner at General Assembly appealed for the support of Indian youth from the Board of Christian Education. The amount of $100,000 was approved on the floor of the General Assembly.   
  
The need for a permanent Native American Consulting Committee (NACC) became apparent after the Consulting Panel began its work. In 1972 the General Assembly, at a time of restructure, approved the creation of NACC, which became a consulting body to the Program Agency, UPCUSA , with an administrative and program budget. (Minutes 1972, UPCUSA, Part I, pg. 286) NACC, Consulting Panel on Indian Ministries, membership included seven representatives of seven synods which had Indian congregations within its bounds, and seven members at large. NACC also included in 1982, an Indian representative from the Southern Church (PCUS).

In 1979, a church wide Policy on Native American Ministry was adopted by the General Assembly; this was subsequently adopted by the eight synods that have Indian congregations. This policy survived the 1983 reunion and thus remains the mandate for Native American ministry in the PC(USA) today. The PCUS had adopted in 1976 a national policy statement which was more a theological statement while the 1979 PCUSA statement was more ecclesiastical and programmatic. Areas of policy in the church wide Policy Statement are Mutuality in Mission; Preparation for Native American Ministry; Leadership; Continuing Education; Pastoral Support; Lay Leadership; Facilities, Buildings and Land; National Agency, Council and Committee Relations; Ecumenical Relationships; Secular Relationships; and Urban Ministries. In the 1980's the Native American Consulting Committee added Youth Ministries and Economics.   
  
The church wide Policy was proposed to address a lack of line authority on Native American ministry issues from the General Assembly to the Synods and then to the Presbytery. Once adopted by the General Assembly, the goals were adopted by middle governing bodies in the eight synods with Native American congregations. Each synod representative to the Native American Consulting Committee reported at each meeting on the progress of their respective synods in implementing the church wide policy goals. Proposals to the denomination and foundations were predicated on the policy statement. At the time of merger between the Northern Church and the Southern Church, the Articles of Agreement stated that policies previously adopted by the General Assembly agencies would remain until changed by the appropriate agency.   
  
Synods and presbyteries of the former PCUS are generally unfamiliar with the church wide policy adopted by the UPCUSA denomination in 1979. At the time of re-union there were 115 Indian Churches in the Northern Church and six in the Southern Church, most being in the Synod of the Sun. Thus, fewer of the formerly southern Presbyterian churches and middle governing bodies have experience with Native American ministry. Until 1983, the Native American Consulting Committee was a bona fide instrument of mission providing prudent counsel to the Program Agency. Sincere-union NACC has worked to resist efforts to take "caucus" status, as well as to reduce the role of Native Americans in formation of policy on Native American ministry.   
  
NACC in 1992 sought to participate in the Major Mission Fund campaign by challenging all Presbyterians to support the "Vision Quest" project, which was to raise two million dollars to be deposited in the Presbyterian Foundation. The interest from the investment would be used to assure Native American Mission Development. Unfortunately the Major Mission fund which promised $250,000 to Vision Quest was never fulfilled. NACC deposited $1,492 in 1992, five hundred years after Columbus, and then deposited an additional $13,000 with the Foundation. This remains a viable option for future support of Native American ministry in the PC(USA).   
  
The 1979 church wide Policy has drawn the map for future development, but not all goals in the policy have been met. Items of ministerial education and recruitment will be ongoing, but with the support of the Christian community faith can thrive and new vitality will emerge. With this history in our minds we now ask "What will be the legacy of the Church to Native Americans in the new millennium?"

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