

BELOVED SPEECH: LANGUAGE AND LEGACIES OF METHODIST WOMEN LEADERS
OF THE OKLAHOMA INDIAN MISSIONARY CONFERENCE WITH
ANTIRACIST/DECOLONIZING STRATEGIES FOR PREACHING

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Committee Chair:

Heather Murray Elkins, Ph.D.

Professor of Worship, Preaching, and the Arts

Suzanne Wenonah Duchesne

Drew University

Madison, New Jersey

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Dedication

To the Beloved One Above All

who is always with me.

ABSTRACT

Beloved Speech: Language and Legacies Of Methodist Women Leaders Of The Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference With Antiracist/Decolonizing Strategies For Preaching

Suzanne Wenonah Duchesne

This dissertation explores the effect of cultural norms and narratives on the preacher's worldview formation and speech. In particular it examines the effects of the prevailing cultural narrative in the United States of America, based on the ideology of Manifest Destiny and an underlying colonial project based in the Doctrine of Discovery and white supremacy.

It examines how this narrative has been codified into Federal law and created policies aimed at the annihilation, assimilation, and erosion of sovereignty of the original Indigenous Nations. It also surveys Methodism's historical engagement with Indigenous peoples with a focus on the Cherokee, Choctaw, MVSKOKE(Creek), and Kiowa Nations. Beginning with John Wesley, through the 19th Century missionaries, and into the 20th century work of the Women's Division, it reveals Methodist historical figures who exemplify resistance to narratives of conquest and white supremacy, as well as those who were complicit in the colonial project.

By comparing the words and actions of these historical figure's insights are offered concerning how a dehumanizing and colonizing worldview as well as humanizing and decolonizing attitude presents themselves in speech.

This project explores the connection between worldview and speech through an Indigenous Methodology which is based in storytelling. Through interviews with women leaders from the Cherokee, Choctaw, MVSKOKE(Creek), and Kiowa Nations, this dissertation presents

a concept called beloved speech and its components of committed relationships, reflexively attending to identity, and practicing the hospitality of listening.

The dissertation concludes with recommendations for non-Native preachers, particularly preachers who identify with a white settler/immigrant worldview, to encounter beloved speech. Through these practices that engage with the components of beloved speech preachers may awaken their own capacity for beloved speech, and encourage the experience to be replicated with their congregations through their sermons.

It also includes 2 sermons concerning the Act of Repentance Toward Healing Relationships with Indigenous Peoples and excerpts of interviews from five women from the Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference.

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Chapter I

Invitation to Beloved Speech

Introduction

Raggatha RagghiRain, a United Methodist laywoman of Cherokee heritage and storyteller, says “Native people were given the gift of stories, the wisdom of caring for each story and the knowledge of ways to use stories. Our lives are filled with lessons from the spoken word handed down from one to another.”¹ Her essay exemplifies the topic of this dissertation, beloved speech. She presents both the vulnerability and transformative healing that comes from sharing stories as well as the specificity of the storytelling tradition in her culture. According to Ragghi, telling a story is a sacred act. The storyteller is responsible for discerning when, where, and with whom they share their stories.² I offer this dissertation as an expression of storytelling that invites preachers into a similar experience of vulnerability and transformation.

This dissertation emerged from my own experiences of hearing the stories of clergywomen and laywomen, both Native American and non-Native, who served in the Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference (OIMC) of the United Methodist Church. The women I met modeled a concept I am calling beloved speech. Their performance of beloved speech with me as our relationships deepened in turn “heard me into” beloved speech.³ Through these relationships I observed the ways in which reflexive attention to

¹ Raggatha RagghiRain, “Storytelling” in *On This Spirit Walk: The Voices of Native American and Indigenous Peoples*, edited by Henrietta Mann and Anita Phillips (Muskogee, OK: The United Methodist Publishing House, 2012), 34.

² Raggatha RagghiRain, (Cherokee Heritage) Chairperson Conference Committee on Native American Ministries Peninsula — Delaware Conference), Conversation with author, April 20, 2018.

³ This concept is based in feminist theologian Nelle Morton’s work which describes how women come to new understandings about themselves and their place in the world through the process of being heard. Similarly, beloved speech invites people to envision a new worldview. “[The women] came to know both the pleasure in sharing their new self-knowledge and the necessity of the sisterhood for maintaining their

identity and the hospitality of listening could lead to an experience of conscientization. Christian ethicist and mujerista theologian, Ada Maria Isasi-Diaz in her book, *En la Lucha*, describes conscientization as the process by which a person's experiences lead them to recognize the difference between the nature of things and cultural differences, to unmask unjust myths and to explore alternative moral decisions.⁴ The experience of beloved speech presents an opportunity for a new moral consciousness to emerge within a person which has the potential to transform their worldview as well as the ways in which they express their worldview, including through their speech.⁵

As an Amer-european woman who identifies with the dominant white culture in the United States and has been influenced by a settler/immigrant worldview, meeting with women from tribes and Nations with different views and experiences awakened me to ways in which my worldview and the language I used in the pulpit were inadequate. I am concerned about the ways in which preachers, particularly those of us belonging to the dominant white settler/immigrant culture in the United States, colonize our speech with colonial narratives steeped in the concepts of white supremacy, euro-christianity, and Manifest Destiny from the pulpit. Narratives presented from the pulpit reflect a preacher's worldview and convey it through stories, images, words, and the language they speak. To prevent maintaining narratives of conquest that dehumanize and perpetuating psychological, spiritual, and physical violence I suggest that preachers,

life. They came to know they were called into being because someone heard and the hearing drew forth their speech." Nelle Morton, "In the Rising Woman Consciousness in a Male Language Structure," in *The Journey Is Home* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1985), 29.

⁴ Ada Maria Isasi-Diaz, *En la Lucha In the Struggle: Elaborating a Mujerista Theology*, (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2004), 160-161.

⁵ Ada Maria Isasi-Diaz wrote, "the formation of moral consciousness has to do with enabling the process of conscientization of the person." Ada Maria Isasi-Diaz, *En la Lucha In the Struggle: Elaborating a Mujerista Theology*, 161.

particularly those belonging to the dominant culture in the United States, engage in an antiracist decolonizing homiletic that will elicit antiracist, decolonizing, and humanizing speech called beloved speech.

Beloved speech provides the key to unlock a door of new possibilities for preachers to speak and embody what it means to be the beloved of God. It also taps into the possibility for congregational transformation from colonial narratives that infiltrate their worldview towards a decolonized perspective, through the reciprocal power of preaching that at once can inspire and become inspired by the community.⁶ Therefore, as preachers begin to adapt and use beloved speech it provides opportunities for congregations to hear and in turn be “heard into” a new way of being in the world and thus a new way of speaking themselves.

Utilizing stories as the basis of analysis, this dissertation seeks to identify the gaps I see in our preaching through a methodological approach utilizing stories through Indigenous Methodology and Feminist Theory. This dissertation will analyze the stories of white settler, Choctaw, Kiowa, Cherokee, and MVSOKOKE women from the Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference in order to understand the components of beloved speech. Furthermore, two sermons will be presented, one from a male preacher who is a member of the Seneca Nation and one from my own experience as a white euro-christian settler/immigrant female preacher to exemplify beloved speech as pronounced from the pulpit.

Coming to Terms with some Terminology

⁶ Charles L. Campbell describes an eschatological vision of preaching and says that though the practice of preaching is limited it is effective because preaching can bring social practices to the forefront of the congregation’s concerns and cultivate new practices. Charles L. Campbell, *The Word Before the Powers: An Ethic of Preaching* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002), 86, 141.

Before we go any further it is important to delineate some definitions, since part of the process of interrupting the colonial narrative involves an interrogation of the language, words, and images preachers use in their stories. Language has the capacity to become a strategic point of decolonization as well as its antithesis. To begin, the colonial narrative is one which obscures the reality that,

Colonial conquest was designed to ensure forced displacement of Indigenous peoples from their territories, the destruction of autonomy and self-determination in Indigenous self-governance, and the assimilation of Indigenous peoples' cultures and traditions... [with] devastating cultural, spiritual, economic, linguistic, and political impacts on Indigenous peoples.⁷

According to activists and biblical scholars Elaine Enns and Ched Myers,

Our communal narratives of Settler history are a patchwork, stitched together from fragments including local legends, heroic (or tragic) tales, “official” accounts (generated by news accounts, academic histories, or government documents), and regional and national myths. These narratives are imprinted onto our psyches and souls through family traditions, race and class-based... While some of this lore is precious and even sacred, many of the stories we tell ourselves function to de-vise and dis-member (that is, render invisible or unimportant) First Nations' history and tradition.⁸

Homiletician Sarah Travis describes colonialism as the “... settlement and/or exploitation of a territory by foreign agents.”⁹ She further elaborates that “Imperialism is the ideology from which colonialism arises.”¹⁰ She adds that, colonizers are “those who had the financial means, military might, and perceived warrant to control other people” and “[i]n

⁷ Harsha Walia, “Moving Beyond a Politics of Solidarity Towards a Practice of Decolonization,” *Colours of Resistance Archive*, accessed June 7, 2018, <http://www.coloursofresistance.org/769/moving-beyond-a-politics-of-solidarity-towards-a-practice-of-decolonization/>.

⁸ Elaine Enns and Ched Myers, “Healing from ‘Lies That Make Us Crazy’: Practices of Restorative Solidarity,” *Intotemak* 49 (Fall 2016), 139-140.

⁹ See Introduction, Sarah Travis, *Decolonizing Preaching: The Pulpit as Postcolonial Space*, (Eugene, Oregon: Cascade Books, 2014), 2.

¹⁰ See Introduction, Travis, *Decolonizing Preaching: The Pulpit as Postcolonial Space*, 2.

many historical instances colonizers gained not only physical control over other populations but also claimed the right of cultural superiority.¹¹

In addition to the colonial narrative there is a dominant racial narrative in the United States. According to antiracism trainer and activist Robin J. DiAngelo, this narrative “produce[s] and reinforce[s] the dominant narratives of society—such as individualism and meritocracy—and use these narratives to explain the positions of other racial groups.”¹² Christian ethicist Jennifer Harvey, in *Dear White Christians* explains the connection even further including religion when she says,

Discussing white – Native relations always makes clear the degree to which nationalism and imperial/colonial dynamics are intertwined with white supremacy in the United States. And the category “white” is entangled with “U.S. American;” “Christian;” and “colonial-settler” as well because of these histories. This is an argument ... as relevant to white – Black relations as it is to white – Native relations (the Middle Passage was an imperial project).¹³

Additionally, theologian George Tinker puts a finer point on terminology when he stresses the role of european christianity in the colonization of the Americas using terms such as western euro-christian to describe the colonizer.¹⁴ Thus, I will use terms such as white euro-christian settler/immigrants in my descriptions when I want to clarify who I am addressing. At the same time, I will maintain the capitalizations and descriptions used by authors out of respect for their particular articulation of their worldview.

¹¹ See Introduction, Travis, 2.

¹² Robin J. DiAngelo, *White Fragility: Why It's So Hard for White People to Talk About Racism*, (Boston: Beacon Press, 2018), 27.

¹³ Jennifer Harvey, *Dear White Christians*, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2014), 164.

¹⁴ Tinker explains that he does not capitalize adjectives such as west, european, or christianity in order to “avoid unnecessary normativizing or universalizing of the principal institutional religious quotient of the euro-west,” George E. Tinker, *American Indian Liberation: A Theology of Sovereignty*, (Maryknoll, N.Y: Orbis Books, 2008), 1. For more of Dr. Tinker’s work explaining the euro-christian worldview see Tink Tinker, “Rites of Discovery: St. Junipero, Lewis and Clark,” *Intotemak* 49 (Fall/Winter 2016): 97-100.

For my definition of race in this paper I draw from Joseph Barndt's definition in *Understanding and Dismantling Racism*, who says, "Race is a sociopolitical construct that originated in Europe, but developed its present-day design in the United States. Race is an enforced myth that dictates the very identity and condition of each of our lives."¹⁵ As a construction race affects our identity as Americans and as individuals. The prevailing narratives in the United States society about race keep the construction alive in the collective identity. At the same time the construct is also signified on our bodies as Linda Martin Alcoff stresses.¹⁶

"The road to freedom from the capriciousness of arbitrary identity designations lies not, as some class reductionists and postmodernists argue, in the attempt at a speedy dissolution of identity—a proposal that all too often conceals a willful ignorance about the real-world effects of identity—but through a careful exploration of identity, which can reveal its influence on what we can see and know, as well as its context dependence and its complex and fluid nature."

This signification of race on human bodies brings us to an important aspect of racial labeling concerning the development of color and racial identification. Jennifer Harvey says that "race is most often recognized (or presumed to be recognizable) by noticing skin 'color.'"¹⁷ Race scholars have varying opinions on the development of race and phenotypical identifications. Historian David Roediger argues that, "The term white arose as a designation for European explorers, traders and settlers who came into contact with Africans and the indigenous peoples of the Americas."¹⁸ By the 18th century

¹⁵ Joseph Barndt, *Understanding and Dismantling Racism: The Twenty-First Century Challenge to White America*, (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2007), chapter 2, Kindle.

¹⁶ Linda Martin Alcoff, *Visible Identities: Race, Gender, and the Self*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 5.

¹⁷ Jennifer Harvey, *Whiteness and Morality: Pursuing Racial Justice through Reparations and Sovereignty*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 19.

¹⁸ David R. Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness Race and The Making of The American Working Class*, (New York: Verso, 2007), 21.

naturalists began categorizing flora and fauna and in 1758 naturalist Carl Linnaeus categorized human beings, including the “red” Indians.¹⁹

Terminology such as “Caucasian” and “Negroid” came into usage as a result of 18th century phrenologists.²⁰ Caucasian does not refer to color but rather originates with German Physician and naturalist Johann Friedrich Blumenbach’s racial classification from his studies of human skulls.²¹ This is significant for Indigenous peoples. According to Lisa M. Poupart, (Lac Du Flambeau Band of Lake Superior Anishinaabeg) professor, of First Nations Studies and Women's and Gender Studies, by the late 18th century science was being employed to justify the seizure of Indigenous people’s land. By labeling Indigenous peoples by skin color their nationality became obscured by a racial category. Poupart also says scientists supposedly “‘found’ differences in Indian crania ... indicating the essential inferiority of Indians [which] affected Indian policy in the following decades.”²² Moreover, scientists acquired the skulls of Indigenous peoples through decapitation, collecting “specimens” after military actions, or through the desecration of Native American burial sites.²³ The genocide of Native Americans went hand in hand with “scientific research.” The legacy of the racialization of Native Americans resides in the Smithsonian and other museums across the United States where

¹⁹ Alden T. Vaughan, “From White Man to Redskin: Changing Anglo-American Perceptions of the American Indian,” *The American Historical Review*, 87:4 (Oct., 1982), 944-946.

²⁰ For more information see Nell Irvin Painter’s work which not only deconstructs the classification Blumenbach and his contemporaries employed, but also points towards the colonial aspects that underlies these classifications. Nell Irvin Painter, *The History of White People*, (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2011).

²¹ Frances Kendall, *Understanding White Privilege: Creating Pathways to Authentic Relationships Across Race*, (New York: Routledge, 2012), 43-44.

²² Lisa M. Poupart, “Crime and Justice in American Indian Communities,” *Social Justice* 29, No. 1/2 (2002): 148.

²³ Poupart, “Crime and Justice in American Indian Communities,” 148.

thousands of human remains still await repatriation.²⁴ The labeling and anthropological study of Indigenous bodies only leads to further dehumanization.

The problem comes when white euro-christian settler/immigrants diminish racism by attributing it to personal behaviors and deny its systemic aspects. For instance, using the example above, the confiscation of human remains involved a prejudicial view of racialized Indigenous bodies, disregard for Indigenous cultural funerary practices, and the growing competition of universities at the turn of the last century for developing departments in the burgeoning fields of archeology and anthropology which were begun by white institutions, run by white administrators and teachers, and funded by American-european sources.

For this dissertation I use Christian ethicist, Traci West's definition of racism as prejudice plus the institutional power to enforce it that enables "a systemic unequal distribution of privilege with access and control over resources and standards based on centralized unequal status according to race."²⁵ The privileges whites enjoy are not always evident to us. Peggy McIntosh's well-known work "White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack," explains how privilege works but let it suffice to say here that these privileges solidify white supremacy and provide the power and economic sources necessary to continue the colonial project.²⁶

Concerning white supremacy, DiAngelo says, that "supremacy is a descriptive and useful term to capture the all-encompassing centrality and assumed superiority of

²⁴ In 1990 The Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act was passed in an effort to return Native human remains to their families, tribes, and homelands.

²⁵ Traci West, "Deconstructing Racism" (lecture, Drew Theological Seminary, Madison, NJ, November 11, 2009).

²⁶ Peggy McIntosh, "White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack," *Multiculturalism* (Oct. 1992), 30-36.

people defined and perceived as white and the practices based on this assumption.”²⁷

Furthermore white supremacy is a systemic “overarching political, economic, and social system of domination... based on racial categories that benefits those defined and perceived as white.”²⁸ As Jennifer Harvey writes, “...people who are “white” are not white in some essential way. Rather, [whites] are racially formed and shaped by way of – and as [they] respond to – the same systems that enable white supremacy.”²⁹

These terms become important to the study of the intersection of colonization and racialization that occurs in the United States, which leads to another important aspect of identification. This dissertation will also address problematic labels that universalize and obscure complicated identities. One label that needs unpacking first is Native American. Charles C. Mann in the Appendix A, titled “Loaded Words,” in his book *New Revelations of the Americas Before Columbus*, writes: “Anyone who attempts to write or even speak about the original inhabitants of the Americas quickly runs into terminological quicksand.”³⁰ The term Native American is a misnomer that universalizes and obscures complicated identities. Jennifer Harvey, states, Native Americans cannot even be appropriately called a group, “Only the fact of imperial colonial realities on this land base led to the construction of a group called Native Americans.”³¹ One of the contentions of this dissertation is that using terms such as Native American imposes colonizing concepts into conversation and stories. Theologian Martin Brokenleg, who is Lakota, writes, “the

²⁷ DiAngelo, *White Fragility: Why It's So Hard for White People to Talk About Racism*, 28.

²⁸ DiAngelo, 30.

²⁹ Harvey, *Dear White Christians*, 11.

³⁰ Charles C. Mann, *1491 New Revelations of the Americas Before Columbus*, (New York: Vintage, 2006), 393.

³¹ Harvey, *Dear White Christians*, 164.

concept of ‘Native Americans’ is not a reality. The hundreds of distinctive peoples native to North America have nothing in common except for our experience with the immigration of European peoples and then with American society.”³²

However, Brokenleg, also concedes that identifying all the particularities of identity for scholarly work in general is awkward.³³ Historian and activist David Phillips Hansen tries to use national or tribal names but explains that he also defers to academic communities who tend to use the term Native American and explains that for brevity he sometimes uses “Native” or “Natives” or “Indian” when called for by historical context.³⁴ Self-described as American Indian, educator John H. Ide, says, “for the most part, American Indian, Amerind, Indian, and Native American are all terms used to denote those individuals who trace their ancestries to the aboriginal people who lived on the American continents before 1492. Indians when speaking among themselves often prefer to use their national or tribal designations.”³⁵ Brokenleg explains, “usually, the specific nation should be identified, such as Dine or Cheyenne.”³⁶ When speaking about himself he contextualizes as belonging to the Lakota tradition and in particular, the Lakota Nation located in South Dakota.

In addition, Native American Religions Scholar, Michelene E. Pesantubbee (Choctaw), identifies the appropriateness of language depending on one’s social location. She says

³² Martin Brokenleg, “A Native American Perspective: That the People May Live,” in *Preaching Justice: Ethnic and Cultural Perspectives*, ed. Christine Marie Smith (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2008), 26-27.

³³ Brokenleg, “That the People May Live,” 29.

³⁴ David Phillips Hansen, *Native Americans, the Mainline Church, and the Quest for Interracial Justice*, (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2017), 9.

³⁵ John H. Ide, *The Failure of American Indian Education: A Clash of Cultures*, (Pittsburgh: Rosedog Press, 2004), xvi.

³⁶ Brokenleg, “That the People May Live,” 29.

Issue can be taken with [“Native American” or “American Indian” and], the misnomer “Indian” perhaps more so. However, native people, local and extended, grassroots and academic, commonly use the term “Indian” intra-communally to designate both specific and general ethnicity. The term “Indian” is not acceptable usage for non-Indians; however, those who have a history of similar experiences with Euro/ Americans use it among themselves to recognize their common distinction from the non-Indian majority society.³⁷

The terminology used most prevalently in The United Methodist Church (UMC) has been Native American so that will appear often in this paper in reference to the UMC. Because this thesis will address a historical period from one of Methodism’s founders, John Wesley’s first contact in the 1730s through the 20th century some derogatory terms will appear such as “heathen” and “savage.” These are unfortunate and at the same time expose the power of language to dehumanize with labels that are closely associated with the history of colonization. In addition, a survey of the representative actions, and missiological efforts of Methodist preachers and missionaries with Indigenous nations belonging to the “Five Civilized Tribes” as well as the “Wild Tribes” will appear in the historical sections.³⁸ This nomenclature not only differentiated “Tribes” based on their accommodations to colonization but also reified colonial perceptions of cultural accommodations.

The term “Five Civilized Tribes” came into use during the mid-nineteenth century to refer to the Cherokee, Choctaw, Chickasaw, Creek, and Seminole nations. . . . Americans, and sometimes American Indians, called the five Southeastern nations “civilized” because they seemed to be assimilating to Anglo-American norms. The term indicated the adoption of horticulture and other European cultural patterns and institutions, including widespread Christianity, written constitutions, centralized governments, intermarriage with white Americans, market participation, literacy, animal husbandry, patrilineal descent, and even

³⁷ Michelene E. Pesantubbee, *Choctaw Women in a Chaotic World: The Clash of Cultures in the Colonial Southeast* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2005), 179.

³⁸ “Contrasted with the settled, agricultural lifestyles and cultural adaptations of the ‘civilized’ tribes, [Methodist missionary J. J.] Methvin and others referred to [western Oklahoma tribes including the Kiowa] as the ‘wild tribes’.” See Bruce David Forbes, “John Jasper Methvin: Methodist ‘Missionary to the Western Tribes’ (Oklahoma),” in *Churchmen and the Western Indians, 1820-1920*, ed. Clyde A. Milner, and Floyd A. O’Neil (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1985), 46.

Slaveholding.... The term was also used to distinguish these five nations from other so-called "wild" Indians who continued to rely on hunting for survival.³⁹

The terminology of Tribe or Nation is contested also. "Categories and concepts of federal Indian law, including such concepts as discovery, dominion, domestic dependent nation, tribe, and so forth, are cultural and cognitive products of the dominating society. These terms are evidence of the various ways that the society of the United States has employed the human imagination to interact with the original indigenous peoples of this hemisphere."⁴⁰ The term "Tribes" will be used sparingly because it undermines the conception of National Sovereignty which has been one of the primary weapons of colonization.

I agree with Native American Studies scholar Jace Weaver (Cherokee) when he says the terms American Indian, Native American, Native, or First Nations are all inadequate because they homogenize diverse traditions and groupings. I will follow the path set by Jace Weaver by trying to respect individual authors' choices.⁴¹ I will also use tribal designations and descriptions scholars and preachers use for themselves as often as possible. One term I will use is "Indigenous peoples." This term has the same difficulties as Native American because of the homogenizing affect. However, it also allows identification of groups of people outside the United States and it allows for the conception of the human being to emerge. The U.N. Declaration on Indigenous Rights speaks to the importance of the word "peoples" used to undermine colonizer efforts to

³⁹ Andrew K. Frank, "Five Civilized Tribes," *The Encyclopedia of Oklahoma History and Culture*, <https://www.okhistory.org/publications/enc/entry.php?entry=F1011>.

⁴⁰ Steven T. Newcomb, *Pagans in the Promised Land: Decoding the Doctrine of Christian Discovery*, (Golden: Fulcrum Publishing, 2008), 18.

⁴¹ Jace Weaver, ed, *Native American Religious Identity: Unforgotten Gods*, (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1998), xi.

group people together and to erase them by indicating there is some homogenous one “people.” The collective “peoples” conveys the idea of group as well as a group of individuals to emerge. It also humanizes as opposed to terms often used such as “indigenous populations” or “indigenous communities.”⁴² While admittedly problematic, it is important to be able to discuss issues on a macro level.⁴³

This brings us to the terminology associated with non-Natives. The designation of human beings by color has been addressed. For this thesis I will use terms utilized by the respective authors which means they will possibly be antiquated and derogatory. However, I am also introducing some terms which I hope will expand not only non-Natives awareness of self-identity but also shed light onto the depth of which naming can either reify or undermine dominate narratives. For instance, Jace Weaver offers a compelling alternative to the term Euro-American. He states that, even though the most common appellation is Euro-American he opts “for the use of the term of John Joseph Mathews (Osage), Amer-european, as more adequately reflecting the relationship of the progeny of colonizers to the American land.”⁴⁴ When speaking of identity, Amer-

⁴² “The United Nations International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights state that all peoples have the right of self-determination by virtue of which they “freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development.” (Part one, Article one, 1966) However, because there has been dispute over the exact meaning of the term “peoples”, it is not clear exactly to whom “peoples” refers. Some state governments oppose use of the term “peoples” in regards to Indigenous Peoples because they fear its association with the right of secession and independent statehood. Those states would prefer the terms “tribes” or “populations,” which do not have those associations. On the other hand, Indigenous Peoples use the term “peoples” because of its association with inherent recognition of a distinct identity. “Indigenous People” is a compromise between these two positions. Indigenous Peoples and their advocates find the denial of being described as “peoples” and the inherent entitlement to self-determination a form of racism and continued discrimination.” Sarah Hymowitz, Ivor Dikkers, and Amalia Anderson. Joshua Cooper, Charmaine Crockett, Lisa Garrett, Bill Means, Kristi Rudelius-Palmer, Dee Sull, and David Weissbrodt, “Study Guide: The Rights of Indigenous Peoples” on *University of Minnesota Human Rights Library*, accessed April 2018 <http://hrlibrary.umn.edu/edumat/studyguides/indigenous.html>

⁴³ Tim Brubacher, “Beyond Good Intentions: Critical Race Theory and the Role of Non-Indigenous Allies,” (Ph.D. diss., Trent University, 2008), 9.

⁴⁴ Weaver, *Native American Religious Identity: Unforgotten Gods*, xi.

European will be helpful to approximate a term more reflective of ancestry. When I am using this term however I will expand “progeny of colonizers” beyond literal ancestry alone to include those of European descent who have immigrated to the North American Continent even if it is recent. Terms such as “white,” “settler,” “immigrant” and “colonizer” will delineate more definitively who I am speaking of because of the sociopolitical and racial intersections within the dominant culture.⁴⁵

The term settler(s) refers to a “[p]erson or people who move to a new place that is already occupied by other people.”⁴⁶ Settler Colonialism is a process of occupying Indigenous territories and forming communities through removal, genocide, and/or assimilation of Indigenous Peoples for land acquisition and wealth accumulation, with the extraction of labor or resources as secondary objectives.⁴⁷ Note, I do not use the word genocide lightly. According to the definition laid out by the United Nations resolution 260A article II “acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such: killing members of the group; causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part; imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; [and] forcibly transferring children of the group to another group,” have all been perpetuated upon the

⁴⁵ As previously mentioned “euro-Christian” will also be used in order to stress the religious intersections of this identity.

⁴⁶ For this and more useful definitions see, Dismantling the Doctrine of Discovery Coalition, *Dismantling the Doctrine of Discovery Study Guide for Individuals, Small Groups and Congregations*, www.dofdmnno.org

⁴⁷ For more see Lynette Russell, ed., *Colonial Frontiers: Indigenous-European Encounters in Settler Societies, Studies in Imperialism*, (Manchester, New York: Manchester University Press, 2001), 2. Also, Patrick Wolfe, “Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native,” *Journal of Genocide Research* 8, no. 4 (December 2006), 388. Dismantling the Doctrine of Discovery Coalition, *Dismantling the Doctrine of Discovery Study Guide for Individuals, Small Groups and Congregations*, www.dofdmnno.org

Indigenous peoples of the territory of the United States of America.⁴⁸ Andrea Smith concludes rightly that the “United States could not exist without the genocide of indigenous peoples, otherwise visitors to this continent would be living under the sphere of indigenous forms of governance rather than under U.S. empire.”⁴⁹

Returning to the discussion at hand, the term settler is an important one for two reasons. First, it is intricately tied to settler colonialism as I will present it in this dissertation. Second, I am writing as a white settler primarily for a white euro-christian settler audience located on the North American Continent and particularly the present United States of America. This term is difficult for people, particularly those who do not perceive themselves as such, to understand and accept. We non-Natives often view colonization as a relic from the past and cannot conceive of ourselves as occupiers of someone else’s lands. Many Amer-europeans distance ourselves from settler colonialism by relegating it to a time of pioneers and frontiers imagining that colonialism no longer exists. In actuality colonialism continues to impact the sociopolitical, ethical, and spiritual belief and praxis of all of us who inhabit this land today. Naming, and thereby acknowledging settlerness as well as whiteness, exposes the ongoing colonial project.⁵⁰

It is also important to realize that the term settler indicates that those who emigrated to what is now the United States, “settled” as opposed to the original inhabitants of this land who have been mischaracterized as “unsettled” or “migrant” cultures in order to justify taking their land. As much as settlers may want to justify

⁴⁸ From Article 2 , UN General Assembly, Resolution 260 A (III), Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, (December 9, 1948), <https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/crimeofgenocide.aspx>

⁴⁹ Andrea Smith, “Decolonizing Theology,” *Union Seminary Quarterly Review* 59, No. 1-2 (2005): 67.

⁵⁰ David Myer Temin, “Remapping the World: Vine Deloria, Jr. and the Ends of Settler Sovereignty,” (Ph.D. diss., University of Minnesota, 2016), 74.

occupation and perpetuate the myth that the land was unused and available, it is undeniable that the term, settler indicates “settlement” which activist Elaine Enns says “can never be separated from the legacy of colonization and its injustices.”⁵¹ For this reason the use of the term immigrant further clarifies that unless we are Indigenous we have immigrated from somewhere else and indeed we are settled on someone else’s land.

When used in this dissertation, often as “settler/immigrant,” the term is indicative of those who now reside in the United States, emigrated from somewhere else even if it was generations ago, live on land that has been illegally acquired, and those who ascribe to the dominant culture’s capitalistic, white supremacist norms which led to this illegal confiscation. Immigrants are anyone not indigenous to the territory now known as The United States of America.

By acknowledging the history inherent within the description of the identity, settler/immigrants make the reality visible. By using these terms, non-Natives and particularly Amer-europeans, acknowledge the colonial project that continues today.⁵² Acknowledgement by those of us who are not Indigenous peoples of our settler and immigrant status raises awareness of the history of relocated/assimilated peoples, national sovereignty of Indigenous peoples, and our role as occupiers.

An important distinction can be made here concerning whether non-whites are also considered settlers.⁵³ African Americans and anyone who were kidnapped and forcibly brought here, such as in the case of chattel slavery or enslaved Chinese women

⁵¹ Elaine Enns, “Facing History with Courage,” *Canadian Mennonite* Vol. 19 No. 5, March 2, 2015, 1.

⁵² For more in depth study of the political implications of this terminology see David Meyer Temin who has a particularly relevant discussion of naming and the erasure of peoples that occurs when geographic names are appropriated from Native peoples and then cleaved from their context. Temin, “Remapping the World: Vine Deloria, Jr. and the Ends of Settler Sovereignty,” 60-63, 72-74.

⁵³ For more on this debate see David Myer Temin’s notes, Temin, 73.

who were brought to California in the early 20th century, would not necessarily fall under the term settler since it was not by choice that they came to this continent. Considering these realities, one may find another helpful term, such as “arrivants” used by Jodi Byrd, which “capture[s] the ways that racialized non-natives experience subordination in relation to white settlers.”⁵⁴

It may also be helpful to acknowledge that these terms are not meant to homogenize the ethnic cultural diversity that exists within non-Native cultures. This dissertation is making an effort for all people to expand their understanding of identity. Unfortunately, the dominant culture based in white supremacy continues to obscure non-Native identity just as it seeks to erase Native Identity. Understanding the process by which Amer-europeans become white enables white settler/immigrants to deconstruct their identity. By using terminology such as white settler/immigrant Amer-europeans become conscientized to their own cultural identity.

However, the dominant euro-christian settler/immigrant culture is certainly one which influences worldview especially of non-Natives. At this point it may also be helpful to define culture. Homiletician, Eunjoo Mary Kim tells us the term culture does not have one fixed meaning; there are more than three hundred definitions of culture available.⁵⁵ Culture is expressed through a number of different means, including but not limited to, language, dress, religious traditions, and rituals. For Native peoples these cultural expressions and norms will not be unified because each nation has distinct

⁵⁴ See Jodi Byrd, *The Transit of Empire: Indigenous Critiques of Colonialism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011), 2 in Temin, 42.

⁵⁵ Eunjoo Mary Kim, and Mark R. Francis, *Christian Preaching and Worship in Multicultural Contexts: A Practical Theological Approach*, (Collegeville, Minnesota: Pueblo Books, 2017), 21.

languages and religious traditions and rituals.⁵⁶ Cultural norms that reside in the dominant white identity in the United States are particularly problematic because the construction of whiteness does not exist in reality beyond an identification with those characteristics introduced through violent colonial norms such as individualism and white supremacy which are aligned with the Doctrine of Discovery and Manifest Destiny.

Jennifer Harvey explains,

The creation of a nation on the sovereign soil of another was pursued through the English making [anyone] non-Christian, non-English, non-white... thoroughly abject. The process of doing so had everything to do with how the emerging nation and nationhood was racialized. Moreover, racialization processes as material processes constituted a thoroughgoing formation of a (white U.S.-American) culture of domination and of dominant white identity.⁵⁷

This is one of the reasons there is, as Jennifer Harvey notes, “a tendency toward romanticizing and appropriating cultures of communities of color... [because] whites [do] not have a justice-producing sense of identity to draw on.... In the gap we become woefully tempted to tack ourselves onto or to flat out appropriate the cultures and identifications of others.”⁵⁸

Whites also tend to exoticize and romanticize cultures especially the monolithic Native American identity that is based in a colonizer worldview that needs to create an “Other.” Because white settler values are often unexamined and assumed to be normative, white identity can be derived from “what we are not.” Thus, labeling people who do not belong to the dominant culture provides a definitive “Other” with which to compare.

⁵⁶ See Dennis McPherson’s chapter on the definition of culture for a comprehensive discussion concerning the difficulties of defining culture for Indigenous societies. Dennis McPherson, “A Definition of Culture,” in *Native American Religious Identity Unforgotten Gods*, ed. Jace Weaver, 96.

⁵⁷ Harvey, *Whiteness and Morality: Pursuing Racial Justice through Reparations and Sovereignty*, 58.

⁵⁸ Harvey, 46.

Which brings us to the problematic term “Other.” It is a term utilized in postmodern thought and as such is part of an ongoing academic conversation.⁵⁹ Ethnographer Luke Eric Lassiter says, “this way of referring to Native Americans is based in a worldview that seeks to understand world by labeling the Other as distinct and different from the dominant culture and the dominant cultural norms.”⁶⁰ He critiques the conventional use of this term in the writing tradition that has emerged out of a Amer-european culture and worldview saying, “this convention became ensconced within the milieu of a colonial experience whereby colonizers wrote about the colonized as distant, exotic, and silent Others.”⁶¹ Of particular interest to this study he says, “authors who write about Native Americans ... mostly non-Indians – routinely write about Indian Others without serious regard to their experiences, their perspectives, and (especially) their voices.”⁶² This discussion is further complicated by the fact that “Aboriginal languages are not object-oriented, as are European languages,” according to Dennis McPherson. So grammatically, epistemologically, and ontologically for an “Aboriginal person there is no ‘other’ out there somewhere.”⁶³

Since this dissertation seeks to honor multiple views, using the terminology of “Other” is limiting and places a Western worldview in a superior position within the conversation, thus, it will be used sparingly. In addition, it creates a label which can be a site of dehumanization by erasing specificity of identity and in the case of this dissertation it perpetuates the colonial project. Terms such as “Other” carry with them

⁵⁹ See Ronald Allen, *Preaching and the Other: Studies of Postmodern Insights*, (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2009).

⁶⁰ Luke Eric Lassiter, “Authoritative Texts, Collaborative Ethnography, and Native American Studies,” *American Indian Quarterly* 24, No. 4 (Autumn, 2000), 601-602.

⁶¹ Lassiter, “Authoritative Texts, Collaborative Ethnography, and Native American Studies,” 601.

⁶² Lassiter, 601-602.

⁶³ McPherson, “A Definition of Culture,” 95.

assumptions formed from a dominant narrative of conquest, which people, particularly white settler/immigrants, need to become aware of in order to engage in beloved speech.

The term worldview has been used throughout this paper thus far and it will be important to examine worldview more closely because it will be an important part of a reflexive attention to identity which is one of the components of beloved speech. However, I will provide one caveat first. In the description of worldview, we will encounter examples of Native culture that will be characterized as belonging to an “Indigenous worldview.” Indigenous scholars working within a western european framework have found similarities across Indigenous cultures reminiscent of the cultural similarities one might find between western european nations. Concerns have been raised about essentializing Indigenous worldview and identity; however, Jace Weaver offers that there are times when “strategic essentialism” helps categorize and name similarities responsibly.⁶⁴ He says that “no universalized essence can encompass the 600 different tribal traditions, eight major language families, and probably three distinct racial strains lumped together under the collective construct Native American or American Indian.”⁶⁵ However, Native persons tend to see themselves in terms of “self in society” rather than “self and society” most often found in Western culture.⁶⁶ He asserts that “One is thus able to speak more broadly about commonly shared attitudes and beliefs within a given grouping than is possible in discussing Western cultures.”⁶⁷

Furthermore, Indigenous educator, Linda Tuhiwai Smith (Māori) redefines essentialism for Indigenous peoples by pointing out that the essence of oneself recognizes

⁶⁴ Weaver, *Native American Religious Identity: Unforgotten Gods*, x.

⁶⁵ Weaver, x.

⁶⁶ Weaver, xi.

⁶⁷ Weaver, xi.

a relationship with the earth and thus it becomes a decolonizing term in the voice of an Indigenous person.⁶⁸ Decolonizing speech in this way is helpful for an Indigenous person. However, I would caution a non-Native from voicing such reframes. Essentializing only tends to re-inscribe white supremacy coming from the mouth of a settler. There is a difference between an Indigenous person naming their identity and a non-Native person imposing a label on them. Labeling becomes just another strategy that settler/immigrant voices use to recolonize.

Worldview

The development of a person's worldview begins when they are quite young and is formed by the shared values that are passed on to the developing child by his or her family and wider community.⁶⁹ Our voice reflects this worldview and the words we use and stories we tell change as our worldview adjusts. Juan Luis Segundo states that people hold multiple values which they assign varying degrees of importance or preference. Over all these values lies one absolute value which gives some specific meaning around which their whole life is structured.⁷⁰ The absolute value becomes “the most important consideration in decision-making.”⁷¹ Though these values may go unexamined, there is a point when a person chooses to accept a particular worldview and its attending values. Karl Mannheim says, “We belong to a group not only because we are born into it, not merely because we profess to belong to it, nor finally because we give it our loyalty and allegiance, but primarily because we see the world and certain things in the world the

⁶⁸ Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*, (London: Zed Books, 2012), 74.

⁶⁹ Juan Luis Segundo, *Faith and Ideologies*, trans. John Drury (Maryknoll New York: Orbis Books, 1982), 5.

⁷⁰ Segundo, *Faith and Ideologies*, 7

⁷¹ Segundo, 19.

way it does.”⁷² Often the person chooses their worldview unconsciously from life experiences lived as an individual within a certain community and as a part of their whole community in relation to other communities.⁷³ He explains that “knowledge is from the very beginning a co-operative process of group life, in which everyone unfolds his knowledge within the framework of a common fate, a common activity, and the overcoming of common difficulties...”⁷⁴

Worldview often passes from generation to generation and if it remains unexamined, specific values can become concretized within a community. If those who hold these values are in authority, these unexplored values become the norm for the community.⁷⁵ As a result, alternative perspectives become suspect and can lead to injustice and oppression of those who hold different values. These prejudicial attitudes may be expressed towards those outside the community or toward those who are marginalized within the community.

Unfortunately, communities or individuals often critique only their own worldviews when forced by some crisis, which has caused them to become one of the marginalized.⁷⁶ Upon reaching this crisis point, an individual can critically analyze his or her worldview, reassess their values and reconsider their former prejudices to alternative views. This critique increases self-awareness helping people to discover what their absolute value is in regards to their scale of preference.⁷⁷ Values may or may not change but the ways in which decisions are made regarding those values may change in light of

⁷² Karl Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia*, (New York: Harcourt, Inc, 1936), 21-22.

⁷³ Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia*, 29.

⁷⁴ Mannheim, 29

⁷⁵ Segundo, *Faith and Ideologies*, 315.

⁷⁶ Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia*, 8.

⁷⁷ Segundo, *Faith and Ideologies*, 7 and 19.

new experiences and information. The new awareness provides information, which allows a person to make a choice which may be different from their previous behavior, beliefs, or even cause them to break with their own cultural norms based on a more informed view of a given situation. Once we begin to examine our values and aspects of our worldview we will be more likely to discover any hidden motives and inconsistencies within ourselves. Eventually, instead of merely reacting to a person or situation that transgresses our values we will be more likely to question our assumptions and preconceived ideas.

Though crisis situations are more likely to provide the impetus for self-reflection and critique, a person may also choose to become intentional about reviewing their worldview in light of other worldviews. Up until this point my discussion has been rather abstract but what we are talking about here is examining one of the components of beloved speech, namely relationships. We are being asked to consider “who is our community?” and “who are we in relationship with?” We have all heard of people who have had life changing experiences after returning from a mission trip to another country. Perhaps we have experienced a change in our worldview due to some interaction with people from another culture. We know that our horizons can expand by exploring other forms of knowledge and interacting with people from other cultures outside of our own or even those who are from subcultures within our own.

The difference I am suggesting lies in the fact that white Americans living in the United States will need to interrogate not just one value but a whole set of interrelated values that have been concretized for centuries and are evident in the very words and language we use to describe ourselves. Take the preceding sentence for example, the idea

of “whiteness” is based in a supremacist ideology. The word “America” derives its name from Italian “explorer” Amerigo Vespucci.⁷⁸ And by the Portuguese word *explorador* has two meanings: to explore and to exploit.⁷⁹ The United States with its inauspicious beginnings exists because of land theft which places into question its legitimacy as Sovereign nation. These terms with which we wrestle are just a few examples of the ways in which language colonizes. The colonial narrative legitimizes these terms by associating them with images of a strong and independent people who pulled themselves up by their “bootstraps” and struck out into the unknown “wilderness” with nothing but their “pioneer” spirit. All these words and images belong to a narrative of conquest.

For those of us raised in the euro-christian settler/immigrant colonial culture, interrogating these concepts embedded in our language and images of national identity will require more than a cursory peek at our worldview. Mannheim speaks to how difficult it is to transform worldview when he says,

Horizontal mobility (Movement from one position to another or from one country to another without changing social status) shows us that different peoples think differently. As long, however, as the traditions of one's national and local group remain unbroken, one remains so attached to its customary ways of thinking that the ways of thinking which are perceived in other groups are regarded as curiosities, errors, ambiguities, or heresies. At this stage one does not doubt either the correctness of one's own traditions of thought or the unity and uniformity of thought in general.⁸⁰

All the same, in the *Liberating Pulpit* Justo Gonzalez and Catherine Gonzalez are clear that once we begin to engage with those who will confront us with our own

⁷⁸ Roberto Almagià, “Amerigo Vespucci,” *Encyclopedia Britannica Online*, accessed September 10, 2018, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Amerigo-Vespucci>

⁷⁹ William Aal, “Moving from Guilt to Action: Antiracist Organizing and the Concept of Whiteness for Activism and the Academy” in *The Making and Unmaking of Whiteness*, ed. Birgit Brander Rasmussen et al., (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001), Kindle.

⁸⁰ Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia*, 1936), 7.

privilege and poverty we will be able to analyze our worldview more fully and understand the world more clearly.⁸¹ Gonzalez infers that any time we shield ourselves from views different from our own we are impoverished. Our comprehension of the world and God are incomplete. Our ability to engage in trusting intimate relationships are jeopardized because of cultural barriers between us. We will need to study and learn our history and we need to develop continuing relationships with people who first inhabited this land.

Let me make it clear at this point that this discussion of worldview is pointed at those of us belonging to the white euro-christian settler/immigrant colonial culture in the United States. Not only because we need to interrogate our worldview more thoroughly but also because as philosopher Bruce Wilshire points out, “‘worldview’ is a European idea, specifically [the] German *Weltanschauung* [meaning the] world looked-at.”⁸² He explains that this word carries with it the european bias that gives priority to seeing and vision which, “deeply masks out the fact that fundamental components of a culture’s way of thinking and being in the world are not visual at all, not accessible to vision at any moment or through any sequence of moments.”⁸³ Trying, to describe a specific worldview completely is impossible because no one can actually see all the aspects of their own culture. Considering identity through this lens assumes that differences become obvious only when encountering different worldviews. Even this notion of comparing is a western european cultural understanding of identity. McPherson’s discussion of Othering,

⁸¹ Justo L. Gonzalez & Catherine G. Gonzalez, *The Liberating Pulpit*, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994), 33, 83.

⁸² Bruce Wilshire “The very idea of ‘a worldview’ and of ‘alternative worldviews’” in *Unlearning the Language of Conquest: Scholars Expose Anti-Indianism in America*, ed. Donald Trent Jacobs, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2006), 261.

⁸³ Wilshire, “The very idea of ‘a worldview’ and of ‘alternative worldviews,’” 263.

as previously mentioned, explains that there is no conception of an object with which to make comparisons.⁸⁴ Thus, I take great care to mention that the concept of worldview is geared toward a non-Native audience and in particular for those of western european descent. This is the construction of identity and language that we white settler/immigrants have been born into. It is not the only one. But it is ours, so let us speak now in a language we understand but let us do it with awareness.

According to this construction of identity it is important to realize that expanding what we know as “worldview” cannot be learned only through intellectual knowing but also through direct interactions with different cultures. During those interactions we will make comparisons. In doing so we will open ourselves up to a whole new way of being. That being said, let us consider some similar values Indigenous scholars have noted that offer an alternative to the euro-christian settler/immigrant worldview.

In her book *Braiding Sweet Grass*, Robin Hall Kemmerer discusses the difference between a euro-christian settler/immigrant and a Native worldview concerning our relationship to this land we both inhabit. She says,

After all these generations since Columbus, some of the wisest of Native elders still puzzle over the people who came to our shores. They look at the toll on the land and say, “The problem with these new people is that they don't have both feet on the shore. One is still on the boat. They don't seem to know whether they're staying or not.”⁸⁵

The colonial narrative of Manifest Destiny drives us to discover, take what we want, and move on. We live in a disposable culture that strives for the next thing whether it be an

⁸⁴ McPherson, “A Definition of Culture,” 95.

⁸⁵ Robin Wall Kimmerer, *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants* (Minneapolis: Milkweed Editions, 2013), 207.

object, land, or people. We leave a lot of waste in our wake and when it piles up we put it out to sea or find some other “wilderness” spot to place it out of our sight.

Andrea Smith explains that identity, the land, and Sovereignty are intertwined with relationship and therefore carry responsibilities. Relationships tie us together so that when one suffers all suffer.⁸⁶ She says,

Sovereignty is an active, living process within this knot of human, material and spiritual relationships bound together by mutual responsibilities and obligations. From that knot of relationships is born our histories, our identity, the traditional ways in which we govern ourselves, our beliefs, our relationship to the land, and how we feed, clothe, house and take care of our families, communities and Nations.⁸⁷

Sovereignty is another important concept to an Indigenous worldview. When the word sovereignty is used in this paper it may refer to personal sovereignty that advocates for self-determination or sovereignty of a nation. It is important for those of us who are part of the euro-christian settler/immigrant colonial culture to remember that relationships with the United States government varies from Nation to Nation due to treaties and legal classifications. Some Native Peoples have dual citizenship with their own Nation as well as the United States and some like the Haudenosaunee have resisted citizenship with the United States. Furthermore, some Native peoples live on reservations, some do not. In addition, one of the most egregious designations is “federally recognized” as opposed to “state recognized.” Some Nations have both, some have only the latter, and some none at all. In effect, those that are not federally or state recognized have been declared “extinct” by the United States government. This despite descendants who continue to practice

⁸⁶ Andrea Smith, *Conquest: Sexual Violence and American Indian Genocide* (Cambridge: South End Press, 2005), 187.

⁸⁷ Smith, *Conquest: Sexual Violence and American Indian Genocide*, 186.

traditions dating back centuries and who still live on and around their ancestral lands such as the Gabrieleno/Tongva Nation of California and the Nanticoke Lenni-Lenape Tribal Nation spread throughout New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Delaware.⁸⁸ Bryan McKinley Jones says that “the idea that there are tribal groups who are federally recognized and those who are not is constructed by the federal government and ignores what Deloria & Lytle call the “extraconstitutionality” of “non-recognized” groups.”⁸⁹

But Sovereignty reaches beyond national recognition; it also encompasses identity. Brayboy tells us that for Indigenous peoples “Power is not a property or trait that an individual has to exercise control over others; rather, it is rooted in a group’s ability to define themselves, their place in the world, and their traditions.”⁹⁰ Andrea Smith elaborates saying,

This is a cyclical view of sovereignty, incorporating it into our traditional philosophy and view of our responsibilities. There it differs greatly from the concept of western sovereignty which is based upon absolute power. For us absolute power is in the Creator and the natural order of all living things; not only in human beings ... Our sovereignty is related to our connections to the earth and is inherent. The idea of a nation did not simply apply to human beings. We call the buffalo, the wolves, the fish, the trees, and all are nations. Each is sovereign, and equal part of the creation, interdependent, interwoven, and all related.⁹¹

⁸⁸ Suanne Ware-Diaz offered some clarification about the Gabrieleno/Tongva (G/T) peoples. They have multiple websites which describe them as the G/T Tribe, G/T Nation or as Suanne has heard them self-refer as the G/T Band of Mission Indians. Suanne Ware-Diaz, conversation with author, October 15, 2018. These different categories of naming point to the complexity of identity, National identity, and the intersections of that identity with both the language of colonization and United States legal determination. It has been said that the word Tribe diminishes claims to Sovereignty: with the characterization of Indian nations as “tribes” (a demeaning term used by “states” as a technique of political subjugation) and as “conquered and subdued nations.” Newcomb, *Pagans in the Promised Land: Decoding the Doctrine of Christian Discovery*, 70.

⁸⁹ Bryan McKinley Jones Brayboy, “Toward a Tribal Critical Race Theory in Education,” *The Urban Review* 37, No. 5, (December, 2005), 433.

⁹⁰ Brayboy, “Toward a Tribal Critical Race Theory in Education,” 435.

⁹¹ Smith, *Conquest: Sexual Violence and American Indian Genocide*, 186.

Another aspect of the euro-christian settler/immigrant colonial mindset is the view that land is a commodified resource that is either used to produce further sources of income or is outright bought and sold for profit. Kemmerer reflects on the one Indigenous value that stood out above all and is in direct opposition to this mindset.

In the face of such loss [of children, language, lands], one thing our people could not surrender was the meaning of land. In the settler mind, land was property, real estate, capital, or natural resources. But to our people, it was everything: identity, the connection to our ancestors, the home of our nonhuman kinfolk, our pharmacy, our library, the source of all that sustained us. Our lands were where our responsibility to the world was enacted, sacred ground. It belonged to itself; it was a gift, not a commodity, so it could never be bought or sold. These are the meanings people took with them when they were forced from their ancient homelands to new places.⁹²

The commodification of the land is not the only economic difference between cultures. Capitalistic economics and monetary systems were virtually unheard of by peoples such as the Kiowa Nation. Stan Hoig tells the story of how the Kiowa, at a loss as to the use of gold coins they had acquired, decided to work their artistry, and turn them into intricate jewelry to wear for adornment.⁹³

Historian Homer Noley (Choctaw) explains one Native perspective this way,

The Spirit of the Creator pervaded everything, giving conscious significance to everything composing the tribal citizen's environment. The ethical relationships of tribal citizens among themselves were based on this consciousness. Being outside of this relationship was, for the individual, a condition of banishment, which was far more painful than personal incarceration. Territorial rights were observed by tribes living adjacent to one another and disputes were settled peacefully to preserve the balance of power. Disputes that flared into violence were quickly extinguished to keep lines of communication open for trade and other international traffic.⁹⁴

⁹² Kimmerer, *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants*, 17.

⁹³ Stan Edward Hoig, *The Kiowas and the Legend of Kicking Bird* (Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2000), 20.

⁹⁴ Homer Noley, *First White Frost: Native Americans and United Methodism*. (Nashville, Abingdon Press, 1991), 37.

Thus, economics are defined as relational. Jacobs mentions the importance of generosity which is considered “the highest form of courage.”⁹⁵ He says, ‘giving and sharing are a priority over taking and saving,’⁹⁶ and “aesthetics and creativity outshine the idea of a work ethic.”⁹⁷ These words should give preachers pause. How much closer is this to the biblical view of economics as opposed to the colonial system based in competition and individualism?

One of the most interesting and probably one of the most overlooked differences occurs in language comparisons. “Language is the medium through which a culture expresses its world view. . . . Like culture in general, language is learned and it serves to convey thoughts; in addition, it transmits values, beliefs, perceptions, norms, and so on.”⁹⁸

Language is both affected by culture and effects culture. Feminist scholar, Becky Mulvaney says, “communication is epistemic,” so it determines how we come to know things.⁹⁹ But it is also constructed through our ways of knowing and the values we hold. In turn those values and ways of knowing are shaped by our language. It is an ever-revolving system made all the more complex by intercultural encounters. The tragedy is that Indigenous languages literally die because of colonizing strategies inherent in english vocabulary and grammar. Becoming the dominant language in United States was a

⁹⁵ Donald Trent Jacobs, ed. *Unlearning the Language of Conquest: Scholars Expose Anti-Indianism in America*, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2006), 279.

⁹⁶ Jacobs, *Unlearning the Language of Conquest: Scholars Expose Anti-Indianism in America*, 280.

⁹⁷ Jacobs, 280.

⁹⁸ Becky Mulvaney, “Feminism and Women's Studies: Gender Differences in Communication: An Intercultural Experience,” in *Intercultural Communication: A Global Reader*, ed. Fred E. Jandt (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc, 2003), 224.

⁹⁹ Mulvaney, “Feminism and Women's Studies: Gender Differences in Communication: An Intercultural Experience,” 222.

colonizing project which not only gave english a place of prominence but disregarded other languages which it deemed archaic and useless.

English has both Germanic and Latin roots. This means that there are some cultural similarities conveyed in the dominant language which was adopted by settler/immigrants from Western Europe. These similarities have been homogenized and conveyed into the dominant culture. One of the consequences of this assimilation by western european immigrants is not only the loss of their heart language but also their lack of memory about the loss. Cultural diversity conveyed in european languages was eliminated and replaced with white “American” values during assimilation.¹⁰⁰ The word “*explorador*” is just one example of the ways in which language conveys ideology. English stresses a noun object construction and is noun based.¹⁰¹ Compare this to Indigenous languages which are verb based and stress process, speaking to “what we do rather than what we are.”¹⁰²

In her book *Braiding Sweet Grass*, Robin Hall Kemmerer eloquently illustrates the difference between languages. She struggled to learn her language which had been reduced to nine speakers among the elders following the boarding school era when children were punished for speaking their language. She explains her difficulty and her revelations,

To actually speak [Potawatomi]...requires verbs. English is a noun based language, somehow appropriate to a culture so obsessed with things. Only 30 percent of English words are verbs but in Potawatomi that proportion is 70 percent. ...European languages often assign gender to nouns, but Potawatomi

¹⁰⁰ For more on the role of english and the white supremacist colonial project see Kelly Brown Douglas, *Stand Your Ground: Black Bodies and the Justice of God* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2015), chapter 1, Kindle.

¹⁰¹ Kimmerer, *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants*, 53.

¹⁰² McPherson, “A Definition of Culture,” 96.

does not divide the world into masculine and feminine. Nouns and verbs both are animate and inanimate. You hear a person with a word that is completely different from the one with which you hear an airplane. Pronouns, articles, plurals, demonstratives, verbs... are all aligned in Potawatomi to provide different ways to speak of the living world and the lifeless one. Different verb forms, different plurals, different everything apply depending on whether what you are speaking of is alive... A bay is a noun only if water is dead. "To be a bay" holds the wonder that for this moment the living water has decided to shelter itself between these shores, conversing with cedar roots and a flock of baby mergansers. Because it could do otherwise - become a stream or an ocean or a waterfall, and there are verbs for that, too... all are possible verbs in a world where everything is alive... This is the grammar of animacy... In English, we never refer to a member of our family, or indeed to any person, as it. That would be a profound act of disrespect. It robs a person of selfhood and kinship, reducing a person to a mere thing. So it is that in Potawatomi and most other indigenous languages, we use the same words to address the living world as we use for our family. Because they are our family. [This includes] rocks ...mountains and water and fire and places.¹⁰³

What a different perspective she presents from western european languages that convey a worldview which at its core "is hierarchical, dualistic, exclusivist, and divisive: humans over animals; male over female; mind over matter; light or white over darkness or dark; transcendent over immanent; rational over non-rational; West over East; active over passive; etc., etc.?"¹⁰⁴

Kimmerer also reflects on the theological aspect of language. Instead of a sense of duty or dominion over creation she expresses a reciprocal relationship. She feels grateful as she walks amongst the trees conversing with them and she appreciates the lessons she can learn from the "Beaver people" or the "Rock people."¹⁰⁵ One memorable experience of this happened to me amongst the Lenni-Lenape in Bridgeton NJ. As the Elders took us to a sacred grove nestled in the pines to pray, the clouds rolled in and the wind seemed to

¹⁰³ Kimmerer, *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants*, 53-55.

¹⁰⁴ Jacobs, *Unlearning the Language of Conquest: Scholars Expose Anti-Indianism in America*, 267.

¹⁰⁵ Kimmerer, *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants*, 58.

join in our prayer and just as we ended, the wind stopped, sun peaked out, and all became still once more. The Elders noted this as a sign of reciprocal prayer. While a euro-christian settler/immigrant colonial mindset will seek to explain this phenomenon scientifically, Kimmerer points us to a different explanation, saying that the “plants and places... love to hear the old language” and even when the old language is lost they will still hear if you speak from your heart.¹⁰⁶

Cultural understanding is conveyed through language, values, history, and religious traditions which often get homogenized into an identity categorized by the nomenclature of Native American or American Indian or First Peoples. As defined early on, when these labels are used they can recolonize and essentialize peoples of different languages, religious traditions, who embody belovedness in particular ways and places on the earth. This discussion of worldview offers some initial insights into the importance of language, the location of voice, and the complexity of identity which are all crucial to understand if one wants to engage in beloved speech.

My own awareness regarding differences in worldviews began with my relationship formed through a prayer partnership with Suanne Ware-Diaz of the Kiowa Nation which began in 2002. Suanne served as one of the highest-ranking Native Americans in The United Methodist Church as the Associate General Secretary at the General Commission on Religion and Race (GCORR) Native American Portfolio. Our relationship slowly developed from prayer partners through an ever-deepening vulnerability with each other that eventually led to a sustaining friendship. My work in antiracism and her work for GCORR opened up conversations that were vulnerable and

¹⁰⁶ Kimmerer, 59.

honest. Through Suanne I began to expand my antiracism work from primarily a Black/white paradigm to a larger view which led to my work with my conference Committee on Native American Ministries.

I did not have a word for it yet but I had been experiencing beloved speech with Suanne as she introduced me to the challenges she faced as she negotiated multiple intersections of cultures and identities on a daily basis. She worked within the dominant culture as well as the hierarchical culture of the UMC while also maintaining her own Kiowa identity and serving peoples from many nations across the United States. My journey to identify my experience as beloved speech began with a conversation with Suanne about her mother's experience as a Deaconess in Kiowa Nation in the 1940's. I became curious about the role of women in Methodist missions.

I visited Suanne and her mother, Virginia Ware in 2014. Virginia's stories made me more aware of how much I did not know about my Indigenous brothers and sisters but also the women of the UMC and their involvement with the OIMC. Through Suanne I met Rev. Anita Philips, Cherokee, Executive Director of the Native American Comprehensive Plan, and Anne Marshall MVSKOKE, Former Associate General Secretary of the General Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns, former chair of the United Methodist Inter-Ethnic Strategy Development Group, and former chair of the Native American International Caucus. I interviewed Rev. Anita Philips, on the phone about preaching and Anne Marshall about her experiences with the Act of Repentance and Preaching. Following these conversations, I realized that if I really wanted to learn about preaching and ways of undermining racism from the pulpit I would need to go and meet with some preachers in person. Suanne and Anne helped me

determine who might be able to meet with me and Anne offered to drive and be my guide to make introductions. Through these relationships I experienced the influence of listening, relationships, and identity on speech which evolved into the concept of beloved speech.

Beloved speech is not a term that can be defined precisely. It happens in community through relationships that are deep, honest, longstanding, and have built trust. In addition, the one using beloved speech pays reflexive attention to their own identity. They understand their own identity and social location. Moreover, the listener has an openness to learning. The listener is humble and honest with themselves about their own identity and open to hearing how others perceive them.

Furthermore, beloved speech also encompasses how speech is performed. In other words, demeanor, tone, and body language all convey beloved speech. Both the speaker and the listener practice the hospitality of listening whereby beloved ones provide space for listening to occur through their tone and demeanor, the words they use and their sensitivity to context. Additionally, beloved speakers are able to listen “between the lines” to the demeanor, tone, and body language of the listener and adjust in order to be heard. At the same time the listener respectfully honors the speaker with a desire to receive and grow in understanding.

Beloved speech emerges from a humility that allows both the speaker and the listener to be vulnerable with themselves and with each other in order to reach an ever-deepening connection. Professor of social work, Brené Brown, studies the relationship

between connectedness and vulnerability and says that, “[s]taying vulnerable is a risk we have to take if we want to experience connection.”¹⁰⁷

Finally, beloved Speech also comes primarily through stories, and therefore offers essential insights in the telling of stories and the framework for listening to stories. Stories may or may not be autobiographical, but stories spoken through beloved speech involve honesty. The first component of beloved speech is relationship which is primary and is deepened by the experience of the other two categories. In order for relationships to affect worldview and thus speech, preachers need to be in deepening relationships with persons who see the world differently from themselves. Relationships are built over time. The patience to build trust is all the more poignant when a non-Native enters into relationship with Native peoples because of the history of betrayal and deceit that accompanied relationships with non-Natives. It will take time to build trust, great care, and an empathetic heart. These relationships require a willingness to listen deeply and to give honor to each other which may appear in the form of protocols. Different nations have different customs and cultural norms so protocols will change according to the context. In this way the relationships are more than just between individuals but also set within the larger community. In some cases, there may be some similarities in protocols between different communities and nations, in some cases there will be subtle differences, and in other cases there will be major differences. Practicing beloved speech by keeping an open heart through deep listening will allow relationships to deepen to the point where participants can become vulnerable enough with each other for Natives to offer and non-Natives to receive guidance. There is a kenotic aspect to the deep listening

¹⁰⁷ Brené Brown, *The Gifts of Imperfection: Let Go of Who You Think You're Supposed to Be and Embrace Who You Are*, (Center City, Minnesota: Hazelden Publishing, 2010), 53.

whereby the hearer humbly empties themselves and allows themselves to abide with the other person so that they may be more fully present with the speaker. When white euro-christian settler/immigrants engage in relationships with Indigenous peoples, the relationship goes beyond the individual to their family, friends, and nation as well as their ancestral land. To come to know a person more fully one needs to appreciate where they come from. This points to the importance of identity with deepening relationships and in turn provides an opportunity to conscientize the white euro-christian settler/immigrant to seek out their own ancestral place. The more trust and vulnerability practiced in these relationships, the more likely one will experience beloved speech.

The second component of beloved speech, attending to identity, incorporates a reflexive aspect of knowing yourself. Jennifer Harvey points to the importance of this for white euro-christian settlers when she quotes Antonio Gramsci who says, “the starting-point of critical elaboration is the consciousness of what one really is, as in ‘knowing thyself’ as a product of the historical process to date which has deposited in you an infinity of traces without leaving an inventory.”¹⁰⁸ She says “such ‘self knowing’ for white people requires going beyond-without departing from-the (more obvious) traces of the unjust economic benefits and historical atrocities implicit to whiteness, to locating the (less immediately tactile) traces of racial subjugation central to white U.S.-American identity itself.”¹⁰⁹ In order for white euro-christian settlers to unmask these parts of their identity, self-reflection will require the input from the experience of the deepening relationships mentioned previously.

¹⁰⁸ Harvey, *Whiteness and Morality: Pursuing Racial Justice through Reparations and Sovereignty*, 97.

¹⁰⁹ Harvey, 97.

One of the first protocols I experienced in my interviews was the expectation that I would present where I come from and who my people are. The answers to these questions lie in a deep understanding of identity. Though dominant culture tells non-Natives that identity can change at any time and we can reinvent ourselves overnight, beloved speech requires a communal aspect in order to come to know the depth of our identity necessary to fully embody belovedness. This is especially important for those of the dominant white euro-christian settler/immigrant culture who have not taken the time to identify themselves. In this way relationships have the potential to not only introduce a person more deeply into alternative worldviews but also to encourage them to seek out their own ancestral songs, history, and place. In addition, viewing the world through an Indigenous lens will encourage euro-christian settler/immigrants to expand their self-understanding in sites of agreement with other people. Moreover, through reflexive analysis euro-christian settler/immigrants may become conscientized to the inadequacy of the colonial norms which form their worldview. Allen says that encounters with alternative worldviews “[C]hallenges us and calls us to question the adequacy of our interpretations of ourselves, [other people], and the world.... At its best, the face of [alternate views] prompts us not only to recognize the limits of our own interpretations but pushes us to recognize potential beyond them.”¹¹⁰

The third component of beloved speech is the hospitality listening. My experiences in the interviews and the interactions following taught me how listening opens new worlds. An alternative to the dominant narrative can be heard through

¹¹⁰ Allen’s title reflects the language he uses, namely “Other.” I have chosen to quote him because his ideas provide a Homiletician’s view of the value of relationships and identity formation for preachers. However, I adjust his language where it is possible for the reasons stated previously concerning the problematic nature of “Other.” Allen, *Preaching and the Other: Studies of Postmodern Insights*, 32.

engaging in relationships and listening to the stories of those who hold a different worldview. Ron Allen refrains from romanticizing how much we can come to understand one another when he says, “To be sure, we can never know one another fully. Dimensions of [other people] are always mysterious and even unknown.”¹¹¹ Yet he also assures us that,

all people are internally related – that is, at a deep level all people affect one another and are affected by one another. I cannot empathize completely with another person, but I can feel that person enough to be touched by him or her. These experiences are sometimes palpable.¹¹²

If Amer-europeans can listen to the stories of those who hold a different worldview, then we can be “touched” and the beloved aspect of speech can flourish. But this requires a deep listening that involves not only words but also sensitivity to vocal cues and body language. In some ways engaging in the hospitality of deep listening seems similar to the listening theory presented by Carl Rogers and Richard E. Farson in their 1957 article, entitled *Active Listening*. In addition to psychological counseling and pastoral care, their techniques have been utilized in business leadership development courses as well as conflict resolution.¹¹³

For instance, they advocate reading non-verbal communication; a component necessary for nurturing beloved speech. They state that “truly sensitive listening requires that we become aware of several kinds of communication besides verbal.”¹¹⁴ They

¹¹¹ Allen, 43.

¹¹² Allen, 43.

¹¹³ Examples and practical uses can be found in Thomas Gordon, *Leader Effectiveness Training: L.E.T.: “L.E.T.”* (New York, N.Y: Berkley Publishing Group, 2001).

¹¹⁴ Carl R. Rogers and Richard Evans Farson, *Active Listening* (Mansfield Centre, CT: Martino Publishing, 2015), 3.

recommend taking note of “...facial expressions, body posture, hand movements, eye movements, and breathing...” in order to hear the entire message.¹¹⁵

However, some of the techniques recommended by Rogers and Farson run contrary to the aspects of beloved speech. For example, respect and honor for all human beings and creation is a constituent of deep listening. Similarly, Rogers and Farson touch on the importance of respect saying that, “[u]ntil we can demonstrate a spirit which genuinely respects the potential worth of the individual, which considers [their] sights and trusts [their] capacity for self-direction, we cannot begin to be effective listeners.”¹¹⁶ By focusing on the individual Active Listening fails to consider the aspect of beloved speech which respects not only the individual but also the individual as part of a community, including the natural world.

Another difference is the assumption built into Active Listening, that both parties are equal partners in communication. For those who belong to the dominant culture listening involves an understanding of protocols and asking for guidance concerning the expectations before actions are taken or assumptions are made. Engagement in communication between white euro-christian settler/immigrants and Indigenous peoples requires a guide in order to develop the trust required for a relationship to develop.

A promising observation by Rogers and Farson is the efficacy of what they call sensitive listening. They say it is “a most effective agent for individual personality change and group development” that brings “about changes in peoples’ attitudes toward themselves and others.”¹¹⁷ On the other hand, Active Listening also encourages behaviors

¹¹⁵ Rogers and Farson, *Active Listening*, 10.

¹¹⁶ Rogers and Farson, 3.

¹¹⁷ Rogers and Farson, 1.

that are contrary to respectful communication as it is practiced in the Native American communities I have visited. They write, “it is important to test constantly your ability to see the world in the way the speaker sees it. You can do this by reflecting in your own words what the speaker seems to mean by [their] words and actions. [Their] response to this will tell you whether or not [they] feel understood.”¹¹⁸

In contrast, one of the key aspects of practicing the hospitality of listening as a white euro-christian settler/immigrant involves what Suanne Ware-Diaz calls, Vocal Constraint. She explains that, quiet moments are part of the exchange and demonstrate reflection, indicate pondering, and convey the importance of what is being shared as opposed to questioning and interruptions which are generally perceived as disrespectful.¹¹⁹ The hospitality of listening is found in the words spoken, the body language, and the ability to remain silent. It is expressed within a deepening relationship and involves a humble posture of one who is willing to hold space for someone to speak.

It is also present when challenging conversations arise and the listener remains steadfast even when the communication is difficult to receive. This is especially true for white euro-christians of the settler/immigrant culture in the United States. Helpful to remaining steadfast is understanding one’s own identity. Attendance to identity will make it more likely that the listener will be secure enough in themselves to remain engaged even when racial and cultural norms brush up against each other. It will also provide a chance to grow if white settler norms result in microaggressions against the other person. When this happens, settlers will need to have courage to remain steadfast and humbly

¹¹⁸ Rogers, *Active Listening*, 12.

¹¹⁹ Suanne Ware-Diaz, conversation to author, 17 January 2019.

hear the other person's perspective. By abiding with and remaining in a stance of hospitality relationships can continue to go deeper, deep listening continues to be developed, and identity continues to expand horizons of knowing and understanding. The honoring of each other as the beloved in these situations has the potential for incredible expansion of worldview and thus an ever-deepening experience and expression of belovedness and beloved speech.

Hospitality of listening has an aspect of listening to the Divine as well. The spiritual and temporal are not separated. Hospitality goes beyond the human realm and brings both the Creator and all of creation into the listening. This aspect is similar to a theological understanding of the "Kin-dom" that is relational as opposed to the colonial hierarchical concept of "Kingdom."¹²⁰

Methodology

These components of beloved speech which came to my consciousness through my experiences in the interviews I conducted were unexpected. When I returned from Oklahoma and California after conducting the interviews for this dissertation I wondered what I was going to do with them. I sat with the interview transcripts confused about what had happened. As I read over my notes and listened to the recordings multiple times I was faced with the discursive nature of the interviews which created a beautiful

¹²⁰ Mujerista theology values relationships in similar ways to an Indigenous worldview. Ada Maria Isasi-Diaz first suggested this word in place of kingdom of God in her book *En la Lucha In the Struggle*, and she expanded upon it in *La Lucha Continues* saying "[t]he use of kin-dom instead kingdom or reign stems from the desire to use a metaphor that is much more relevant to our world today. From the perspective of mujerista theology, the point of reference for kin-dom of God is the concept of family and community that is central to Latina culture. There is also a need to move away from "kingdom" and "reign" because they are sexist and hierarchical metaphors." Ada Maria Isasi-Diaz, *La Lucha Continues: Mujerista Theology* (Orbis Books, 2004), 7. Consistencies between these worldviews suggested by Suanne Ware-Diaz, conversation with author, October 15, 2018.

unfolding of relationship. They also held important conceptions of preaching and race as well as cultural difference embedded throughout. Unfortunately, I did not know how to access any supposed patterns or create a sense of continuity between the interviews.

I had entered the rooms with questions designed to gather data about preaching styles and strategies and I did not seem to have anything useful for my study on preaching. I had hoped they would provide insights into racial identity formation and its influence on speech. I had recorded long conversations which touched on preaching but also meandered into topics such as our ministry, our lives, and our experiences of racism and colonization. It was only after many long hours spent pouring over the interviews, listening to the inflections of their voices, and attending to each word that any semblance of principles came to the fore. Still I was resisting what was directly staring at me from the page. It was only in the months following, after reading and rereading the interviews and then talking with my advisor Dr. Heather Murray Elkins and Suzanne Ware-Diaz that I realized I did have useful information but it was not “data” as I had understood it during my days as a scientific researcher. I had something much more valuable; I had stories that emerged from the relationships I had entered into.

Tribal/Critical Race Theorist Bryan McKinley Jones Brayboy tells us, “Stories are not separate from theory; they make up theory and are, therefore, real and legitimate sources of data and ways of being.”¹²¹ Likewise Kovach describes the ways in which, “story and indigenous inquiry are grounded within a relationship based approach to research.”¹²² Narrative, in particular storytelling, will be used throughout this dissertation

¹²¹ Brayboy, “Toward a Tribal Critical Race Theory in Education,” 430.

¹²² Margaret Kovach, *Indigenous Methodologies: Characteristics, Conversations, and Contexts*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010), 98.

as a methodological approach. When I speak of storytelling I am primarily referring to personal narratives but Kovach points out this is only one form of stories within indigenous epistemologies because both “creation and teaching stories” as well as “personal narratives of place, happenings, and experiences” are passed along to the next generation through oral tradition.¹²³ While acknowledging that story is not unique to Indigenous knowledge systems and making it clear that the way a culture employs a story differs, nonetheless Kovach explains that both story form and method crosses cultural divides.¹²⁴

I had experienced beloved speech conveyed through the stories of the women I met which was so organic and natural I did not even realize what it was. What I did not realize is that they were not only introducing me to beloved speech but they were also guiding me into an Indigenous ethnographic methodological approach as we talked. I do not mean to say that the women were consciously teaching me what has been named by ethnographers, Indigenous Methodology but rather that the practice of Indigenous Methodology organically happened through storytelling and the protocols they enacted with me.

The difficulty of conducting research with Indigenous peoples made me uncomfortable from the first time I submitted paperwork for my Internal Review Board (IRB) at Drew University. I knew about the ways research had been performed in the past by white settler/immigrant anthropologists and social scientists as well as medical practitioners who had viewed the people they worked with as subjects. At the very least these researchers had misinterpreted their findings and at the worst they had abused and

¹²³ Kovach, *Indigenous Methodologies Characteristics, Conversations, and Contexts*, 95.

¹²⁴ Margaret Kovach, 96.

caused the deaths of the men and women they investigated.¹²⁵ Ethnographer Jelena Porsanger (Saami) writes that, research has been used as a tool of colonization of Indigenous peoples and their territories and when viewed from the Indigenous peoples' perspective, the term 'research' has been linked with colonialism.¹²⁶ Kovach explains, “[e]arly researchers extracted knowledge from indigenous peoples and in the case of ethnographers this often meant conducting quick interview sessions during short-term visits and analyzing the data on their own terms through their own lens.”¹²⁷

From the outset my project anticipated a pastoral approach that would be built on relationships for two reasons. Firstly, as a feminist I was experiencing a disconnect with the traditional concepts and language used for ethnography and it is no wonder. Campbell and Lassiter say,

Feminist theory calls “into question, ... the language of traditional ethnographic terminologies like "subject" or "informant,” which once helped to reify the divisions between a presumably objective researcher and his or her informing subjects. Many scholars - feminist scholars, for example - have long called into question the use of these terms and the epistemology that gives rise to such notions....¹²⁸

Secondly, I was given access to meet with all the women I interviewed through my relationship with Suanne Ware-Diaz. beginning with her mother and continuing through her established relationships within the community of the OIMC. From my

¹²⁵ Here are but two of many sources of information concerning research abuses including the forced sterilization of Indigenous women, Smith, *Conquest: Sexual Violence and American Indian Genocide* and Amnesty International, “Maze of injustice: the failure to protect indigenous women from sexual violence in the USA,” *Amnesty International*, <http://www.amnesty.org/en/50/inspirational-stories/indigenous-women's-rights>.

¹²⁶ Jelena Porsanger, “An Essay about Indigenous Methodology,” *Nordlit*, Volume 8 Number 1 (1 July 2004), 107.

¹²⁷ Kovach, *Indigenous Methodologies Characteristics, Conversations, and Contexts*, 28.

¹²⁸ Elizabeth Campbell and Luke Eric Lassiter, *Doing Ethnography Today: Theories, Methods, Exercises*, (Malen, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2014), 45.

relationship with Suanne, my travels to Oklahoma in the past to Cherokee Nation, and my work with the Committee on Native American Ministries in my annual conference I knew that I was not just going to interview these women and disappear. Not only would this would be a serious breach of the trust Suanne and Anne Marshall, my guide in Oklahoma, had placed in me but also it would dishonor my colleagues in the OIMC and could harm any potential relationships between my community in Pennsylvania with the OIMC. I did not walk into those rooms alone, my community both Native and Non-Native came with me. Both Anne and Suanne have told me on separate occasions that they saw something in me – a desire to learn and understand – which led them to take a chance and invite me into private spaces that carried risk for them if I was disrespectful of those spaces. Initially I did not realize the degree of trust they had placed in me. As time went on it became much clearer the great honor I was given and the fact that it was only possible due the investment of their time in me and my desire to continually develop our relationships .

This community influenced my pastoral approach and yet coming from a white euro-christian settler/immigrant worldview and a Western pedagogical background, I also struggled with my need to maintain the agenda as stated in my IRB and follow what I perceived to be proper procedure. Margaret Kovach in *Indigenous Methodologies: Characteristics, Conversations, and Contexts* explains how Indigenous Methodology (IM) differs from Western methods of ethnographic research. In the Western view interviewers form specific questions before the interview which they pedantically record.¹²⁹ To embark on interviews restricted to preconceived questions is a colonizing

¹²⁹ Kovach, *Indigenous Methodologies Characteristics, Conversations, and Contexts*, 98.

act. Jelena Porsanger writes about the struggle to use an Indigenous methodology while performing a task designed within a Western framework. She says the very definition of research is antithetical to IM saying,

research includes collecting information about a particular subject, revising accepted theories or laws in the light of new facts, and the practical application of such new or revised theories or laws ...[which] implies discovery, observation, collection, investigation, description, systematization, analysis, synthesis, theorizing and codifying by means of the language of theory, comparison, verification, checking hypotheses, etc.¹³⁰

Shawn Wilson agrees stating that relationship, which is integral to the method “is shared and mutual,” therefore “ideas or knowledge cannot be owned or discovered.”¹³¹ I straddled these two worlds by entering into the interviews with questions as prescribed by the Internal Review Board at Drew University. But I also purposely left allowances for the conversation to unfold organically by engaging a narrative method that made room for pastoral sharing.¹³²

The affinity I did find with the Indigenous women I interviewed appears to be influenced by both the feminist methodological approach I brought with me and the aspects of Indigenous Methodology the women organically presented to me in spite of my Western Influences. I entered into the interviews seeking to use a collaborative methodology such as ethnographers Elizabeth Campbell and Luke Eric Lassiter advocate. Lassiter has worked in the Kiowa Nation in Oklahoma as well as other Native American communities for the last 20 years and in his book with Elizabeth Campbell they press

¹³⁰ Porsanger, “An Essay about Indigenous Methodology,” 106.

¹³¹ Shawn Wilson, “What Is an Indigenous Research Methodology?” *Canadian Journal of Native Education* 25, no. 2 (2001): 177.

¹³² Though I had a list of questions, my Research Determination Form for the Internal Review Board at Drew University included the phrase, “Questions will pertain to both the presenter’s personal experiences as well as resources they recommend, it is anticipated that questions will adjust as each interview progresses.”

back against the view that ethnography supplements quantitative research as a source of anecdotal stories.¹³³ They introduce a collaborative approach to ethnographical research which they say has affinity with feminist methods and appreciative approaches that takes human relationships seriously.¹³⁴

Kovach also points out agreement between Indigenous methodology and feminist inquiry through the highly reflexive nature of feminist methods.¹³⁵ Kovach cites this as an important aspect of Indigenous Methodology which calls for a “Critically reflective self-location [which] is a strategy to keep us aware of the power dynamic flowing back and forth between researcher and participant...[which] prompts awareness of the extractive tendency of research.”¹³⁶

The reflexivity continues after the interview is concluded. Lassiter and Campbell point to methods which involve “an ethnography that is interpretive and hermeneutic rather than scientific.”¹³⁷ As they recommended I immersed myself in the interview materials and found that “intuitions – or, more accurately, inklings – [led] to fresh questions, which will [led] back into new conversations, on to further questions, and eventually into deeper texts and new understandings” in a continual cycle.¹³⁸

But it was not just self-reflection I engaged in. I also checked in with my communities and guides such as Suanne Ware-Diaz and Anne Marshall and those I had interviewed. This collaborative approach alongside the reflexivity creates a unique model. Campbell and Lassiter say that, “[i]n an effort to de-colonize and democratize the

¹³³ Campbell and Lassiter, *Doing Ethnography Today: Theories, Methods, Exercises*, 9.

¹³⁴ Campbell and Lassiter, 5-6.

¹³⁵ Kovach, *Indigenous Methodologies Characteristics, Conversations, and Contexts*, 33.

¹³⁶ Kovach, 112.

¹³⁷ Campbell and Lassiter, *Doing Ethnography Today: Theories, Methods, Exercises*, 118.

¹³⁸ Campbell and Lassiter, 118.

processes of ethnographic fieldwork and writing, feminist ethnographers extended issues of positionality into their ethnographic writing experiments, using devices like biography, dialogic editing, or reciprocal ethnography, a kind of collaborative ethnography informed by feminist theory in which ethnographers share their ethnographic texts with and seek input from their consultants as the writing develops.¹³⁹ Campbell and Lassiter point to the risk of this kind of approach. It is possible that people will ask for sections of an interview be removed which are critical pieces of the researcher's premise. As they say, "the humanity of our participants took precedence over our research goals, so anything they wanted taken out got taken out."¹⁴⁰

Porsanger says, the main aim of Indigenous methodologies is to "ensure that research on indigenous issues can be carried out in a more respectful, ethical, correct, sympathetic, useful and beneficial fashion, seen from the point of view of indigenous peoples."¹⁴¹ It may be that this value is what sets IM apart from feminist methods. This is not to say that feminist methodologies are not ethical but rather what is "beneficial" for Indigenous peoples may be different.

For instance, what I discovered is that the method I actually followed was less collaborative than I imagined and more like a pedagogical experience. Through beloved speech the interview tables were turned and I was interviewed as part of protocol. I was watched and listened to and in a way perhaps vetted for my trustworthiness.

In addition, I discovered what Shawn Wilson, Opaskwayak Cree and Indigenous researcher describes as "fundamental ontological, epistemological, axiological, and

¹³⁹ Campbell and Lassiter, 12.

¹⁴⁰ Campbell and Lassiter, 34.

¹⁴¹ Porsanger, "An Essay about Indigenous Methodology," 107-108.

methodological differences.”¹⁴² I was not asked only about my personal credentials but I was asked to name my community and my place. As Wilson points out, IM does not come from the view that an individual researcher comes seeking knowledge and understanding, rather a researcher using Indigenous Methodology begins with an “Indigenous ontology and epistemology grounded in relationality with other human beings and all creation.”¹⁴³

Furthermore, the reflexivity aspect goes beyond ongoing conversations to actual reciprocation of power over the transcriptions of the interviews. Ownership of research is an important consideration due to historical patterns of cultural misappropriation and theft of stories taken from Indigenous peoples and used for profit by white researchers in particular.¹⁴⁴ Richard Grounds, a member of the Yuchi Nation and scholar, describes his dismay at receiving a stapled handout as he prepared to present at an academic panel discussion which contained diagrams of sacred dances from the Yuchi Tradition. Not only was it disconcerting to see the dances written down and handed out publicly but the way it portrayed them in the English language as a social dance mis-categorized their meaning.¹⁴⁵ In *Native Voices American Indian Identity and Resistance* he describes several ways in which scholars garnered “materials for their chosen careers” from elders who believed this was a way to preserve their traditional beliefs and practices.¹⁴⁶ In

¹⁴² Wilson, “What Is an Indigenous Research Methodology?” 176.

¹⁴³ Wilson, 176.

¹⁴⁴ I use the term white here because knowledge has been appropriated by those of European descent around the world not just settlers or Amer-Europeans.

¹⁴⁵ Richard A. Grounds, “Yuchi Travels” in *Native Voices: American Indian Identity and Resistance*, edited by, Richard A. Grounds, George E. Tinker, and David E. Wilkins, (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2003), 304 – 305.

¹⁴⁶ Grounds, “Yuchi Travels,” 306 – 308.

actuality researchers exoticized sacred traditions and presented them through a colonial lens with its own erroneous perceptions and interpretations.

One of the ways to counterbalance this history and build trust and mutuality in the relationship involves the ways in which the researcher handles the resulting material after the interviews are concluded. Knowledge taken and used out of context or abstractly separates the voices of the people from their words. Thus, as an added step in my process, I provided copies of the interview transcripts afterwards to everyone for their final approval and spoke with them over the phone about what exactly would be relayed in this dissertation, even though they had already signed a release form. This extra step ensured I presented their words as they would want. For this dissertation I used processes laid out in Drew Institutional Review Board and dissertation publishing guidelines which puts access to this dissertation into their database.

However, as result of this experience and further conversations about intellectual property with Dr. Richard Grounds, I have since updated any forms I will use in future research to make sure that the participants have full ownership of their interviews.¹⁴⁷ This limits the rights of the researcher to use the material outside of the established relationship and makes sure they cannot take someone else's words and stories for their own profit away from the community in which they were spoken. I have conducted a few interviews this way and one of the books used in this dissertation has this protocol attached to its use. It adds extra steps to the research and publishing process; however it also builds trust that unfortunately has been lacking in many non-Native – Native

¹⁴⁷ Richard Grounds, Presentation to UNESCO forum on 2019 Year of Indigenous Languages, at the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, Church Center for the United Nations, New York, April 2018.

research relationships. Non-Native researchers often consider the interviews they conduct to be their property which only perpetuates colonization practices. By maintaining the sovereignty of the individual's voice to their own keeping, it protects the words and knowledge contained in their story from being used out of context without the speaker's cognizance.

As would be expected, non-Native researchers may be regarded with suspicion which adds layers to the interview process.¹⁴⁸ James Hoopes advises researchers of barriers that already exist without this added layer. He explains how certain groups of peoples suffer fatigue from being studied so often by students and social scientists.¹⁴⁹ Additionally, he adds that people will sometimes focus their attention on how they want to appear for posterity.¹⁵⁰ It is easy to understand why many Indigenous peoples guard both their persons and their stories and are careful of what they say and with whom. The knowledge that they have this kind of control over their words can build trust.

There is another reason I needed to run the transcriptions past my interviewees two or three times. Wilson says, "As a researcher you are answering to all your relations when you are doing research."¹⁵¹ Within an IM framework I have a responsibility towards not just myself and my institution and not only towards the women I interviewed but also towards the communities the women belong to. This includes Virginia Ware, née Louke, who is non-Native but through her marriage and her children she remains connected to the Kiowa Nation. What I write and what I do affects the family as well.

¹⁴⁸ I use the term non-Native in this case because I am pointing to a particular phenomenon in what is now known as the United States of America by anyone involved in museums and special collections. These positions are not only held by Amer-europeans or whites.

¹⁴⁹ James Hoopes, *Oral History*, (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1979), 70.

¹⁵⁰ Hoopes, *Oral History*, 89.

¹⁵¹ Wilson, "What Is an Indigenous Research Methodology?" 177.

Wilson says, to begin with, “an Indigenous methodology has to ask different questions: rather than asking about validity or reliability, you are asking how am I fulfilling my role in this relationship?”¹⁵² This is not just research I have embarked on; it is a life changing experience for me as a researcher that will go far beyond the few hours I spent interviewing the Indigenous women I met.

In addition, I plan to follow up again once the dissertation is completed. Porsanger makes it clear that, “[r]eporting back is one of the most important imperatives of indigenous research. All these issues are based on the principles of respect, reciprocity and feedback, which are crucial for indigenous methodologies.”¹⁵³ This kind of feedback is not limited to IM though. Campbell and Lassiter say that their model of collaborative or reciprocal ethnography based in both IM and feminist theory “take the evolving text back to identified consultants (there are no anonymous voices unless directed otherwise by consultants) who offer critique, interpretation, and further dialogue... [and] the consultants themselves actually collaborate in how the text is defined and written.”¹⁵⁴ This is exactly what will appear throughout this dissertation as I collaborated with both my guides, Suanne Ware-Diaz and Anne Marshall, and the women I interviewed.

Narratives of Conquest and Genocide

One of the main contributions of this dissertation is its exposure of the dominant euro-christian settler/immigrant narrative of genocide that has been reframed into a tale of pioneer spirit and American exceptionalism which has become a source of national pride for many non-Natives in the United States of America. The messianic belief in

¹⁵² Wilson, “177.

¹⁵³ Porsanger, “An Essay about Indigenous Methodology,” 113.

¹⁵⁴ Lassiter, “Authoritative Texts, Collaborative Ethnography, and Native American Studies,” 605.

United States' superiority can be found in such disparate sources as President Barack Obama's First inaugural which "reaffirmed the greatness of our nation" and praised those who "packed up their few worldly possessions and traveled across oceans in search of a new life. and settled the West..." to Donald Trump's campaign slogan "Make America Great Again" which is a thinly veiled code for "white America First."¹⁵⁵ This paper not only exposes the political history of colonization but also its christian roots which continue to influence christian missiology, theology, and biblical interpretation – and preaching.

Contrary to the prevailing narrative known to many non-Native citizens of The United States of America, The Americas, and for this study North America, was not an uncharted wilderness waiting to be discovered and developed but rather a continent occupied by millions of people from many various nations of different cultures, traditions, languages, and religious beliefs and practices.¹⁵⁶

When explorers such as Christopher Columbus arrived beginning in 1492, they found a multicultural milieu of peoples with political and economic systems in place. After 1492, those systems endured a century of european exploration, exploitation, and conquest. The word "discovery" is an important one with legal ramifications based in christian Church Law. Over a period of centuries various popes made a series of decrees concerning the "discovery" of territories and peoples. Eventually the United States

¹⁵⁵ President Barack Hussein Obama, "President Barack Obama's Inaugural Address," President Barack Obama's Inaugural Address, January 21, 2009, <http://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/blog/2009/01/21/president-barack-obamas-inaugural-address>. Jeffrey D. Sachs, *A New Foreign Policy: Beyond American Exceptionalism*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2018), 38.

¹⁵⁶ The exact count has been debated but conservative estimates place it at 5+ million for what is now the Contiguous territory of the United States. Michael Robert Haines and Richard H. Steckel, *A Population History of North America* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 12-14.

Supreme Court codified these decrees into Civil law and it thereby became known as the Doctrine of Discovery.

Thus the “discovery,” which was actually a conquest, began long before Columbus ever set sail. In the 11th century Pope Urban II began a series of papal bulls which slowly eroded the sovereignty of non-Christians. In 1095 he put out a call for the first Crusade to claim Jerusalem for the Holy See, declaring, “whatever infidel lands or property the Christians managed to locate (discover) and seize (possess) would belong as spoil to the Christians who first seized it.”¹⁵⁷ Also known for the papal bull *Terra Nullius*, meaning ‘empty land,’ or ‘uninhabited land,’ Urban defined “discovered” lands as those harboring “‘heathens’ — people without souls and incapable of faith.”¹⁵⁸ In 1240 Pope Innocent IV stated that it was legitimate for Christians to invade the lands of infidels because the Crusades were just wars fought for the “defense” of Christianity.¹⁵⁹

“Infidels” during the time of the Crusades referred to Muslims. Later it took on new meaning which would impact the Americas. By 1366 in Florence, women were being trafficked in to meet the demand for domestic workers so the “Priors of Florence declared that people not born of Latin Christian parents were and would forever remain irredeemable ‘infidels,’ thereby giving the practice of human trafficking religious sanction and absolving faithful Italians of any guilt associated with it.”¹⁶⁰ As a result the definition not only became associated with non-Christians but imprinted on gendered

¹⁵⁷ William Brandon, *New Worlds for Old: Reports from the New World and Their Effects on the Development of Social Thought in Europe, 1500–1800* (Athens: Ohio Univ. Press, 1986), 121, quoted in Newcomb, *Pagans in the Promised Land: Decoding the Doctrine of Christian Discovery*, 49.

¹⁵⁸ Hansen, *Native Americans, the Mainline Church, and the Quest for Interracial Justice*, 28-29.

¹⁵⁹ Robert J. Miller, “Christianity, American Indians, and the Doctrine of Discovery,” *Remembering Jamestown* ed. Amos Yong and Barbara Brown Zikmund, (Eugene Oregon: Wipf and Stock, 2010), 52-53.

¹⁶⁰ Hansen, *Native Americans, the Mainline Church, and the Quest for Interracial Justice*, 30.

bodies. As we shall see in chapter 2, women's bodies and behaviors are often used as proof used to dehumanize them.

This dehumanization process moved swiftly as the stage was now set for implementing these papal declarations in their full force during the "Age of Discovery." Set against a backdrop of power plays and intrigues between the Papacy and the kingdoms of Portugal, Spain, and France complicated further by the Reformation, there were complex forces at work creating what would ultimately form the dominant narrative of conquest in the United States.

Seeking to increase their power through pronouncements, the popes ceded increased power to the explorers and the colonial governors to "evangelize" the heathen. In 1454 Pope Nicholas V issued the papal bull *Romanus Pontifex* which "granted Portugal's King Alfonso V the authority to 'invade, search out, capture, vanquish, and subdue all Saracens and pagans whatsoever, and other enemies of Christ wheresoever placed, and the kingdoms, dukedoms, principalities, dominions, possessions, and all other movable and immovable goods whatsoever held and possessed by them and to reduce their persons to perpetual slavery.'"¹⁶¹

As the Spanish Empire sought to remedy their increasing debt by investing in Columbus who returned with gold and stories of more, it only required another Papal Bull to solidify the Pope's control over these "new" lands. In 1493, Pope Alexander VI issued *Inter Caetera II*, dividing the lands with Portugal to the east and Spain to the west to "carry out this 'holy and laudable [conversion] work' to contribute to 'the expansion of the Christian rule...'"¹⁶² For the next forty years Spain would essentially be given

¹⁶¹ Hansen, 30.

¹⁶² Miller, "Christianity, American Indians, and the Doctrine of Discovery," 55.

ecclesial powers from subsequent popes. In the 1930's historian Lewis Hanke meticulously documented this history.¹⁶³ He says that by 1529, Clement VII issued *Intra Arcana*, conceding to the Emperor (Charles V of Spain) “great power to present to benefices in the Indies and even to decide ecclesiastical law suits” saying

We trust that, as long as you are on earth, you will compel and with all zeal cause the barbarian nations to come to the knowledge of God, the maker and founder of all things, not only by edicts and admonitions, but also by force and arms, if needful, in order that their souls may partake of the heavenly kingdom.¹⁶⁴

Concurrently, there were church officials who were arguing against the inhumane treatment of Indigenous peoples. These instances provide an insightful look at the enormous obstacles they faced. In 1517 when Bartolomé de Las Casas argued for laws to protect the Indians, “a member of the royal council suggested that Indians were too low in the scale of humanity to be capable of the faith.”¹⁶⁵ In 1527 friar Bernadino de Minaya, visited with a cardinal. Voicing his concerns about misrepresentations made by a Friar Domingo [de Betanzos] he was told, “[he] was much deceived, for [the cardinal] understood that the Indians were no more than parrots, and he believed that Friar Domingo spoke with prophetic spirit and, for himself, would follow that friar’s opinion.”¹⁶⁶ In 1535 Julián Garcés, Bishop of Tlaxcala in New Spain, sent a letter to pope Paul III declaring the Indians

were not ‘turbulent or ungovernable but reverent, shy, and obedient to their teachers.’ Although acknowledging that some misguided Spaniards believed the Indians unfit to belong to the church and incapable of comprehending its mysteries, he held strongly that the pope ought to reject such a conception, ‘which had surely been prompted by the devil himself.’ He defended the Indians against

¹⁶³ Lewis Hanke, “Pope Paul III and the American Indians,” *Harvard Theological Review* 30, no. 2 (April 1, 1937).

¹⁶⁴ Lewis Hanke, “Pope Paul III and the American Indians,” 77.

¹⁶⁵ Lewis Hanke, 67-68.

¹⁶⁶ Lewis Hanke, 84.

the charge of barbarity, cruelty, and cannibalism, cited many examples of their aptitude for Christianity.¹⁶⁷

Hanke writes that this letter, alongside the witness of Minaya and a chance to further grasp power over the territories now colonized by Spain, led Paul III to issue *Sublimis Deus* in 1537.¹⁶⁸ In this bull, he states essentially that man is created for happiness in Christ and therefore should be evangelized. Furthermore, since Christ commanded ‘Go ye and teach all nations’ without exception, certainly all must then be “capable of receiving the doctrines of the faith”¹⁶⁹ He then rebukes those who would “publish abroad that the Indians of the West and the South, and other people of whom We have recent knowledge should be treated as dumb brutes created for our service, pretending that they are incapable of receiving the catholic faith” as inspired by “The enemy of the human race.”¹⁷⁰

It was not long before Minaya was exiled and the pope was backpedaling declaring his own brief be annulled “at the request of the Emperor and in order that the preaching of the faith might not be impeded... and which might disturb the peaceful and happy state of the new world and the Emperor’s rule there,”¹⁷¹ It seems a Treaty made in 1529 gave the King full decision making concerning colonial rule from the construction of hospitals to the appointments of priests and monks and “Lastly, no decision of the pope himself could be carried out in the Indies without the permission of the king.”¹⁷² In addition the pope was in need of the King’s support. “Ten days after Paul had issued the

¹⁶⁷ Lewis Hanke, 70-71.

¹⁶⁸ Lewis Hanke, 71.

¹⁶⁹ Lewis Hanke, 72.

¹⁷⁰ Lewis Hanke, 72.

¹⁷¹ Lewis Hanke, 88.

¹⁷² Lewis Hanke, 80.

bull, he requested aid from Charles in fighting the infidel Turks.” One can imagine the pressure this created when the King made it known that he did not want the pope meddling in his affairs.

Though Las Casas would try to use *Sublimis Deus* in his favor it was too far gone. By 1555 when he met with Juan Gines de Sepulveda at Valladolid, Spain, for a disputation over enslavement of the people of the New World. Sepulveda argued for the enslavement of the indigenous people on the basis of the intellectual and moral superiority of the Spaniard: ‘In wisdom, skill, virtue and humanity, these people are as inferior to the Spaniards as children are to adults and women to men; there is a great a difference between savagery and forbearance, between violence and moderation, almost—I am inclined to say—as between monkeys and men.’¹⁷³

Spain and Portugal were not alone. France and England were also Roman Catholic at this point and wanted to lay claim to land for themselves. But since they did not want to violate the pope’s decree they invented a new concept for the Doctrine of Discovery, by colonizing any lands, “‘unknown to all Christians’ and lands ‘not actually possessed of any Christian prince.’”¹⁷⁴ They also expanded *terra nullius* to include cultural considerations - the land was uncultivated and used for hunting thus it was wilderness. James I conflated religion and civilization saying, “propagate[e] Christian Religion to those [who] as yet live in Darkness and miserable Ignorance of the true Knowledge and Worship of God, and [to] bring the Infidels and Savages, living in those Parts, to human civility, and to a settled and quiet Government...”¹⁷⁵

This tale of hubris assumes that european monarchs and popes have the power to fight over people and their land, to determine who would be evangelized and who would not, and who is human and who is not does not even come into question. Of importance

¹⁷³ Patrick Mingos, *Beneath the Underdog Race, Religion, and the Trail of Tears*, American Indian Quarterly summer 2001 vol. 25, no. 3 453.

¹⁷⁴ Miller, “Christianity, American Indians, and the Doctrine of Discovery,” 58.

¹⁷⁵ Miller, 58.

to this thesis is specifically the way The Doctrine of Discovery operated in the life of the Chickasaw, Choctaw, Cherokee, MSKOKE, and Kiowa Nations. Through the Doctrine of Discovery, Christendom sought to legitimize the conquest and confiscation of both people and land. Because the people were not considered human beings, it empowered european governments to use coercion and violence, including genocide and enslavement to fulfill their “mission.” Proclaimed as a mission effort, the Doctrine of Discovery used religion as a means by which colonizing empires could commodify the people and the lands already occupied by other Nations.

It will pave the way for the British to colonize North America and it will inform the formation of The United States of America. Ever since the war of 1812 and the implementation of the Monroe Doctrine, the seeds sown in the years of colonization and borne out of the Doctrine of Discovery spread ever deeper roots and wider branches into the psyche of those settling the United States of America.

However, it was not until the summer of 1845 that there was a term describing the westward expansion of white euro-christian settler/immigrant culture. John L. O’Sullivan seized hold of an idea that captured the imagination of a culture obsessed with bigger and better and more. “The phrase was buried halfway through the third paragraph of a long essay in the July–August issue of *The United States Magazine, and Democratic Review* on the necessity of annexing Texas and the inevitability of American expansion.”¹⁷⁶ Intersections of religion, economics, race, patriotism, and morality formed together and announced the inevitable and providential expansion of American exceptionalism beyond personal liberty. On December 27, 1845 O’Sullivan printed a second article in the *New*

¹⁷⁶ David S. Heidler and Jeanne T. Heidler, “Manifest Destiny: United States History,” *Encyclopedia Britannica Online*, by accessed April 18, 2017, <https://www.britannica.com/event/Manifest-Destiny>.

York Morning News which had a larger audience. Coming on the heels of the Second Great Awakening, the dominant cultural mood was full of excitement and vigor. The drive to conquer and subdue the land for God and Country resonated with the non-Native public. For many the land was considered empty for the filling. If there were people, particularly “heathens” in the land, they needed to be moved so that the land could be developed for the best possible uses and colonized completely. Like the Doctrine of Discovery from which it sprang, Manifest Destiny is bound up with christianity.

The christian colonizers conception of North America can be traced back to the New England Puritans who “conceived the territory itself as sacred, or sacred to be” and “made it so by being there.”¹⁷⁷ Described as “the New Canaan” North America became the “promised land” to be inhabited by the “remnant.”¹⁷⁸ For preachers raised on this narrative, the message of Manifest Destiny could easily be conflated with the desire to be Holy and to live a life devoted to right thinking and belief in the promise land as the chosen ones. By christianizing the tribes, American missionaries could fulfill this mandate to be holy and save “heathen” souls. But most important is that at the heart of Manifest Destiny lies the pervasive belief in white supremacy and euro-christian settler/immigrant cultural superiority.¹⁷⁹ Native Americans had long been perceived as inferior and Manifest Destiny alongside Holiness just confirmed that belief all the more.

¹⁷⁷ Anders Stephanson, *Manifest Destiny: American Expansion and the Empire of Right* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1995); quoted in Newcomb, *Pagans in the Promised Land: Decoding the Doctrine of Christian Discovery*, 51-52.

¹⁷⁸ Anders Stephanson, *Manifest Destiny: American Expansion and the Empire of Right* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1995); quoted in Newcomb, *Pagans in the Promised Land: Decoding the Doctrine of Christian Discovery*, 51-52.

¹⁷⁹ For discussion about the connection between white supremacy, Manifest Destiny, and the agenda for ethnic cleansing imported by the Puritan reformers and pilgrims see Douglas, *Stand Your Ground: Black Bodies and the Justice of God*, Chapter 1.

This narrative lies within the consciousness of settler/immigrants and affects their worldview in harmful ways. It is necessary to help settlers – and arrivants – remember this history of colonization in the United States and recognize its effects on present circumstances. Relegating the Doctrine of Discovery to the past would be a mistake. It is still in effect and has been cited in court cases as recent as the 2005 decision by Ruth Bader Ginsberg in the United States Supreme Court.¹⁸⁰ Its effects will be seen throughout this dissertation.

Contributions and Critiques of Methodism

A second contribution of this dissertation is the further exposure of the history of the United Methodist Church and the role it played in the colonizing process. Through John Wesley's calling to mission and his missionary efforts in the Georgia Colony beginning in 1736 we will observe that there are various ways in which the dominant narrative of colonization and conquest manifests itself in both his personal story and the Methodist story. John Wesley carried many of the prejudices and attitudes which mark the colonizer mindset. At the same time, he had some attitudes that were not limited by his cultural norms. Shaped by his reading of Scripture and openness to the Spirit, he saw the world somewhat different from the traders, settlers, and military personal that surrounded him. However, his worldview was inexorably influenced by the church which had already been engaging in colonizing actions for centuries.

John Wesley held views which could be described as ambiguous at best in regards to the people of the Chickasaw, Choctaw, and Creek Nations who he met as the christian

¹⁸⁰ *City of Sherrill v. Oneida Indian Nation of New York*, 544 U.S. 197 (2005), was a case in which the Supreme Court of the United States held that repurchase of traditional tribal lands did not restore tribal sovereignty to that land.

minister to the colony of Georgia. He is enamored at one time and at other times he is mystified by those he meets. Sometimes he holds them up as examples and sometimes he uses them to complain. This dissertation will return to the Wesley brothers' first contact with Indigenous peoples in order to better understand our own United Methodist legacies in more detail in chapter 2.

The influence will not end with John Wesley however. Because most of this history is unknown to many non-Native United Methodists, this dissertation will also present select narratives and testimony of various missionaries from the 19th century. The recurring theme of inconsistency will continue into the 19th century with examples such as the Methodist ministers who stood on both sides of the relocation of the Cherokee Nation, which leads to the Trail of Tears. Missionaries argued against the Indian Removal Act and other church officials supported removal to the West. Emerging from this ambivalence comes the encounters of the first circuit riders both Native and non-Native who preach the word of God, build schools, and advocate for Native American issues pressing against the dominant narrative of Manifest Destiny.

Yet lurking behind are others who will critique attempts at advocacy and support colonizing efforts of the United States government. One deadly example of a Methodist preacher who moved beyond critique to a campaign of annihilation is Col. Chivington, the abolitionist and "Indian Fighter" who will order the Sand Creek Massacre in Nov 29, 1864.¹⁸¹ Roberts says, Sand Creek "captured public attention at a time when reform-minded people were sensitive to the problems of the Native Americans and because it

¹⁸¹ Descendants of The Sand Creek Massacre and their Indigenous allies called The United Methodist Church to account for the massacre which culminated in a 2012 Act of Repentance toward Healing Relationships with Indigenous Peoples and an ongoing journey of Repentance throughout the denomination. See more details concerning the Act of Repentance below.

delineated so sharply the contradictions in national policy.”¹⁸² Because of Chivington’s actions reforming Methodists who believed that the “Indian” was endangered both physically as well as spiritually, sought to save them through education. As a result, schools were begun such as the Methvin Institute founded by Rev. J. J. Methvin in the Kiowa Nation. Unfortunately, survival often meant “civilizing” Indigenous peoples through compulsory lessons in the English language, indoctrination into the norms of the dominant settler culture, and dislocation from their own culture. These stories will be discussed and analyzed further in chapter 3.

The Methodist church was "one of the largest, wealthiest, and most powerful religious institutions in America..."¹⁸³ and it united itself with the American political narrative so that "Methodists [believed they] had a central role to play and had been given abundant resources to carry the torch of American (Protestant) christian civilization to the world.”¹⁸⁴ Therefore, by presenting the Methodist view one can extrapolate to some degree the social-political interactions between the church and the United States Government in the nineteenth century. Secondly this study provides an overview of history that can be helpful to United Methodist preachers seeking to engage with the Act of Repentance Toward Healing Relationships with Indigenous Peoples that took place in 2012.

¹⁸² Gary Leland Roberts, “Sand Creek: Tragedy & Symbol,” (Ph.D. diss, University of Oklahoma, 1984), 4.

¹⁸³ Morris Lee Davis, *The Methodist Unification: Christianity and the Politics of the Jim Crow Era*, (NYU Press, 2008), 128. (According to Kevin Newburg quoting DePuy, "In 1886 the total membership of the Methodist Episcopal Church (north and south) was 3.5 million members. The second largest Protestant body was the Baptists (north and south) with a membership of 2.4 million. The total for all in the Methodist sphere was 3.8 million, while Baptists combined to have 2.5 million members." W.H. editor DePuy, *The Methodist Yearbook*, New York: Phillips & Hunt, 1886, 45; quoted in Kevin D. Newburg, “Sermons and the Shaping of Northern Methodist Identities, 1885-1905,” (Ph.D. diss, Drew University, 2011), 2.

¹⁸⁴ Morris Lee Davis, *The Methodist Unification: Christianity and the Politics of the Jim Crow Era*, 7.

The Act of Repentance worship service of 2012 actually began years before with a study led by Rev. Dr. Homer Noley in the 1970s all the way up until the 2000s through the efforts of Anne Marshall, who was interviewed in the course of this thesis and became my guide in Oklahoma.

In the 1972 General Conference the Native American Caucus called for recognition and an end to paternalistic tendencies by the church.¹⁸⁵ The first report of the General Commission on Religion and Race presented a request for the right to direct their own mission efforts and an “Indian voice.”

Self-determination cannot be achieved if the voice of the Indian community is not heeded. An Indian voice is needed at all levels of decision making within the church. This voice is needed to help the church formulate programs with the American Indian in mind. An Indian voice is needed to help general agencies relate to the American Indian community. The establishment of an Indian Desk within the National Division of the Board of Missions is one step in this direction. Other boards and agencies should also be following this lead.¹⁸⁶

Hopes were high when the 1976 General Conference ordered the study report of all the Native American churches within the denomination. When the report was presented to the General Conference in 1980, it contained four years of work and over 100 pages of compiled data from Indian churches all around the United States. This comprehensive report, which took an enormous amount of work by Native American leaders and scholars, presented statistics, interview notes, and concrete recommendations for moving forward. In answer, the General Conference handed it off to the General Board of Church and Society which shelved it after the 1980 conference. As disappointing as this action was there were some gains made in 1980. Delegates to the

¹⁸⁵ “New Issues Faced by General Conference,” *New World Outlook* 30, no. 10 (June 1970): 55.

¹⁸⁶ Report of the General Commission on Religion and Race to The United Methodist Church General Conference, April 16-28 1972, 59-60.

1980 General Conference finally approved a resolution that gave representatives from the OIMC the power to vote at the General Conference bringing their voices to the floor. Once again, some voices were put aside while others were permitted to speak.

Throughout the 1980s Native members of The United Methodist Church continued to lift their voices demanding to be heard. Eventually, Native American voices were added to the General Board of Global Ministries and the General Commission on Religion and Race. The Native American Comprehensive Plan was formed and The United Methodist Church began celebrating Native American Awareness Sundays as part of the church year.

As Native American Ministries developed and the caucuses grew some of the historical trauma caused by The United Methodist Church began to come to the surface. In 1985 Rev. Alvin Deer (Kiowa and Creek) began serving his congregations drawn from the Cheyenne and Arapaho Nations. As he told a reporter from the New York Times, even though he had heard of the Sand Creek incident years earlier it was working with people on a daily basis, [he] learned how intense this is in their memory.”¹⁸⁷ As a result he brought legislation to the 1996 the General Conference which passed a resolution calling for an apology for The Sand Creek Massacre of members of the Cheyenne and Arapaho Nations.¹⁸⁸

The resolution passed. The formal apology was never made.¹⁸⁹ However the Sand Creek Massacre was revisited in 2012 and 2014, culminating in 2016 with a discussion

¹⁸⁷ Gustav Niebuhr, “132 Years Later, Methodists Repent Forebear’s Sin,” The New York Times Religion Journal, April 27, 1996 <https://www.nytimes.com/1996/04/27/us/religion-journal-132-years-later-methodists-repent-forebear-s-sin.html>

¹⁸⁸ Resolution 135 [Support Restitution to the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes of Oklahoma for the Sand Creek Massacre] in 1996.

¹⁸⁹ Open Letter to The United Methodist Church from Members of The Native American International Caucus, October 19, 2011.

and updated report on the role of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the massacre which took full blame for Chivington's behavior, Governor Evan's policies and actions that contributed to the massacre and the Church's negligence to condemn the actions.

Historian Gary L. Roberts described his findings which consisted of both archival and ethnographic research with descendants of Sand Creek survivors.¹⁹⁰ Disrespectful behaviors were acknowledged and culminated in a statement by William Walks Along, (Northern Cheyenne descendent) saying "We now extend our hand in friendship to the Methodist Church... We have developed a measure of trust, respect and honor for each other."¹⁹¹

Simultaneously an Act of Repentance worship service developed. Responsibility for the service was placed under the direction of the General Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns. Before the service the commission "held nearly two dozen listening sessions with indigenous people in the United States as well as two sessions outside the United States."¹⁹² This series of listening sessions further exposed The United Methodist Church and its predecessors complicity with the unjust policies of the United States government in regards to the people who were already living in the land that has been colonized and claimed through treaties that were either unfulfilled on the part of the government or overturned by military aggression and unjust land seizure.

In addition, because there were some voices who were left out of the discussions the Native American International Caucus' called for continued dialogue and work with

¹⁹⁰ For the complete report see Gary L. Roberts, *Massacre at Sand Creek* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2016).

¹⁹¹ Sam Hodges, "GC2016 Recalls, Laments, Sand Creek Massacre," United Methodist News Service, May 18, 2016 <https://www.umnews.org/en/news/gc2016-recalls-laments-sand-creek-massacre>

¹⁹² Kathy L. Gilbert and Linda Bloom, "GC2012 To Include Call to Repentance," United Methodist News Service, April 12, 2012. <http://archives.gcah.org/bitstream/handle/10516/8976/article10.aspx.htm?sequence=3>

individual tribes. It turned out that some of the listening sessions became heated because of broken promises made by the church and by non-Natives in the past. Some questioned if the church was ready and truly understood what repentance meant. Rev. Dr. Thom White Wolf Fassett said before the service in 2012,

Some members in the Native United Methodist communities believe the act is premature. They believe the church has not sufficiently prepared itself to understand the profound nature of this act, nor has it planned programs and actions that would carry it out. Others who love the church are skeptical. Too many promises have been made that never materialized.¹⁹³

Regardless, in May 2012, at the General Conference in Tampa, Florida, Rev. Dr. George Tinker preached at the service talking about how an Act of Repentance is an ongoing act not a one-time ritual. A professor at Iliff School of Theology, a United Methodist Theological School, a member of the Osage Nation, and an ordained Lutheran he brought an inside-outsider voice to the conversation. As he paced across the stage his identity apparent to all, not only because he named his social location, but because his very presence spoke to those gathered both in his demeanor and the ways in which he chose to present his culture through his clothes. Passionately he embarked on a study of the language in order to illuminate his message. He explained that the Greek word used in the verse in Mark, *metanoia*, is a Greek verb in form of the present tense imperative meaning “to be repenting” thus repentance must be repeated, every day, to keep on repenting. He continues in his study of the language to say that it reflects the Hebrew understanding “turning back.”¹⁹⁴ He then stressed that the word indicates Jesus addresses

¹⁹³ Thom White Wolf Fassett, “‘Doctrine of Discovery’ Legislation Proposed by NAIC,” *Love Your Neighbor News*, no.1 (April 27, 2012): 3.

¹⁹⁴ George Tinker, “GC2012 April 27 Act of Repentance toward Healing Relationships with Indigenous Peoples,” Filmed Friday April 27, 2012 <https://youtu.be/8xEJGoEwDII>

not just one person but everyone – “y”all” need to be repenting.¹⁹⁵ Repentance must become a way of being in the world, a way of life. He continued saying, “There’s a lot of history to be owned, and there’s a lot of this stuff that has yet to be learned, and it’s being concealed from you - you have to do the work now, to go dig it up, spade the ground and make fertile soil for the seed of the gospel to grow.”¹⁹⁶

He finished saying, “It dare not stop here today but it must continue...It’s got to be a long long process that you are willing to commit to and to live out of and to let it change your whole way of being in the world...[but you are not alone] in one sense we [Indigenous peoples] are the victims but we understand it’s not going to happen until we all work at this together.”¹⁹⁷

Analysis of the language and concepts embraced by our Methodist forefathers and foremothers which either reified or undermined the prevailing system of colonization, genocide, and cultural disruption will be found in chapters 3 and 4. These analyses will provide the context necessary to better understand the legacy of The United Methodist Church’s engagement with Native American missions and also the background for the interviews I conducted with women from the OIMC.

The third and most unique contribution lies in the chronicling of the relationships and analysis of the interviews I have had with Suanne Ware-Diaz (Kiowa), Anne Marshall (MVSKOKE), Virginia (Louke) Ware (Non-Native), Rev. Judy Deere (MVSKOKE/Choctaw), Rev. Lois V. Glory Neal (Cherokee), Rev. Julienne Judd

¹⁹⁵ George Tinker, “GC2012 April 27 Act of Repentance toward Healing Relationships with Indigenous Peoples,” Filmed Friday April 27, 2012 <https://youtu.be/8xEJGoEwDiI>

¹⁹⁶ George Tinker, “GC2012 April 27 Act of Repentance toward Healing Relationships with Indigenous Peoples,” Filmed Friday April 27, 2012 <https://youtu.be/8xEJGoEwDiI>

¹⁹⁷ George Tinker, “GC2012 April 27 Act of Repentance toward Healing Relationships with Indigenous Peoples,” Filmed Friday April 27, 2012 <https://youtu.be/8xEJGoEwDiI>

(Choctaw/Kiowa), and Rev. Billie Nowabbi (Choctaw). These women's stories are not only significant for my personal experience but they are also significant to this dissertation. Their words offer a rarely seen look into the lives of Indigenous United Methodist women and their contribution to the church, their nations, and to the art of preaching through their embodiment of beloved speech.

After I returned from Oklahoma I meditated upon the interviews as mentioned in the previous Methodology section. As I began to outline the components of what I experienced in the interviews I began seeking a unifying principle to give it a name. At the same time, I was also researching the cultural history of Choctaw women. As I meditated and read, the term beloved came to my awareness a couple of times. In the midst of my research I discovered Michelene E. Pesantubbee's book, *Choctaw Women in a Chaotic World*, about Beloved Women in the Choctaw tradition from the Southeastern territory of what is now called the United States of America.¹⁹⁸

Beloved Speech as I experienced it in the relationships that formed this project came alive in the pages of her historical recounting of the Choctaw, Cherokee, Creek, and Chickasaw traditions. According to Michelene E. Pesantubbee women's voices were honored within the Choctaw, Cherokee, Creek, and Chickasaw Nations.¹⁹⁹ She tells us,

¹⁹⁸ I will try to be very precise when I use the term "Beloved." Even though I am not using it in its original language, I want show respect in english. Therefore, I capitalize the term when I describe it according to the traditions of the Cherokee, MVSKOKE/Creek, and Choctaw Nations (i.e. Beloved Women, Beloved Men, Beloved Earth, Beloved speech). Additionally, I do not capitalize "beloved speech" when referring to it as a term indicating the main theme and title of this thesis. I also keep "beloved" in lower case when I am using it as an adjective describing behaviors exhibited by the women I met with or when mentioning it in connection with the Christian biblical tradition, as a sign of respect for the Indigenous conveyance of the term. I want to make it clear that I am not determining who or what might be considered Beloved according to the cultural tradition within the Cherokee, MVSKOKE/Creek, and Choctaw Nations. For a comprehensive study of these traditions see Michelene E. Pesantubbee, *Choctaw Women in a Chaotic World: The Clash of Cultures in the Colonial Southeast*, (Albuquerque: University New Mexico Press, 2005).

¹⁹⁹ Pesantubbee, *Choctaw Women in a Chaotic World: The Clash of Cultures in the Colonial Southeast*, 2.

their voices were “treated in accordance with the Southeastern native custom of recognizing honored beloved people, those who are held in high esteem.”²⁰⁰ From that time forward beloved speech became a guiding term. I will elaborate further on the origins of Beloved Speech in chapter 5 and I will present my experiences in the interviews in chapters 5 and 6.

The final contribution of this dissertation lies in its homiletical influence. What this dissertation offers is a theoretical view of engaging with beloved speech as well as practical steps for white euro-christian settler/immigrants to engage in deepening relationships within community, reflexive attention to identity, and the hospitality of listening which will address the ways preacher’s words, images, and stories can reflect an antiracist/decolonizing worldview through beloved speech week after week. Not only in order to preach sermons that address race or colonization but rather to reflect a new beloved way of being both in the pulpit and outside of it.

After I left Oklahoma I became conscientized to some gaps in my own self-understanding and conceptualizations of race and I became more aware of my own language and the effects of worldview on the words I use and the images I portray in the stories I tell. As an antiracism trainer I was familiar with the concept of racialization, white privilege, white supremacy, white racism, and antiracism, as well as tendencies of we who are white, to deny our own privilege through colorblindness and acts of fragility.²⁰¹ But my experiences with the people and particularly the women of the

²⁰⁰ Pesantubbee, 2.

²⁰¹ For more information concerning racialization see: Nell Irvin Painter, *The History of White People*. For more about White Fragility see DiAngelo, *White Fragility: Why It’s So Hard for White People to Talk About Racism*, For more on colorblindness see Bonilla Silva concerning discursive rhetoric especially chapters 3 and 4 p. 70-71, 98-99. Bonilla-Silva, Eduardo. *Racism without Racists*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2006. For more on white privilege see Peggy McIntosh, “White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack” *Multiculturalism*, (Oct. 1992).

Choctaw, MVSOKKE, Cherokee, and Kiowa Nations led me to explore a more comprehensive understanding of the intersections of christianity, racism and colonization in the United States of America.

I began this dissertation as an attempt to further understand how white preachers could use words, images, and stories to eliminate racist stereotypes and tropes from their speech and to undermine racist narratives operating within the dominant culture. I focused on race initially and began to develop something I called Antiracist Preaching.²⁰² However, after engaging in further conversation with my committee and my research I became clear that what I experienced with Choctaw, Cherokee, MVSOKKE, and Kiowa women as part of the journey through this dissertation was an intersectionality of race, colonization, gender politics, cultural identity, and religious prejudice towards Native peoples and nations within the settler/immigrant culture of the United States of America.

I began to question, “How do we talk about stories that involve intersections of race, culture, colonization, environmental concerns, land rights and sovereignty?” In particular for white preachers, ‘How do our voices reify historical erasure, continue to dehumanize people who do not share our worldview, and reinscribe prejudicial, racist, and colonizing narratives?’

Jennifer Harvey states,

The processes by which we have become white are tangled, complex nexuses of power relations and hegemonies. White racialization is intrinsically bound with state violence, economics, nation building, institutional access, and many other social realities. The histories of white people in relation to Native peoples and people of African descent cannot be attended to sufficiently without analysis of nationhood and capitalism being made intrinsic to analysis of race.²⁰³

²⁰² See Suzanne Wenonah Duchesne, “Antiracist Preaching: Homiletical Strategies for Undermining Racism in Worship.” *Liturgy* 29, no. 3 (2014): 11–20.

²⁰³ Harvey, *Whiteness and Morality: Pursuing Racial Justice through Reparations and Sovereignty*, 13.

While this may not be news to those of us preachers who belong to the dominant culture and want to undermine the dominant narrative of conquest it is important to keep in mind because it is deeply seated in the minds of congregants especially those belonging to the dominant culture. Even as Amer-european preachers seek to change the narrative, forces will work against us from multiple sides. Interrupting them will be an ongoing, lifelong work of antiracism and decolonization as racist colonizing systems continue to work. Furthermore, Harvey explains that “the racial self is being continually re-formed and reconstituted by white supremacist processes, even if one attempts to continually denounce such processes.”²⁰⁴ Thus, it will continue to plague efforts of white euro-christian settler/immigrants at changing their self-narrative through beloved speech.

This continual re-formation makes race construction an important consideration for those engaging with the criteria of beloved speech. I agree with Jennifer Harvey when she says that historically “visible differences - whether in dress, bodily attributes, skin pigmentation, cultural expressions-were ascribed meanings that had significant legal and political implications. . . .The differentiation was intrinsic to political struggle, social conflicts, and interests, and the ‘selection of [real or imagined] particular human features.’²⁰⁵ Thus undermining constructions of race will be at the center of decolonizing white euro-christian settler/immigrant speech. However, because colonization is intrinsically a christian project the very religious traditions which gave birth to christian preaching will need to be addressed as well. Conflicting worldviews created a situation that colonizers took advantage of and justified with tenets from the Doctrine of Discovery backed by biblical interpretation. The euro-christian colonizer imposed cultural

²⁰⁴ Harvey, 36.

²⁰⁵ Harvey, 77.

hegemony to subjugate sovereignty and illegally seize land and resources in order to support an occupier state. Therefore, a comprehensive strategy that combines both antiracist and decolonizing methods will be needed to undermine the effects of the Doctrine of Discovery, Manifest Destiny, and white supremacy on white Amer-euro-christian settler/immigrant voices from the pulpit.

Bryan McKinley Jones Brayboy describes the complex intersections of race that led to the occupation of Indigenous lands and continues to colonize. He describes a shifting liminal space saying, “It is this liminal space that accounts for both the political/legal nature of our relationship with the U.S. government as American Indians and with our embodiment as racialized beings.”²⁰⁶ He explains what he perceives to be the limits of Critical Race Theory (CRT), because though it “serves as a framework in and of itself, it does not address the specific needs of tribal peoples because it does not address American Indians’ liminality as both legal/political and racialized beings or the experience CRT was originally developed to address the Civil Rights issues of African American people. As such, it is oriented toward an articulation of race issues along a “black-white” binary ...”²⁰⁷

I would temper this by saying it is *primarily* oriented towards a “black-white” binary though scholars like Jennifer Harvey are seeking to change this. Either way the concern still holds true. We have already addressed how the term Native American is problematic but to identify this term with a racial category only reifies the problematic nature of identity for those who belong to various Nations such as the women I interviewed.

²⁰⁶ Brayboy, “Toward a Tribal Critical Race Theory in Education,” 427.

²⁰⁷ Brayboy, 428-429.

As an alternative Bryan McKinley Jones Brayboy proposes a Tribal Critical Race theory [TribalCrit] because “TribalCrit emphasizes that colonization is endemic in society while also acknowledging the role played by racism.”²⁰⁸ He explains that to limit identity to racialized category is a sign of colonization.

American Indians are both legal/political and racialized beings; however, we are rarely treated as such, leaving Indigenous peoples in a state of inbetweenness wherein we define ourselves as both, with an emphasis on the legal/political, but we are framed as racialized groups by many members of society. The racialized status of American Indians appears to be the main emphasis of most members of U.S. society; this status ignores the legal/political one, and is directly tied to notions of colonialism, because larger society is unaware of the multiple statuses of Indigenous peoples.²⁰⁹

He offers that TribalCrit is also a theoretical option for more than just Native Americans and quotes Vine Deloria Jr. who argues, “Few members of racial minority groups have realized that inherent in their peculiar experience on this continent is hidden the basic recognition of their power and sovereignty.”²¹⁰

I am cognizant that my work intersects with other recent work in homiletics which I believe are enlightening to the practice of beloved speech. In particular Sarah Travis and Carolyn Helsel’s work come to mind.²¹¹ Travis’ *Decolonizing Preaching* enunciates the ways in which the unsuspecting preacher recolonizes the pulpit through their scriptural interpretation and language. Her work is important and provides many insights within the contexts of both Canada and India. She offers numerous resources for

²⁰⁸ Brayboy, 430.

²⁰⁹ Brayboy, 432- 433

²¹⁰ Vine Deloria Jr., *We Talk, You Listen: New Tribes, New Turf*, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2007), 115.

²¹¹ Travis, *Decolonizing Preaching: The Pulpit as Postcolonial Space*, and Carolyn B. Helsel, *Preaching about Racism: A Guide for Faith Leaders* (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2018). and Carolyn B. Helsel, *Anxious to Talk About It: Helping White Christians Talk Faithfully about Racism* (Chalice Press, 2018).

decolonizing speech and this book is a helpful companion to begin the conscientization process I describe in beloved speech

Likewise, Helsel's work *Anxious to Talk About It*, and *Preaching about Racism* are incredibly helpful as she addresses the need to be in community, focuses on the psychological aspects of race development, and presents a comprehensive study of race theory and strategies to preach about race and racism. Her work offers important information to begin to strategize about how the preacher will approach the topic of racism in the congregation and pulpit. Her books are also helpful companions to beloved speech as the preacher enters into the reflexive attendance to identity through self-reflection and within the community.

At this juncture I offer an example what I mean by beloved speech in relationship to preaching.²¹²

June 16, 2016, Rev. Dr. Thom White Wolf Fassett, a member of the Seneca Nation and former top executive of the United Methodist Board of Church and Society as well as an Ordained United Methodist pastor, addressed the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference of The United Methodist Church. The invitation to preach at their Act of Repentance toward Healing Relationships with Indigenous Peoples came at the behest of the Eastern Pennsylvania Committee on Native American Ministries. He stepped forward draping over the podium the Anishinaabe made blanket he had been gifted moments earlier in accordance with protocols that expressed thanksgiving for his presence and recognized the honor he bestowed on the congregation as he spoke. With a catch in his voice he said,

²¹² This is an excerpt of the sermon and truncated analysis. For a full transcript and more detailed analysis see Appendix A.

“We have a lot of work to do together.”²¹³ He then invited the assembly to prayer and began to deftly interweave personal narrative, history, theology, and biblical exegesis that gave evidence of his own identity self-awareness, his relationship with his audience, and a listening ear that enabled him to not only meet people where they were but to invite them to go deeper ethically and spiritually. His voice was even and pastoral and at the same time his words frankly called his listeners to “A New Beginning” based on John 1:1-5.²¹⁴

To begin Dr. Fassett used humor to disarm people. He teased them about how long he intended to speak and how long he was permitted to speak.²¹⁵ He also enticed them to attend his lecture by saying that they would have to come later that evening to hear the rest of the story.

He started his sermon by stretching out his hands and saying, “the whole world’s pressing in.”²¹⁶ With a firm clear voice, he parsed out the concept of repentance verses an apology and stressed that his theme of repentance was about healing relationships. He mentioned history and the other repentance services, namely the African American experience. He explained that they were not being asked to apologize but to reconstruct the institution and address issues of justice.

²¹³ Thom White Wolf Fassett (Seneca), “A New Beginning,” (sermon, The Lancaster Marriott at Penn Square, Lancaster, PA, Annual Conference of the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference of The United Methodist Church, June 16, 2016).

²¹⁴ Fassett, “A New Beginning,” 2016.

²¹⁵ After his prayer he said, “Well in preparing for this event I came up with about three hours’ worth of work and decided that probably it would become a little uneasy after a while and decided I would have to pare that down. So you will have to hear the rest of the story, as Paul Harvey would say, this evening. And I hope you will be there because I want to address some of these issues in greater detail tonight and have a less formal setting and have some give and take if that is possible.”

²¹⁶ Fassett, “A New Beginning,” 2016.

He began to share some of his own story and his tradition of the Haudenosaunee, the Iroquois, and presented a religious metaphor, the Tree of Peace, and the worldview that comes from it. This is when Dr. Fassett began to tie his sermon to the scripture. With an apology to New Testament scholars which was both charming and sincere, he drew comparisons between the text and his tradition. He smiled and reached out his hands in a welcoming gesture and explained that God created everything and all things are related. He then took an aside and somewhat incredulously detailed what he meant – even nonhumans – with a firm voice he explained all beings are related – all animals and all life forms.

He then turned the sermon in a new direction by informing the congregation that they have had a hard time understanding that as Methodists. He paused and introduced a word from his father's language -- the Lakota phrase *Mitákuye Oyás'iy* -- which means "All my Relatives." His tone turned pastoral as he emphasized how difficult it is to get along with all the brokenness in our communities. He offered that this is another way to say those verses in John. He asked the congregation to ponder, how hard is it to say, "You are my relative?"²¹⁷

He then related a narrative from his mother's tradition. He was asked to speak in the Longhouse. As he shared you could hear the emotion in his voice – not only the honor he felt to be asked to speak – but also the very real emotion of fear. After describing the Longhouse and the trepidation he felt, he explained the worldview that shapes his people's discernment practices – namely the consideration by his people of the impact a decision makes on the next seven generations. With a sense of urgency, he then shared a

²¹⁷ Fassett, "A New Beginning," 2016.

question – adding that it is not a rhetorical question – “How do we care for the next seven generations?”

Dr. Fassett then introduced the congregation to a new idea that would begin to allow him to lay out his main theme. He presented the concept of, “History is theology.” He clarified that if you want to understand our theology you study our history. To explain he laid out some of the historical and cultural differences between the white “illegal immigrants” and the people who inhabited the land and wistfully provided a vision for what might have been.

Next, he explained the origins of the United States Constitution and democracy which are based in the conversations between Benjamin Franklin with the Six Nations Iroquois. He pointed out the absurdity that policy makers would define African Americans as 3/5 human and Native peoples as savages. He proceeded to name some of the atrocities that occurred and asked the congregation to consider, how there can be unity after such trauma? He accentuated that, they need to, “rebuild, reconstruct, redesign, reconfigure – our approach to ministry...”²¹⁸ He passionately proclaimed, “If history is theology, we need to examine our history. We need to take a look at what that history tells us about what we claimed we believe.”²¹⁹

He then proceeded to tell another story from his mother’s tradition about a missionary which received a good laugh from the congregation. This became a transition to talk about the church’s historic role with Native People’s. He went on to explain how relocation came about and the church’s influence during the Federal Boarding School era which began in Carlisle Pennsylvania. He related the historical caused by the

²¹⁸ Fassett, “A New Beginning,” 2016.

²¹⁹ Fassett, “A New Beginning,” 2016.

government's separation of children from their parents. Then he returned to his personal testimony and shared how a non-Native family adopted him when he was four-years-old. He declared, that these are not "dusty tidbits from history" and poignantly stood before them as the embodiment of that history.²²⁰ With a clear voice, he punctuated each syllable stating "Everything I have said about history, every reference is alive and well today among Native People" and began to name the consequences of historical trauma and the resultant generational trauma such as high unemployment, alcohol, drugs, suicide, murder.²²¹

He grew quieter as he said, "That's how you assimilate people."²²² He outlined the erosion of Sovereignty naming particularly 20th century landmarks such as the recognition of Indian Citizenship, civil criminal jurisdiction, and forced sterilization of Indian women.

As he drew to a close he reiterated, "How do we talk about issues of kinship? If we are to believe, as I do, those verses in John and we are sisters and brothers. We are related to each other...."²²³ He named massacres – recent and past – Orlando, Sand Creek, Lancaster City. He named the marginalized – children on reservations, animals, and the earth itself.

He then offered a word of hope. He shared that in Lakota country talks have begun about rebuilding of nations. He shared a word with similar meaning and import

²²⁰ Fassett, "A New Beginning," 2016.

²²¹ Fassett, "A New Beginning," 2016.

²²² Fassett, "A New Beginning," 2016.

²²³ Fassett, "A New Beginning," 2016.

from Hawaii and then asked the congregation, “What are we going to call it in The United Methodist Church?”²²⁴

Finally, he equated Jesus Christ with Tree of Peace and made it clear that, “We are Kin... no matter what race, what gender, what sexual preference, who you love, who you don’t love...”²²⁵ He encouraged finding oneness in Christ and the hope that Native Americans can be looked upon as human beings “...who are welcomed because of who they are, and their theological history.”²²⁶

Dr. Fassett used beloved speech. Through humor, language, and storytelling he presented an alternative view that engaged the congregation and encouraged self-examination of their worldview through a particular view of theology, biblical exegesis, and cultural anthropology. He also created a safe space with his demeanor. I will revisit these concepts later but most important to the description of beloved speech is the way Fassett’s sermon was composed of more than words alone.

Dr. Fassett epitomized the value of relationships so important to beloved speech. His voice conveyed emotion and his body honored those who had followed protocol when they welcomed his arrival to the community with the blanket. Protocols have to do with set of guidelines that are adhered to in order to show respect. Margaret Kovach, Plains Cree and Saulteaux ancestry and a registered member of Pasqua First Nation located in southern Saskatchewan describes protocols saying that they are different depending on local tradition but in general they involve acknowledgment of those present, including the ancestors, and in the case of storytelling, there is also the sharing of

²²⁴ Fassett, “A New Beginning,” 2016.

²²⁵ Fassett, “A New Beginning,” 2016.

²²⁶ Fassett, “A New Beginning,” 2016.

food with an elder present to guide the process.²²⁷ Additionally there is a gift presented to honor the one who is speaking or visiting such as in the case of Thom White Wolf Fassett. The community honored him and he honored them in response. He would continue to foster community building in his storytelling.

He also stood before the assembly fully human and fully embodied culturally secure in his own identity. He knew himself and made it clear that he had attended to his own identity thoroughly. He presented through both his words and actions the full force of his identity. When Rev. Fassett set the blanket across the podium he was not just setting it somewhere convenient. When he placed it before the congregation it became itself a form of beloved speech. It became a sign conveying multiple messages at once. It evidenced the relationship that was forged in the gifting but it also embodied an alternative worldview. The blanket was gifted to Fassett by the Committee on Native American Ministries for Eastern Pennsylvania and it was noted for all assembled that this was a “Native made” blanket not “Native Inspired.” The blanket had been spread across his shoulders like a mantle of authority. The Northeast woodlands print, inspired by his own geographical location of the Seneca Nation, enveloped his tall frame with interwoven vines. As he removed it and carefully folded it over and laid it on the podium it became a piece of art informing the congregation about his identity and the values of their committee leaders.

As art speaks without words many more messages than perhaps even the artist intended, it became a concrete sign of his identity with a theopoetical aspect that conveyed a sacredness. Considering the traumatic place of material culture in the lives of

²²⁷ Kovach, *Indigenous Methodologies Characteristics, Conversations, and Contexts*, 124-127.

Native peoples in the United States, this was in effect a beloved reclamation of Native American art created by Native Americans for Native Americans and gifted by Native Americans. In this particular case, Sarah Agaton Howes the Anishinaabe artist, teacher, and community organizer from the Fond du Lac Reservation in Minnesota made the blanket with numerous design elements, but the most obvious was the intertwining vies which indicates traditional Anishinaabe floral representation of the connection of all things.

Dr. Fassett also exhibited the hospitality of listening as he interwove contextualizing elements and his own identity throughout the sermon. It was evident he had been listening deeply to both the experiences of the CoNAM members who had invited him and to the concerns of the assembly. He was subtle but it became clearer as the sermon progressed that he acknowledged his role in the Methodist christian colonial religious system and identified as one of them. He sided with any resistance the congregation may have felt about him and yet he was also an outsider who had a prophetic message of hope calling the congregation to envision a different worldview.

Dr. Fassett's ability to create community as he preached came from his relationships he had formed beforehand. Similarly, his ability to present his own identity so effectively came from his own reflexive praxis on his life and worldview as well as his ability to engage in deep listening before he stepped into the pulpit. Relationship in community, reflexive attendance to identity, and the hospitality of deep listening are the three components of beloved speech as I experienced it with the women I interviewed. The three are interconnected and yet also distinct. It is through these three practices that beloved speech is expressed, experienced, and learned.

My interviews and continuing relationships with the Suanne, Anne, Virginia, Judy, Lois, Julienne, and Billie have led me through a process of conscientization that has brought me into a deeper understanding of beloved speech. In chapter 6 I will draw upon ethnographic scholars, primarily Margaret Kovach, to examine the degree to which the components of beloved speech were honored in the interviews and how they influenced the conversation to go deeper into a recognition of humanity and belovedness. I will share some of those findings and present some strategies for engagement with the components of beloved speech. I will end with a sermon which will exemplify the ways in which I, as a white euro-christian settler/immigrant woman, have begun to use beloved speech in my preaching.

Chapter II

One Man's Search for Holiness

*"I went to America to convert the Indians; but Oh! who shall convert me?"*²²⁸

As we saw in Chapter 1, John Wesley has been used to narrate a saga of mission that leads up to The United Methodist Church's Act of Repentance with Indigenous Peoples. Some United Methodists proudly proclaim John Wesley's missionary journey to the Georgia Colony to evangelize Native Americans as a sign of his open-mindedness and progressive views on religion. Some Methodist scholars have been less generous, describing his views towards Native populations as immature, much like historian Philip Wingeier-Rayo surmises, or even "harsh," as noted by to historian J. Ralph Randolph.²²⁹ This chapter focuses on his portrayals of Native Americans in his journal entries, writings, and sermons throughout his lifetime. Of interest to this dissertation are his observations of the Choctaw, Creek (MVSKOKE) and Cherokee nations and Indigenous women. According to the accounts from John Wesley's journals and the Earl of Egmont's diary, it appears that governor Oglethorpe and the Georgia colony board of trustees may have conferred some status to women such as Tomochichi's wife Sinauky and Mary Musgrove. Moreover, according to Michelene E. Pesantubbee, the title of Beloved Woman likely would have been in effect with these nations at this time.²³⁰ We do not know for certain if Sinauky and Mary would have been accorded such titles. However,

²²⁸ John Wesley, January 24, 1738, *Journal and Diaries I (1735-1738)*, ed. W. Reginald Ward and Richard P. Heitzenrater, vol. 18 of *The Bicentennial Edition of the Works of John Wesley* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1988), 204.

²²⁹ See Philip D. Wingeier-Rayo, "A Wesleyan Theology of Religions: A Re-Reading of John Wesley Through His Encounters with Peoples of Non-Christian Faiths," *Methodist Review* 10, no. 0 (February 12, 2018), abstract; and J. Ralph Randolph, "John Wesley and The American Indian: A Study of Disillusionment," *Methodist History* 10, no. 3 (April 1972): 11.

²³⁰ Pesantubbee, *Choctaw Women in a Chaotic World: The Clash of Cultures in the Colonial Southeast*, 56.

we do have Wesley's observations of them and of Indigenous women in general, which provide insight into his perceptions of them in comparison to Pesantubbee's descriptions.

John Wesley's Introduction to Missions

To begin with, we know that John Wesley grew up both physically and spiritually at the knee of his mother Susanna Wesley. Her influence has been expounded upon by many scholars on subjects ranging from her methodological approach to child rearing, all the way to her scruples concerning journaling and practicing spiritual disciplines in her daily life. In regards to John Wesley's penchant for missions, the famous "Evening Prayers Controversy" of 1712 stands out. According to Susanna Wesley, her own desire to grow in faith and instruct her children came after she began reading an account of Danish Missionaries.²³¹ Her daughter Emily read aloud to the household and this personal devotion led to weekly family devotions and eventually spread throughout the parish. These meetings became so unwieldy that she and her husband, who was away at the time, had a disagreement via the post concerning her public meetings where she read from sermons and prayers.

According to Wallace, this book was probably a series of volumes published by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, which described the missions of Pluetschau and Ziegenbalg to Tranquebar on the southern coast of India.²³² It contained stories of their work in the wilds of India. This occurrence happened at a formative time in the life of nine-year-old John Wesley. He not only experienced his mother's leadership in a public role, but by her own account Susanna Wesley was so taken that, "[She] could not

²³¹ Charles Wallace, ed. *Susanna Wesley: The Complete Writings*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 80.

²³² see note 2 Wallace, *Susanna Wesley: The Complete Writings*, 83.

forbear spending a good part of that evening in praising and adoring the divine goodness for inspiring them with such ardent zeal for his glory.... For several days [she] could think or speak of little else.”²³³ These stories took on an almost hagiographic quality. They would have influenced his romantic ideas of the mission field, if John Pritchard is correct is saying that Susanna “set about imparting to her children her enthusiasm for missions to the heathen.”²³⁴

While it may be true that John Wesley's imagination was fired by these tales of missions in India, we also know that Governor Oglethorpe brought the Mico Tomochichi of the Yamacraw in 1734 to England and presented him and his wife to the English King and Queen, an encounter which may have influenced Wesley as well.²³⁵ According to Wingeier-Rayo, Wesley met with him and found this conversation to be encouraging and, in part, motivated him to be a missionary to Georgia.²³⁶ Wingeier-Rayo attributes this to the young John Wesley's naive belief in the “noble savage.”²³⁷

The term "noble savage" warrants some consideration as we prepare to analyze Wesley's worldview and language.²³⁸ Throughout European and American literature and art the "noble savage" is portrayed as "innocent, physically perfect, always fearless, highly instinctive (without thinking or emotional skills), peaceful, free of social restraints,

²³³ Excerpt from Susanna's diary dated Feb. 6, 1711/12 see note 62 in John Wesley, August 1, 1742, *Journal and Diaries II (1738-1743)*, ed. W. Reginald Ward and Richard P. Heitzenrater, vol. 19 of *The Bicentennial Edition of the Works of John Wesley* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1990), 285.

²³⁴ John Pritchard, *Methodists and Their Missionary Societies 1760-1900*, (New York: Routledge, 2016), 2.

²³⁵ John Wesley, February 14, 1736, *Journal and Diaries I (1735-1738)*, ed. W. Reginald Ward and Richard P. Heitzenrater, vol. 18 of *The Bicentennial Edition of the Works of John Wesley* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1988), 148.

²³⁶ Wingeier-Rayo, “A Wesleyan Theology of Religions: A Re-Reading of John Wesley Through His Encounters with Peoples of Non-Christian Faiths,” 5.

²³⁷ Wingeier-Rayo, 1, 5.

²³⁸ Four Arrows presents an in-depth treatment of the myth of "the noble savage" for more detail see Appendix essay 1 Four Arrows, "The Myth of the Noble Savage," in *Unlearning the Language of Conquest: Scholars Expose Anti-Indianism in America*, ed. Donald Trent Jacobs (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2006), 275.

and a part of nature that is extremely brutish when provoked."²³⁹ It first appeared in 1672, in John Dryden's *Conquest of Granada*; however, it was John Locke and other enlightenment philosophers who would ultimately interpret the term as a state of innocence to which “civilized” humans cannot return. Based on the romantic belief that "Indigenous People merely wandered freely in nature and did not have social institutions," it was ultimately ... "used to rationalize physical and cultural genocide against Indigenous People."²⁴⁰

Albert Outler indicates that Wesley had “illusions about the myths of the ‘noble savage’” at one point, but in later years he “lost his illusions about the myths of the ‘noble savage’ and the unspoiled ‘children of nature,’ through his experiences with the Native Americans in Georgia.”²⁴¹ Furthermore, we know that Wesley does not mention Locke until his 1781 journal, and at that time he was critical of Locke’s conclusions therefore I hesitate to attribute the dehumanizing aspects of Lockean thought to Wesley's understanding of Indigenous peoples.²⁴² However, it is clear that John Wesley holds a romantic view concerning the peoples he will soon meet, which is consistent with contemporary 18th century thought. Romantic notions about groups of people can lead to

²³⁹ Four Arrows, "The Myth of the Noble Savage," 275.

²⁴⁰ Four Arrows tells us that this concept continues to be used by white settler/immigrants to dismiss different worldviews that challenge the norms of the dominant culture in the United States. Four Arrows, 275-276.

²⁴¹ Albert C. Outler ed., *The Sermons - Preface & Introduction*, vol. 1 of *The Bicentennial Edition of the Works of John Wesley* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1984), 89.

²⁴² For a detailed analysis of the influence of Locke on John Wesley’s epistemology see Kevin Twain Lowery, "Wesley's Limited Alliance with Lockean Empiricism," (Faculty paper, 2000), his theology see Henry Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast: John Wesley and the Rise of Methodism*, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1993), 383-388 and John Wesley, “Remarks Upon Locke’s 'Essay on Human Understanding',” (April 28, 1781) in *The Works of John Wesley*, ed. Thomas Jackson, 14 vols., CD-ROM edition (Franklin, TN: Providence House, 1994).

exoticization, which can preclude us from truly engaging in the deep listening required in a reciprocal relationship. We see signs of this in Wesley's narrative.

Some of Wesley's romantic ideals appear through his correspondence before leaving England for Georgia. October 10, 1735, he writes to Rev. John Burton,

I hope to learn the true sense of the gospel of Christ by preaching it to the heathens. They have no comments to construe away the text, no vain philosophy to corrupt it, no luxurious, sensual, covetous, ambitious expounders to soften its unpleasing truths, to reconcile earthly-mindedness and faith, the Spirit of Christ and the spirit of the world. They have no party, no interest to serve, and are therefore fit to receive the gospel in its simplicity. They are as little children, humble, willing to learn, and eager to do the will of God. And consequently they shall know of every doctrine I preach, whether it be of God. From these, therefore, I hope to learn the purity of that faith which was once delivered to the saints, the genuine sense and full extent of those laws which none can understand that mind earthly things.²⁴³

In Wesley's time and culture, the word heathen meant anyone not of the western christian tradition. Wingeier-Rayo argues that Wesley's theology of missions equated christianity with that practiced in the Church of England.²⁴⁴ Through this lens the term heathen sounds rather innocuous until we realize its use within the Doctrine of Discovery. Steven Newcomb interprets this term within these historical uses determining that, "the category heathen serves a tacit cognitive function of judgment based on negation: not christian, not positive, not good, not fully human, not civilized."²⁴⁵ Furthermore,

The judgment that the Indians were savage "heathens" living in "an unhealthy state" led to the inference that they were living an immoral way of life. This in turn led to the conclusion that Christian European missionaries and educators needed to lead the Indians to a moral way of life, which, from a Christian European perspective, was considered to be a "civilized" and "Christian" way of life.²⁴⁶

²⁴³ John Wesley, To the Revd. John Burton (October 10, 1735), *Letters 1721-1739*, ed. Frank Baker, vol. 25 of *The Bicentennial Edition of the Works of John Wesley*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980), 439.

²⁴⁴ Wingeier-Rayo, "A Wesleyan Theology of Religions: A Re-Reading of John Wesley Through His Encounters with Peoples of Non-Christian Faiths," 21.

²⁴⁵ Newcomb, *Pagans in the Promised Land: Decoding the Doctrine of Christian Discovery*, 103.

²⁴⁶ Newcomb, 13-14.

Wesley's use of this term provides not only a sense of the times in which he lives, but it also gives us some further insights into the effects of the Doctrine of Discovery on John Wesley's worldview.

This letter of John Wesley's is rather remarkable for a couple reasons. First, Geordan Hammond says Wesley took the controversial position of praising what he saw as the "simple lifestyle of the Indians" as "more akin to life in the apostolic era than that of contemporary England."²⁴⁷ Hammond explains that, "writers exploited the Indians both to praise and critique European societies" and that "Wesley's letter to Burton clearly shows that he agreed with the sympathetic image of the Indians whose lifestyle he believed was worthy of emulation."²⁴⁸ Second, Wesley is responding to Burton's letter dated Sept. 28, 1735. Burton, who recruited Wesley for the Georgia mission on behalf of the Trustees, detailed his vision for Wesley's mission. He assumed that Wesley's chief motive was to serve the settlers on the ship and in the colony. John Wesley's response included this pronouncement concerning his intention to evangelize the "heathen."

Considering the history of mission and the original peoples of North America from a 21st century worldview, it is in retrospect unsettling to read John Wesley's account of why he wants to pursue this objective. He tells us that his "chief motive, to which all the rest are subordinate, is the hope of saving my own soul. I hope to learn the true sense of the gospel of Christ by preaching it to the heathens."²⁴⁹ Added to this is "[t]he Protestant belief that the devil had led the Indians (who were difficult to convert) from

²⁴⁷ Geordan Hammond. "John Wesley's Mindset at The Commencement of His Georgia Sojourn: Suffering and The Introduction of Primitive Christianity To the Indians," *Methodist History* 47, no. 1 (October 2008): 21-22.

²⁴⁸ Hammond. "John Wesley's Mindset at The Commencement of His Georgia Sojourn: Suffering and The Introduction of Primitive Christianity To the Indians," 23.

²⁴⁹ Wesley, To the Revd. John Burton, (October 10, 1735), *Letters I*, in *Works*, 25:439.

Europe to America so that he might preserve his own peculiar people, uncontaminated by christianity, made the Indian missions a peculiar touchstone of God's presence with the Protestant churches."²⁵⁰ His second motive is to evangelize those "who have not [the gospel]" and "earnestly call for it."²⁵¹

Wesley's entries in his journals and sermons, present the ambiguity that accompanies his aspirations and his intentions in connection with Indigenous peoples. For instance, his perception of the primitive environment is that it will be more conducive for a pure christianity to develop since an "Indian hut affords no food for curiosity, no gratification of the desire of grand, or new, or pretty things," and the simple food will aid his already ascetic life.²⁵² He also acknowledges that, "the cedars which God has planted round it may so gratify the eye as to better the heart, by lifting it to him whose name alone is excellent, and his praise above heaven and earth."²⁵³

He speaks of the omnipresence of human pride and depicts the "poor heathen" as a passive vessel who can help diminish this vice through their "deep humility" "fully sensible of their want of an instructor."²⁵⁴ Next he shows his cognizance of the pitfalls of evangelistic zeal when he speaks of the,

contempt which cannot fail to attend all who sincerely endeavor to instruct [the heathens], and which, continually increasing, will surely make them in the end as the filth and off-scouring of the world. Add to this, that nothing so convinces us of our own impotence as a zealous attempt to convert our neighbor; nor indeed, till he does all he can for God, will any man feel that he can himself do nothing.²⁵⁵

²⁵⁰ See note 98 in John Wesley, December 4, 1749, *Journal and Diaries III (1743-54)*, ed. W. Reginald Ward and Richard P. Heitzenrater, vol. 20 of *The Bicentennial Edition of the Works of John Wesley*, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1991), 315.

²⁵¹ Wesley, To the Revd. John Burton, (October 10, 1735), *Letters I*, in *Works*, 25:442.

²⁵² Wesley, *Works*, 25:440.

²⁵³ Wesley, *Works*, 25:440.

²⁵⁴ Wesley, *Works*, 25:440.

²⁵⁵ Wesley, *Works*, 25:440.

His description of the women he expects to encounter are troubling. He admits his struggle with the desire of “sensual pleasures” and declares that this can be ameliorated, “especially where I see no woman but those which are almost of a different species to me.”²⁵⁶ Yet he also aspires to “love my neighbor as myself and to feel the powers of the second motive to visit the heathens, even the desire to impart to them what I have received, a saving knowledge of the Gospel of Christ.”²⁵⁷ Cautioning himself all the while saying, “...[B]ut this I dare not think on yet. It is not for me, who have been a grievous sinner from my youth up and am yet laden with foolish and hurtful desires, to expect God should work so great things by my hands...”²⁵⁸

Based on his experiences of life thus far, and his studies, Wesley is romanticizing what his future holds. However, it is heartening that he is cognizant of his motives. As we shall see through Wesley’s journals, writing, and sermons the conflict between his desire to connect with Indigenous peoples and his accompanying colonial worldview will influence his aspirations and his intentions in connection with Indigenous peoples throughout his missionary service in Georgia. Whatever his motivations for going, Hammond makes a good point when he says that “[a]n aspect of Wesley’s thinking that becomes abundantly clear through this letter is that his missionary aspirations were directed toward the Indians and not the colonists.”²⁵⁹

John Wesley the Missionary

²⁵⁶ Wesley, *Works*, 25:440.

²⁵⁷ Wesley, *Works*, 25:441.

²⁵⁸ Wesley, *Works*, 25:441.

²⁵⁹ Hammond. "John Wesley's Mindset at The Commencement of His Georgia Sojourn: Suffering and The Introduction of Primitive Christianity To the Indians," 20.

As we follow John Wesley to Savannah, there is some historical context which will help us to understand the complicated world Wesley and his other companions stepped into in 1735-36. At the time of the Georgia settlement, two key groups inhabited what was to become colonial Georgia—the Creek Nation and the Yamacraw peoples.²⁶⁰ With land rights being threatened by the French to the west, the Spanish to the south, and the British to the east, the indigenous nations sought alliances with each other in order to survive. The Creek peoples formed a confederacy and the Yamasees joined a number of groups including the Creek Confederacy.²⁶¹

Conflicts over trade with British settlers in the Carolina Colony led to a number of different agreements and alliances. Out of these various alliances emerged the Yamacraw, an offshoot of the Creek Nation, led by Tomochichi. Tomochichi chose to distance himself from his Creek relatives and moved his people closer to John and Mary Musgrove.²⁶² The Musgroves had set up a trading post and would later serve as translators. Mary, known as Coosaponakeesa, belonged to the Creek Nation and her linguistic skills, connections, and negotiating abilities made her an ideal bridge person between the colonial British and the native Creeks.²⁶³

Back in 1733, James Edward Oglethorpe began foreign settlement in the same region of the Yamacraw lands, naming Georgia for King George II of Britain. After establishing Savannah, settlers branched out across the countryside, setting up small

²⁶⁰ David H. Corkran, *The Creek Frontier: 1540-1783* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1967), 82.

²⁶¹ Julie Anne Sweet, "Will the Real Tomochichi Please Come Forward?," *The American Indian Quarterly* 32, no. 2 (2008): 159.

²⁶² Sweet, "Will the Real Tomochichi Please Come Forward?," 163.

²⁶³ Andrew K. Frank, "Mary Musgrove (ca. 1700-ca. 1763)," *New Georgia Encyclopedia*, Georgia Humanities, and the University of Georgia Press, 2002, <http://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org>.

outposts in an attempt to solidify the British claim to the surrounding area.²⁶⁴ There was a treaty signed on May 21, 1733, that addressed “land cession, trade, and friendship” between the First Peoples of the Savannah region and Oglethorpe.²⁶⁵ Instrumental to these negotiations, due to his proximity to the settlement and his own abilities, Tomochichi mediated this agreement, and as a result began a series of political negotiations, which would eventually result in the Creek attributing the title of Mico upon him.²⁶⁶ It has been mentioned that John Wesley may have met him when he and his wife accompanied Oglethorpe to England to be presented to the king and queen of Britain in 1734. These trade agreements and military matters are the backdrop to John and Charles Wesley's journey to Georgia.

John Wesley enters into a complicated intersection of competing political agendas between colonial and Indigenous Nations. Peaceful relations are the result of a delicate balance of diplomacy on all sides and war is imminent on several occasions. Allusions to these conflicts will appear in John Wesley's conversations with the Creeks and Choctaw leaders, but the details of these conflicts between Creek, Choctaw, and Yamacraw leaders and Oglethorpe and the Trustees with France and Spain are beyond the scope of this dissertation. Suffice it to say that they were encountering Creek and Choctaw leaders who were not *tabula rasa* and the land was not empty or, *terra nullius*.²⁶⁷

²⁶⁴ Julie Anne Sweet, “Charles Wesley: Georgia’s First Secretary for Indian Affairs,” *Methodist History* Volume L, no.4, (July 2012), 217.

²⁶⁵ Heather Ann Clements and Cassandra Shea Sequivel. "John Wesley, First peoples of North America, and Christian perfection." *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 46, no. 2 (September 2011), 161.

²⁶⁶ Sweet, “Will the Real Tomochichi Please Come Forward?,” 163-164.

²⁶⁷ For a detailed analysis of the political landscape and the Wesley brother’s involvement see Julie Anne Sweet, "Charles Wesley: Georgia’s First Secretary for Indian Affairs," *Methodist History* L, no. 4 (July 2002): 214; Julie Anne Sweet, *Negotiating for Georgia: British-Creek Relations in the Trustee Era, 1733-1752*, Athens: University Georgia Press, 2005. and Sweet, “Will the Real Tomochichi Please Come Forward?,” 141-177.

In 1735, John Wesley, literally fresh off the boat, is eager to evangelize the pure "child-like" 'heathen' he describes in his letter to Burton. Wesley's early journal entries have descriptions and inner thoughts that appear to be conflicted about the Yamacraw, Creek, Choctaw, and Chickasaw peoples he meets, but for the most part his words are positive.

On Friday, February 13, 1736, a week after they first landed, John Wesley writes, "We received information that Tomochichi and his beloved men were coming to see us."²⁶⁸ He further records that the biblical readings for the day were from Zechariah 8:21-22, perhaps indicating a belief that this meeting carries eschatological significance.²⁶⁹ The next day he writes "Tomochichi, his nephew Toonahowi, his wife Sinauky, with two more women, and two or three Indian children, came on board."²⁷⁰ In his manuscript journal he describes them with more detail about their appearance;

Tomochichi, Sinauky, and Toonahowi were in an English dress. The other women had on calico petticoats and coarse woollen mantles. The Savannah king, whose face was stained red in several places, his hair dressed with beads, and his ear with a scarlet feather, had only a large blanket which covered him from his shoulders to his feet.²⁷¹

Wesley also describes a gifting ritual,

²⁶⁸ Wesley, February 14, 1736, *Manuscript Voyage Journal October 14, 1735 – February 16, 1735/36*, ed. W. Reginald Ward and Richard P. Heitzenrater, vol. 18 of *The Bicentennial Edition of the Works of John Wesley* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1988) 356.

²⁶⁹ "In our course of reading today were these words: 'Thus saith the Lord of hosts, It shall yet come to pass that there shall come people, and the inhabitants of many cities. And the inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying, Let us go speedily to pray before the Lord, and to seek the Lord of hosts; I will go also. Yea, many people and strong nations shall come to seek the Lord of hosts, and to pray before him.'" Wesley, February 13, 1736, *Journal and Diaries I*, 18:148-149.

²⁷⁰ According to the editor's notes, "Among various spellings this is the most generally accepted form; John Wesley used the form 'Tomo-Chachi' and his nephew Orig., 'Thleeanouchee'; variously spelled in the copies of Wesley's MS voyage journal: Toanoh, Tooanohooi, Tooanohooy, Toonahowhi, and Toonahowi. Wesley, February 13, 1736, *Journal and Diaries I*, 18:148-149.

²⁷¹ Details about the differences and accuracy of the various manuscripts is explained in the Appendix beginning on page 299. MS Journals and Diaries Editorial Introduction Wesley, February 14, 1736, *Manuscript Voyage Journal October 14, 1735 – February 16, 1735/36*, ed. W. Reginald Ward and Richard P. Heitzenrater, vol. 18 of *The Bicentennial Edition of the Works of John Wesley* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1988), 357.

They sent us down a side of venison before them... Sinauky brought us a jar of milk and another of honey, and said she hoped when we spoke to them we would feed them with milk, for they were but children, and be sweet as honey towards them.²⁷²

Wesley's first experience introduces us to an important aspect of Indigenous culture. Michelene E. Pesantubbee explains "Among Southeastern native people, food served as a primary means of sealing relationships and expressing thanks through ceremony. ... Since women controlled the cultivation of corn and other crops, they played a major role in the preparation and distribution of food. However, it was not unusual for a large group, or even an entire village, to deliver food in the manner of gifts."²⁷³

In his record of this meeting, he also expresses surprise by the actions and demeanor of Tomochichi and the women in particular. He writes,

At our coming in they all rose, and Tomochichi, stepping forward, shook us by the hand, as did all the rest, women as well as men. This was the more remarkable because the Indians allow no man to touch or speak to a woman, except her husband, not though she be ill and even in danger of death.

The women participating in this greeting are "remarkable" to Wesley. His perceptions about the women's behavior indicate that he was expecting them to take a less central role. In this case, the women may have been behaving as respected Beloved Women traditionally would have behaved, by providing hospitality and engaging in political conversation. How rare this would be at this time is unknown, but according to Lisa Poupart women would eventually adopt the colonizers' expectations of gender

²⁷²Wesley, February 14, 1736, *Manuscript Voyage Journal October 14, 1735 – February 16, 1735/36*, ed. W. Reginald Ward and Richard P. Heitzenrater, vol. 18 of *The Bicentennial Edition of the Works of John Wesley* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1988), 357.

²⁷³ Pesantubbee, *Choctaw Women in a Chaotic World: The Clash of Cultures in the Colonial Southeast*, 27.

norms. Poupart tells us, “[t]hrough the processes of colonization, American Indian people have internalized white patriarchy and Western constructions of abject Otherness upon which patriarchal powers justified and maintained. As our traditional cultures were devastated, we internalized Western power structures at many levels and assumed Western dichotomous gender differences that privilege men and objectify women and children”²⁷⁴

It is also possible that Wesley heard stories about Nations who adopted new cultural norms for women in order to protect them from the colonial male gaze and assumed that all Indigenous peoples would follow the same cultural norms. Pesantubbee explains how cultural differences led to some misunderstandings which would explain how women’s roles became increasingly limited. There were stories spread abroad about women by the Jesuits, who viewed women's manner of dress and sexual activities as evidence that they were temptresses. For instance, Pesantubbee says that traditionally a common greeting from Choctaw women involved embracing and ritually caressing people, male or female. She supposes that “the missionaries probably avoided the more intimate caressing with women that would have caused native people to wonder about their behavior.”²⁷⁵

In addition, Pesantubbee relates that the marriage customs of southeastern peoples often included the exchange of gifts which could be misinterpreted. “[A] woman brought corn and a man meat to the marriage contract. However, this may not have been understood as marriage by the [European settler] men. They may have interpreted it as

²⁷⁴ Lisa M. Poupart, "The Familiar Face of Genocide: Internalized Oppression among American Indians," *Hypatia* 18, no. 2, (Spring, 2003): 91.

²⁷⁵ Pesantubbee, *Choctaw Women in a Chaotic World: The Clash of Cultures in the Colonial Southeast*, 74.

payment for sex or they may have purposely defrauded the parents but in either case it would bring shame to the family.”²⁷⁶ Furthermore,

[a]lthough anyone, male or female, could be captured and sold or traded as a slave, the French and British typically desired female Indian slaves. European interest in female slaves created a region-wide climate of apprehension that all native women experienced. Native people were aware that the French often sold captives to French or Canadian families who needed laborers or shipped them overseas where they were never seen again.²⁷⁷

Wherever Wesley’s assumptions about women’s behavior came from, it is interesting to make a note of his observations of women when he first arrives in comparison to the opinions he expresses at the end of his ministry in Georgia. Furthermore, it does not appear that Wesley is aware of the honor the Yamacraw women are paying to him and the degree of trust they are placing in him and his companions. This is an excellent example of the cultural importance of protocols and gifting, and it highlights the great value of inquiring about those protocols in order to fully appreciate and participate in appreciate them.

Wesley then relates that they shook hands and conversed with interpretation from Mrs. Musgrove. At this initial meeting, Tomochichi fills him in on some of the conflicts saying,

I am glad to see you here. When I was in England, I desired that some might speak the Great Word to me; and my nation then desired to hear it. But since that time we have been all put into confusion. The French have built a fort with a hundred men in one place, and a fort with a hundred men in it in another. And the Spaniards are preparing for war. The English traders, too, put us into confusion, and have set our people against hearing the great word. For they speak with a double tongue; some say one thing of it and some another. But I am glad you are come. I will go up and speak to the wise men of our nation; and I hope they will

²⁷⁶ Her book details the pervasiveness of these situations. Pesantubbee, 102.

²⁷⁷ Pesantubbee, 53.

hear. But we would not be made Christians as the Spaniards make Christians: we would be taught first, and afterwards baptized.²⁷⁸

With these words, Tomochichi conveys his support to “speak to the wise men of our Nation” with the caveat that Wesley will teach differently than the “Spaniards.”

Tomochichi’s words must have been encouraging to John Wesley since his desire was to bring the gospel message to the Native Americans.

According to his journal account, Wesley replies,

‘There is but One, he that sitteth in heaven, who is able to teach man wisdom. Though we are come so far, we know not whether he will please to teach you by us or no. If he will teach you, you will learn; but we can do nothing.’ We then saluted them all as before, and withdrew.²⁷⁹

Surprisingly, Wesley’s answer seems non-committal. However, this may reflect his theological understanding of conversion and missiological methodology. Theologically Wesley wants to give God the credit for evangelization and he is not interested in forced conversion.

Another interesting aspect of his encounter is John Wesley’s notes about Tomochichi and the other men’s manner of speech. Commenting on his meeting with Tomochichi he says, “All this he spake with great earnestness, and much action both of his hands and head, and yet with the utmost gentleness... both of tone and manner.”²⁸⁰ In his notes for the next day, Sun. February 15, 1736, Wesley writes, “[a]nother party of the Indians of the Savannah nation came down; they were all tall, graceful, well-proportioned

²⁷⁸ Wesley, February 14, 1736, *Manuscript Voyage Journal October 14, 1735 – February 16, 1735/36*, ed. W. Reginald Ward and Richard P. Heitzenrater, vol. 18 of *The Bicentennial Edition of the Works of John Wesley* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1988), 357.

²⁷⁹ Wesley, February 14, 1736, *Manuscript Voyage Journal October 14, 1735 – February 16, 1735/36*, *Works* 357.

²⁸⁰ Wesley, February 14, 1736, *Works*, 357.

men, and had a remarkable softness in their speech and gentleness in their whole behaviour.”²⁸¹ Wesley must have found this encounter to be memorable because he stresses their “soft” voices and gentle behavior as “remarkable”.

Wesley’s next encounter from his journal demonstrates continued romanticizing of the Choctaws and perhaps a little consternation for having his usual worship space disrupted by the Creeks. On Sunday, June 27, 1736, Wesley writes that following morning prayer, “...a large party of Creek Indians came, the expectation of whom deprived us of our place of public worship, in which they were to have their audience.”²⁸² This depiction was followed by his entry of June 30, 1736, which read, “I hoped a door was opened for going up immediately to the Choctaws, the least polished, i.e., the least corrupted, of all the Indian nations.”²⁸³ We do not know how Wesley comes to the conclusion that the Choctaws are the “least polished,” however Michelene E. Pesantubbee tells us that, “Choctaw society, in general, has been little studied, primarily because of its lack of exceptional characteristics in the eyes of Europeans, and later Americans.”²⁸⁴ It may be that Wesley is reflecting a general impression at the time that the Choctaws were more protected from colonial influence and christian evangelization.

When Wesley communicates his desire to visit the Indians, governor Oglethorpe promptly squashes it. “[Mr. Oglethorpe] objected, not only the danger of being intercepted, or killed by the French there; but much more the inexpediency of leaving Savannah destitute of a minister. These objections I related to our brethren in the evening,

²⁸¹ Wesley, February 15, 1736, *Works*, 358.

²⁸² see editors notes, “services were normally held in the court-house, now requisitioned for the reception of the Indians. The Moravians lent their meeting-house.” Wesley, June 27, 1736, *Journal and Diaries I*, 18:163.

²⁸³ Wesley, June 27, 1736, *Journal and Diaries I, Works*, 18:163.

²⁸⁴ Pesantubbee, *Choctaw Women in a Chaotic World: The Clash of Cultures in the Colonial Southeast*, 10-11.

who were all of opinion, “We ought not to go yet.”²⁸⁵ Time and again Wesley will be frustrated in his efforts by Oglethorpe, who would make it clear that “British parishioners were to take precedence over First Peoples, regardless of Wesley’s own inclinations.”²⁸⁶ This must have been frustrating for him since we know that he had letters from Oglethorpe before he ever set sail for Georgia which indicated that Oglethorpe was keen upon Wesley ministering to the “Indians.”²⁸⁷ It is a sign of belovedness that Wesley is persevering in his quest to build relationships with Indigenous peoples, and in July of 1736, circumstances take a promising turn.

On July 1, 1736, he mentions another audience with the Creek "Indians" when their "headman" Chigilly dined with Mr. Oglethorpe.²⁸⁸ John Wesley recounts their meeting thus,

After dinner I asked the grey-headed old man what he thought he was made for. He said, ‘He that is above knows what he made us for. We know nothing. We are in the dark. But white men know much. And yet white men build great houses, as if they were to live for ever. But white men can’t live for ever. In a little time white men will be dust as well as I.’ I told him, ‘If red men will learn the Good Book, they may know as much as white men. But neither we nor you can understand that book unless we are taught by him that is above; and he will not teach unless you avoid what you already know is not good.’ He answered, ‘I believe that; he will not teach us while our hearts are not white. And our men do what they know is not good. They kill their own children. And our women do

²⁸⁵ Wesley, June 27, 1736, *Journal and Diaries I, Works*, 18:163.

²⁸⁶ Clements and Sequivel. "John Wesley, First peoples of North America, and Christian perfection," 165.

²⁸⁷ When John and Charles Wesley met with a fellow Oxford Club member, Benjamin Ingham in 1735 they tried to convince him to accompany them to the Georgia Colony. He recorded his impressions of their conversations in a letter to his mother from Savannah dated May 1, 1736. He tells us that after a protracted conversation the old school companions part ways but not before, “they lent me several letters, written by Mr. Oglethorpe, relating to the Indians, their manner of living, their customs, and their great expectation of having a white man come amongst them to teach them wisdom.” For more see Tyerman, Luke, *The Oxford Methodists: Memoirs of the Rev. Messrs. Clayton, Ingham, Gambold, Hervey and Broughton, with Biographical Notices of Others* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1873), 65.

²⁸⁸ Wesley, Wed. July 1, 1736, *Journal and Diaries I, Works*, 18:163.

what they know is not good. They kill the child before it is born. Therefore he that is above does not send us the Good Book.’²⁸⁹

This encounter is revealing on many levels. Wesley’s engagement in religious dialogue with the Chigilly gives evidence of his concern for the man’s soul. However, while he did not explicitly equate “white culture” with “civilization” and salvation, nonetheless, Wesley accepted Chigilly’s use of the language of “red” and “white” as well as his assumptions which equate whiteness with christianity. Wesley’s reply, “If red men will learn the Good Book, they may know as much as white men,” indicates that he is possibly conflating salvation with white cultural norms. In addition, it may be that Chigilly already appropriated enough of white culture to provide what he perceives to be the expected answer. Chigilly’s deferral to the white man’s knowledge, his statement that God’s grace will not be available to him until his heart becomes ‘white,’ and his revelation concerning the actions of his people reveal how far the process of colonization progressed.

The use of color to identify people came up earlier when Wesley remarked that Tomochichi’s face was “stained red in several places”²⁹⁰ Historian Alden T. Vaughan notes that “red” is not universally used to describe Natives before the late eighteenth century.²⁹¹ This means that this is a rather early example of how skin color and colonization took form in the colonies. According to Vaughan, the original people of the

²⁸⁹ see the accompanying Bicentennial edition notes for more information about Oglethorpe's negotiations with the Choctaw Nation and Creek Confederacy. Wesley, Wed. July 1, 1736, *Journal and Diaries I*, 18:163.

²⁹⁰ Wesley, February 14, 1736, *Manuscript Voyage Journal October 14, 1735 – February 16, 1735/36*, ed. W. Reginald Ward and Richard P. Heitzenrater, vol. 18 of *The Bicentennial Edition of the Works of John Wesley* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1988), 357.

²⁹¹ In the 16th century gradations of color descriptions by europeans range from “tauny colour” to the “colour russet” and “the colour of brasse, or “yellowe colour.” Vaughan, “From White Man to Redskin: Changing Anglo-American Perceptions of the American,” 922.

land are seen as culturally different but not fundamentally different, and in an effort to recognize similarities colonists remarked upon ‘red stains’ on the skin caused by paint and dye from berries for aesthetics and religious practice.²⁹² By doing so it allowed for the belief that Indigenous peoples were no different from Europeans and therefore could be evangelized because the only separation resulted from ignorance rather than some innate difference that precluded Indians from being civilized.²⁹³ John Wesley’s words indicate that he began to appropriate this view and he certainly has kept an open mind thus far concerning the evangelization of the Native peoples.

By far the most comprehensive conversation occurs between Wesley and a contingent of “Five of the Chickasaw Indians” in Savannah on Tuesday, July 20, 1736. He says that twenty men had traveled to Savannah with their interpreter Mr. Andrews and “[t]hey were all warriors, four of them headmen. The two chiefs were Paustoobee and Mingo Mattaw.”²⁹⁴

The conversation follows a catechetical pattern, which suggests that Wesley may have been testing their cosmology if not their theology. This would make sense since one of his desires was to experience the purity of faith found in the early church conversions and he was seeking people ‘unspoiled’ by outside influences. While he may be testing them out for his experiment in preaching “the true gospel,” it is also a testament to his desire to listen that he not only engages in this conversation but that he appears to record it in detail. He lays out the conversation thus,

²⁹² Vaughan, 922-923.

²⁹³ For further discussion about skin color and evangelization see footnote 29 which provides a literature review of the theory that Indians were probably descended from the lost tribes of Israel and therefore “possessed essentially the same pigmentation as Europeans.” Vaughan, 926.

²⁹⁴ Wesley, July 20, 1736, *Journals and Diaries I, Works*, 165.

Q: Do you believe there is One above, who is over all things? A. Paustoobee answered, We believe there are four beloved things above: the clouds, the sun, the clear sky, and he that lives in the clear sky.

Q: Do you believe there is but One that lives in the clear sky?

A: We believe there are two with him, three in all.

Q: Do you think he made the sun, and the other beloved things?

A: We cannot tell. Who hath seen?

Q: Do you think he made you?

A: We think he made all men at first.

Q: How did he make them at first?

A: Out of the ground.

Q: Do you believe he loves you?

A: I don't know. I cannot see him.

Q: But has he not often saved your life?

A: He has. Many bullets have gone on this side, and many on that side, but he would not let them hurt me. And many bullets have gone into these young men; and yet they are alive.

Q: Then, can't he save you from your enemies now?

A: Yes, but we know not if he will. We have now so many enemies round about us that I think of nothing but death. And if I am to die, I shall die, and I will die like a man. But if he will have me to live, I shall live. Though I had ever so many enemies, he can destroy them all.

Q: How do you know that?

A: From what I have seen. When our enemies came against us before, then the beloved clouds came for us. And often much rain, and sometimes hail, has come upon them, and that in a very hot day. And I saw, when many French and Choctaws and other nations came against one of our towns. And the ground made a noise under them, and the beloved ones in the air behind them. And they were afraid, and went away, and left their meat and drink and their guns. I tell no lie. All these saw it too.

Q: Have you heard such noises at other times?

A: Yes, often; before and after almost every battle.²⁹⁵

Q: What sort of noises were they?

A: Like the noise of drums and guns and shouting.

Q: Have you heard any such lately?

A: Yes; four days after our last battle with the French.

Q: Then you heard nothing before it?

A: The night before I dreamed; I heard many drums up there, and many trumpets there, and much stamping of feet and shouting. Till then I thought we should all die. But then I thought the beloved ones were come to help us. And the next day I heard above a

²⁹⁵ "Gentleman's Magazine adds: '(Here Mr. Andrews said that he had often heard them himself, and so had all the traders.)'" in Wesley, July 20, 1736, *Journals and Diaries I*, 166.

hundred guns go off before the fight began.²⁹⁶ And I said, ‘When the sun is there, the beloved ones will help us; and we shall conquer our enemies.’ And we did so.

Q: Do you often think and talk of the beloved ones?

A: We think of them always, wherever we are. We talk of them and to them, at home and abroad; in peace, in war, before and after we fight; and indeed whenever and wherever we meet together.

Q: Where do you think your souls go after death?

A: We believe the souls of red men walk up and down near the place where they died, or where their bodies lie. For we have often heard cries and noises near the place where any prisoners had been burned.

Q: Where do the souls of white men go after death?

A: We can’t tell. We have not seen.

Q: Our belief is that the souls of bad men only walk up and down; but the souls of good men go up.

A: I believe so too. But I told you the talk of the nation.

(Mr. Andrews: They said at the burying they knew what you was doing. You was speaking to the beloved ones above to take up the soul of the young woman.)²⁹⁷

Q: We have a book that tells us many things of the beloved ones above. Would you be glad to know them?

A: We have no time now but to fight. If we should ever be at peace, we should be glad to know.

Q: Do you expect ever to know what the white men know?

(Mr. Andrews: They told Mr. O[glethorpe] they believe the time will come when the red and the white men will be one.)

Q: What do the French teach you?

A: The French black kings never go out. We see you go about. We like that. That is good.

Q: How came your nation by the knowledge they have?

A: As soon as ever the ground was sound, and fit to stand upon, it came to us, and has been with us ever since. But we are young men. Our old men know more. But all of them do not know. There are but a few; whom the Beloved One chooses from a child, and is in them, and takes care of them and teaches them. They know these things. And our old men practise[sic]; therefore they know. But I don’t practise; therefore I know little.²⁹⁸

²⁹⁶ “Gentleman’s Magazine adds: ‘(“as did I,” said Mr. Andrews).’” in Wesley, July 20, 1736, *Journals and Diaries I*, 166.

²⁹⁷ They had obviously observed the recent funeral conducted by Wesley for Rebecca Bovey, one of the settlers who had died suddenly on July 10, 1736. Wesley, July 10, 1736, *Journals and Diaries I*, 165-167.

²⁹⁸ Wesley, July 20, 1736, *Journals and Diaries I*, 165-167.

The conversation conveys the worldview of the Chickasaw as well as their cultural values. We hear for the first time mention of ‘Beloved One’ as well as the ‘four beloved things above’ and the ways in which the ‘Beloved One’ and the ‘beloved clouds’ protect them and ‘save’ them as well as the omnipresence of the beloved ones. James Malone, early twentieth century chronicler of the Chickasaw, corroborates Paustoobee’s story in Wesley’s diary and provides some of the background on the battle. He tells us that, “in May of [1736] the Chickasaws had met in a most sanguinary war the army of Bienville coming from Mobile, and that of D’Artaguette coming from the great Northern lakes, who planned by overwhelming numbers to meet and utterly destroy the entire Chickasaw nation, instead of which the Chickasaws defeated both armies.”²⁹⁹ Their insistence that they only have “time to fight” was not an excuse but a very real threat.

Moreover, Malone tells us that during the battle with the French, “[i]t will be noted that in the storm and the thunder and lightning accompanying the same, the Chickasaws believed that thereby the “Beloved One who dwelleth in the blue sky” made manifest his presence to his children...” and “...before the finish of that battle a great storm arose, sweeping over the scene of conflict.”³⁰⁰ This story presents a worldview that encompasses creation as beloved and recognizes that creation has agency and is capable of offering protection.

Furthermore, Paustoobee testifies to the importance of community, relationships, and esteem for his elders, especially those “whom the Beloved One chooses from a child.”³⁰¹ One also wonders, is it possible that their willingness to engage in prolonged

²⁹⁹ James H. Malone, *The Chickasaw Nation*. (Louisville: John P. Morton & Co., 1922), 219.

³⁰⁰ Malone, *The Chickasaw Nation*, 218.

³⁰¹ Wesley, July 20, 1736, *Journals and Diaries I*, 167.

conversation with Wesley comes from some trust that is being built between them? Perhaps they experienced a difference in him compared to the “French black kings.”³⁰² They have had ample time to observe Wesley. They let Wesley know that they have been watching him when they say, “[w]e see you go about. We like that. That is good.”³⁰³ His actions have spoken as loudly as his words. But they have not only observed his actions but listened to his words too. Mr. Andrews interjects, “They said at the burying they knew what you was doing. You was speaking to the beloved ones above to take up the soul of the young woman.”³⁰⁴ Wesley’s religious language and possibly his tone of voice may have connected with their own. The fact that they watched Wesley would have been common. Pesantubbee tells us that intercommunication between the various nations was the norm and the Indigenous peoples would have been aware of every movement the settlers made.³⁰⁵

Nonetheless, there is a point where they cut off the conversation. On the surface the reason given, “I don’t practice; therefore I know little,” may be true. This statement may also convey another value concerning ritual knowledge. Tomochichi told the bishop at Lambeth during his stay in England that he would not talk about religion because he believed that one of his companions had died as a consequence of speaking too much about his religion to the Englishmen.³⁰⁶

³⁰² Wesley, July 20, 1736, *Works*, 167.

³⁰³ Wesley, *Works*, 167.

³⁰⁴ Wesley, *Works*, 167.

³⁰⁵ Pesantubbee, *Choctaw Women in a Chaotic World: The Clash of Cultures in the Colonial Southeast*, 118.

³⁰⁶ The entry for August 19, 1734 says, “They were yesterday to see the Archbishop of Canterbury, and were extremely pleased with their visit. They had apprehensions that he was a conjuror, but the kind reception he gave them altered that imagination. The Archbishop would have put some questions to them concerning their notions of religion, but they have a superstition that it is unfortunate to disclose their thoughts of those matters, and refused to answer. They attributed the death of their companion to having too freely spoke thereof since they came over. Nevertheless the King was so taken with the Archbishop that

For John Wesley's part, he shows some cultural sensitivity and at the same time makes some prejudicial assumptions in this conversation. To begin with, his sensitivity comes across in his address. He does not describe the men as heathens. He describes them by name and nationality. Additionally, Wesley does not condemn their beliefs but rather equates their tradition to the Christian faith tradition and seeks further discussion. He seems to be engaging in deep listening. Even though he conveys some prejudices and assumptions, he does not interrupt. He allows the men to speak and seems genuinely intrigued with their answers, so much so that he records them in their entirety.

What is interesting is that he does not seem overly concerned or surprised about their discussion of the "cries and noises near the place where any prisoners had been burned." Whether he saw this torture of prisoners as a consequence of war, he understood the practice, or he was more concerned about the question of which souls would "go up," is unknown; however, he not only avoids judging them, but he also chooses not to address it entirely.

Pesantubbee explains the role of torture in Choctaw culture and indicates that this is practiced amongst the southeastern nations. In Choctaw culture "[t]he death of a captive served to free the wrongly killed person's spirit so that it could enter the afterlife, thus restoring balance to the spirit world, and in turn, this World.³⁰⁷ The Chickasaws may

he said he must come again alone to talk with him. At coming away he said he now really believed they should have some good man sent them to instruct them and their children" John Perceval and Great Britain, Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts, *Manuscripts of the Earl of Egmont Diary of Viscount Percival Afterwards First Earl of Egmont*, (London, H.M. Stationery office, 1920), 121.

³⁰⁷ For more detail on the practice of torture and funeral ritual see Pesantubbee, *Choctaw Women in a Chaotic World: The Clash of Cultures in the Colonial Southeast*, 156.

have held a similar belief, but we do not know because Wesley does not ask them about this practice or belief.³⁰⁸

Additionally, we once again encounter the term “red men” used by Paustoobee and “white man” by John Wesley. Curiously, Wesley seems to be probing for answers as to whether the “red men” are “bad men because they “walk up and down.” Paustoobee does not engage with the premise except to agree with Wesley’s assumptions about “good” and “bad.” He does make it clear that he is repeating what is said amongst the Chickasaw without acceding that the “red men” are “bad men.”

Another aspect of these encounters which is sometimes overlooked is Wesley’s lack of engagement with Indigenous languages. He relies on interpreters such as Andrews and Musgrove throughout his time in Georgia. Almost two months later, in a letter to James Vernon dated September 11, 1736, he says, “Mr. Ingham has made some progress in the Creek language, but a short conversation I had with the chief of the Chickasaws (which my brother I presume has informed you of) moves me to desire rather to learn their language, if God shall give me opportunity.”³⁰⁹ Wesley admits that this encounter has motivated him to learn and yet he does not. We know he had the capability in languages since he could read Greek and Latin as well as read and converse in French. He also spent time learning German and some Italian to speak with the Moravians and some other parishioners. He even began to study Spanish in 1737 “in order to converse with my Jewish parishioners.”³¹⁰ As indicated in chapter I, the vocabulary and grammar

³⁰⁸ For discussion of John Wesley’s understanding of spiritual experiences and supernaturalism see discussion in Henry Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast: John Wesley and the Rise of Methodism*, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1993), 387.

³⁰⁹ James Vernon is one of the Georgia Colony trustees. Ralph J. Randolph, “John Wesley and The American Indian: A Study of Disillusionment,” *Methodist History* 10, no. 3 (April 1972), 8 and Wesley, Letter to James Vernon, (September 11, 1736), *Letters I*, in *Works*, 25:463f.

³¹⁰ Wesley, Monday, April 4, 1737, vol. 18, *Journal and Diaries I*, 178.

of a language opens up new horizons of understanding that often get lost in interpreted conversations, causing blocks to deep listening, and understanding. Wesley's inability to speak the language and his heavy reliance on interpreters may have impeded his relationships with the Creek and Chickasaw peoples he met. What level of trust would have been built between Wesley and his contacts in these nations if he had endeavored to speak their heart language?

Once again, we receive a conflicted view of Wesley's encounters. In some ways, he is ahead of his time with the respect he conveys and the obvious belief that the Chickasaws and Creeks are human beings with a soul and worthy of spiritual conversation. At the same time, he is a man of his day, using English words and images based in his cultural assumptions. The Chickasaw warriors also seem to have assimilated some of the words and ideas conveyed by the settlers, and at the same time appear to be resisting those words and ideas.

At this point, we have a foreshadowing of what is to come in Wesley's thought. His brother set sail for home after a miserable six months and his desire to meet with the men was not only discouraged by Oglethorpe, but also by the Chickasaw. Malone writes, "It may be that Mr. Wesley drew an unfavorable opinion of the Chickasaws from their frank statement that they did not then wish a missionary sent to their people; they giving as a reason that their nation was then engaged in war and that occupied all their time and attention... [But from the Chickasaw] point of view it was not a time for missionaries."³¹¹

Wesley still desired to evangelize the peoples of the Yamacraw, Creek, and Chickasaw Nations, but his frustration increased into the fall of 1736 as seen through his

³¹¹ Malone, *The Chickasaw Nation*, 219.

letters and journal. Randolph surmises that personal observation and information furnished by men who had long contact with the Southern natives convinced him that his belief in the simple, unsophisticated ‘heathen’ had been inaccurate. Though he maintains some of his initial optimism, his disillusionment and animosity toward the Indians began to increase.³¹²

In his letter to James Vernon of September 1736, his optimism showed when he not only expressed his desire to learn the Chickasaw language, but he also praised their “humble and peaceable qualities, scarce to be found among any other of the Indian nations, but have so firm a reliance on Providence, so settled a habit of looking up to a Superior Being in all the occurrences of life, that they appear the most likely of all the Americans to receive and rejoice in the glorious-Gospel of Christ.”³¹³

However, one can sense that others are beginning to influence his thinking because his opening statements label the Chickasaw as a “despised and almost unheard-of nation” according to accounts given by their “own countrymen or strangers.”³¹⁴ He made no such observations in his meetings with the Chickasaw in his journals. Later in the letter, the realization seems to dawn on him that his work amongst them may not ever come to fruition. His concern for their welfare reaches out through the page as he bemoans what will happen to them, “few of whom now see the light and bless God for it...” when he is inevitably called away to the larger parish work.³¹⁵ He also admits “...the work is too weighty for me...”³¹⁶ Though he hopes for the best and believes this

³¹² Randolph, “John Wesley and The American Indian: A Study of Disillusionment,” 7.

³¹³ Wesley, Letter to James Vernon, (September 11, 1736), *Letters I*, in *Works*, 25:474.

³¹⁴ Wesley, *Works*, 25:474.

³¹⁵ Wesley, *Works*, 25:474.

³¹⁶ Wesley, *Works*, 25:474.

to be a trial which will help him grow in his faith and character, he also makes it clear that this job is too big for one man, writing, “Savannah alone would give constant employment for five or six to instruct, rebuke and exhort as need requires.”³¹⁷

The next mention of the ‘Indians’ comes through his journal entry of Tuesday, November 23, 1736, and it appears that his disappointment and frustration continues to grow. He writes,

Mr. Oglethorpe sailed for England, leaving Mr. Ingham, Mr. Delamotte, and me at Savannah, but with less prospect of preaching to the Indians than we had the first day we set foot in America. Whenever I mentioned it, it was immediately replied, ‘You can’t leave Savannah without a minister.’ To this indeed my plain answer was, ‘I know not that I am under any obligation to the contrary. I never promised to stay here one month. I openly declared both before, at, and ever since my coming hither, that I neither would nor could take charge of the English any longer than till I could go among the Indians.’ If it was said, ‘But did not the Trustees of Georgia appoint you to be minister of Savannah?’ I replied, ‘They did; but it was not done by my solicitation: it was done without either my desire or knowledge. Therefore I cannot conceive that appointment to lay me under any obligation of continuing there any longer than till a door is opened to the heathens. And this I expressly declared at the time I consented to accept of that appointment.’ But though I had no other obligation not to leave Savannah now, yet that of love I could not break through; I could not resist the importunate request of the more serious parishioners to watch over their souls yet a little longer, till someone came who might supply my place. And this I the more willingly did because the time was not come to preach the gospel of peace to the heathens, all their nations being in a ferment; and Paustoobee and Mingo Mattaw having told me, in terms, in my own house, ‘Now our enemies are all about us, and we can do nothing but fight; but if the beloved ones should ever give us to be at peace, then we would hear the Great Word.’³¹⁸

The frustration enunciated by Wesley in this journal entry contains his frustration at the mixed messages he received from the different trustees. It seems that he feels duped. Beguiled with stories about the Native Americans, conflicting messages from the

³¹⁷ Wesley, *Works*, 25:474.

³¹⁸ John Wesley, July 20, 1736, *Journal and Diaries I (1735-1738)*, 18:173.

board of trustees, Oglethorpe's insistence that Wesley minister to the settlers, and his conversation with the Chickasaw in July paints a bleak picture facing Wesley.³¹⁹ His hope of experiencing God's grace anew and ministering to the 'unspoiled' heathens appears to be ruined. Wesley expects a replacement to free him up to spend time with the Chickasaws. Considering how long it took the trustees to find the Wesley brothers to minister to the colony, the likelihood of another coming any time soon remains improbable. A subtle indicator of a change occurs in his choice of language. He uses proper names like Paustoobee and Mingo Mattaw but he has also begun to refer to the 'heathens' once again.

Wingeier-Rayo says this point marks Wesley's "...middle stage of his growth, [when] Wesley fell into the common colonial belief that Native Americans were "savages" who did not want to learn about christianity."³²⁰ Wingeier-Rayo goes on to say that this perspective would impact most of his theological writings.³²¹

John Wesley's entries continue to unravel throughout the next year culminating in a scathing report to the Trustees in December of 1737. There are a number of probable reasons for this change from the stress of serving the settlers to his interactions with traders. Not surprisingly, his language begins to reflect his emerging dissatisfactions and disappointments.

His views concerning those not belonging to the settler/immigrant culture or the British Empire include not only the indigenous peoples but also the African slaves he

³¹⁹ for meeting minutes see John Perceval and Great Britain, Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts, *Manuscripts of the Earl of Egmont Diary of Viscount Percival Afterwards First Earl of Egmont*, (London, H.M. Stationery office, 1920).

³²⁰ Wingeier-Rayo, "A Wesleyan Theology of Religions: A Re-Reading of John Wesley Through His Encounters with Peoples of Non-Christian Faiths," 9.

³²¹ Wingeier-Rayo, 7.

encounters. Though Georgia at this time forbid slavery, neighboring Carolina did not.

There were also some settlers in Georgia who broke the laws and used slaves. This made Wesley's encounters with slaves relatively infrequent and notable in his journals.

Clements and Sequivel point out that during this time Wesley did not yet actively oppose slavery. He journals freely about evangelizing the slaves with some consternation about their suffering whilst unprepared to upend the status quo, "suggesting his understanding of the full humanity of all peoples was not yet as developed as it would one day become, as expressed in his letter to abolitionist William Wilberforce" from 1791.³²²

His journal entry from Wed. April 27, 1737 is a case in point. He records, "I came to Mr. Bellinger's plantation at Chulifinny... Here I met with an half Indian (one that had an Indian mother and a Spanish father) and several Negroes who were very desirous of instruction.³²³ He then expresses concern when he writes "...O how hath God stretched over this place 'the lines of confusion and the stones of emptiness'!³²⁴ Alas for those whose lives were here vilely cast away, through oppression, through divers plagues and troubles! O earth! How long wilt thou hide their blood? How long wilt thou cover thy slain?³²⁵" This is followed by his reflection on his experiences in the Carolina colony that, "...perhaps one of the easiest and shortest ways to instruct the American Negroes in

³²² Clements and Sequivel. "John Wesley, First peoples of North America, and Christian perfection," 163-164.

³²³ Wesley, April, 27, 1737, *Journal and Diaries I (1735-1738)*, ed. W. Reginald Ward and Richard P. Heitzenrater, vol. 18 of *The Bicentennial Edition of the Works of John Wesley* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1976-), 181.

³²⁴ See note 73 "Isaiah 34:11" in Wesley, April, 27, 1737, *Journal and Diaries I (1735-1738)*, ed. W. Reginald Ward and Richard P. Heitzenrater, vol. 18 of *The Bicentennial Edition of the Works of John Wesley* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1976-), 181.

³²⁵ See note 74, "See Is. 26:21. In the context of black slavery, there is little doubt that Wesley is referring to horrible cruelties practiced by some slave-masters, which he and his brother Charles had first met with in South Carolina as Charles was returning to England." in Wesley, April, 27, 1737, *Journal and Diaries I (1735-1738)*, ed. W. Reginald Ward and Richard P. Heitzenrater, vol. 18 of *The Bicentennial Edition of the Works of John Wesley* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1976-), 181.

Christianity would be first to inquire after and find out some of the most serious of the planters. Then, having inquired of them which of their slaves were best inclined, and understood English, to go to them from plantation to plantation, staying as long as appeared necessary at each.”³²⁶

In this entry, he also mentions meeting a ‘half Indian.’ This categorization of identity leads one to wonder how he came upon this description. The concept of blood quantum levels appeared as early as 1705, but it would not be codified into U.S. law until the 20th century.³²⁷ This may show the influence of Great Britain’s language of colonization in Wesley’s language. He is beginning to parse out racial categories. Linda Tuhiwai Smith tells us that, “...sexual relations between colonizers and colonized ...led to communities who were referred to as 'half-castes' or 'half-breeds', or stigmatized by some other specific term which often excluded them from belonging to either settler or indigenous societies. Sometimes children from 'mixed' sexual relationships were considered at least half-way civilized; at other times they were considered worse than civilized. Legislation was frequently used to regulate both the categories to which people were entitled to belong and the sorts of relations which one category of people could have with another.”³²⁸

³²⁶ Wesley, April, 27, 1737, *Journal and Diaries I (1735-1738)*, ed. W. Reginald Ward and Richard P. Heitzenrater, vol. 18 of *The Bicentennial Edition of the Works of John Wesley* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1976–), 181.

³²⁷ Spruhan tells us that though British law shows some precedence concerning identity and bloodlines in reference to property ownership and inheritance, the first mention of blood quantum measurement to determine “Indian” identity came in 1705 in Virginia Colony which barred a child of an Indian from holding public office, but it wasn’t used systemically in the courts until the Allotment Act, and was not used extensively until the early 20th century. In 1935 it is codified in the Indian Reorganization Act. Paul Spruhan, “A Legal History of Blood Quantum in Federal Indian Law to 1935,” *South Dakota Law Review*, Vol. 51, No. 1, 2006, 5, 46-51.

³²⁸ Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*, 27.

Randolph tells us that Wesley's journal entries penned during the troubled summer of 1737 also give clues to Wesley's change of heart.³²⁹ Randolph relates that John Wesley's journal at this period contained few references to "Indians" but he had not forgotten the need for missionary activity.

'He had recently read David Humphreys' *Historical Account of the Incorporated Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts*, and believed that he had the solution to the problem of the English missionary activity.' In a July 1737, letter to Humphreys, Wesley stated his belief that success among the natives would come only after 'one or more' missionaries had been put to death for their faith. Such evidence of zeal would convince the stubborn natives of the true belief of the English and also encourage others to continue the effort.³³⁰

He wrote the letter to David Humphreys on July 22, 1737. His words attest to a strong frustration with his own missionary efforts that may have settled upon his mind as a result of his interview on July 9th with a "Frenchman of New Orleans on the Mississippi, who had lived several months among the Chickasaws."³³¹

The man recounts to Wesley in-depth reports of torture carried out by the Chickasaw following a battle with the French. Wesley says he then asked him about their "manner of life only to be told, 'They do nothing but eat and drink and smoke from morning till night, and in a manner from night till morning. For they rise at any hour of the night when they wake, and after eating and drinking as much as they can, go to sleep again.' Based on how much credence Wesley gives this man's report. it appears that he is either unaware of the context behind this man's story or he chose to disbelieve the reports he would have had access to through Oglethorpe.

³²⁹ Wesley's troubled summer refers to the charges brought against him by the Bailiff Thomas Causton regarding his relationship with Causton's niece Sophie Williamson. For details see Julie Anne Sweet, "Thomas Causton: Cause or Casualty of Early Georgia's Troubles?," *The Georgia Historical Quarterly*, 97, no. 2 (Summer 2013): 139-175.

³³⁰ See note 1 in John Wesley, *Letters I*, 25: 514.

³³¹ John Wesley, July 9, 1737, *Journal and Diaries I (1735-1738)*, 184.

The French considered the Chickasaw to be enemies. According to Pesantubbee, they used any tactic they could devise to divide the nations so as to protect their financial assets from the British. She describes instances of instigating conflict between nations by ordering raids and then encouraging retaliation.³³² She says, the French were known for manipulating situations by threatening to withdraw trade agreements and weapons, leaving villages destitute and vulnerable.³³³ Worst of all, they would then use such leverage to instigate war between neighboring villages who had refused to give into French demands, essentially initiating civil war between family groups.³³⁴ They mostly manipulated the Choctaw leaders who would be at war with the Chickasaws, but she also describes counterintelligence tactics they used to diminish trust of the English.³³⁵ It would be naïve to assume the French were the only European nation engaging in these kinds of tactics, but this certainly explains why the “Frenchman” would have denigrated the Chickasaw peoples to John Wesley. Not only are the Chickasaw this man’s enemies, but John Wesley, an Englishman, is also his enemy.

After this, Wesley’s reflections on this conversation diverge greatly from his initial aspirations of finding an unspoiled people who would be like the first Christians, eager and childlike. Wesley’s tone comes through the pages almost as if he is mocking them and their religious commitment to the “beloved ones,” as he wonders,

What is the religion of nature, properly so called, or that religion which flows from natural reason, unassisted by revelation. And that, even in those who have the knowledge of many truths, and who converse with their beloved ones day and

³³² See Pesantubbee, *Choctaw Women in a Chaotic World: The Clash of Cultures in the Colonial Southeast*, 43.

³³³ Pesantubbee, 43.

³³⁴ Pesantubbee, 43.

³³⁵ Pesantubbee, 43.

night. But too plainly does it appear by the fruits that ‘the gods of these heathens too are but devils.’³³⁶

Between the stresses of multiple court appearances concerning the charges brought against him and his “chief motive” for coming to the Georgia colony, namely to “instruct the Indians,” unrealized and unlikely to ever be realized, he journals on October the 7th, 1737, “I consulted my friends whether God did not call me to return to England.” He concludes that it is not quite time yet to leave. He also reiterates that his main purpose for coming to Georgia in the first place was for the sake of “heathens.” Curiously, he does not blame Oglethorpe or the trustees as he did the previous year, but rather he bemoans that he had not “as yet found or heard of any Indians on the continent of America who had the least desire of being instructed.”³³⁷

A little more than a month later, on December 2, 1737, Wesley headed home. He drew up a short report for the Trustees, which discussed the geography, delineated the land parcels, the agriculture of the colony, and most remarkably the “Georgian Indians.”³³⁸ The adjective used to describe the peoples tells us that his worldview fully embraced the colonial mentality concerning land rights. He accepted that Georgia was not a settlement within the Yamacraw Nation, but rather belonged to the king of England. This is only the beginning of his disturbing report.

³³⁶ note 88 tells us that John Wesley is “playing upon the title of William Wollaston’s work, *The Religion of Nature Delineated* (first published 1722), which he had read in 1733. Wollaston constructed a philosophical approach to religion and morality without the need for divine revelation, and here as at the beginning of this entry Wesley implies the poverty of ‘that religion which flows from natural reason, unassisted by revelation.’” Wesley, July 9, 1737, *Journal and Diaries I*, 18:185-186.

³³⁷ Wesley, October 7, 1737, *Journal and Diaries I*, 18:193.

³³⁸ Wesley, December 2, 1737, *Journal and Diaries I*, 18:195-204.

To begin with, he makes mention of Mary Musgrove's parcel and adjoining land owned by Captain Watson on which is an "unfinished house, swiftly running to ruin."³³⁹ But he makes no mention of her integral work in this letter, nor does he make mention of why Watson's land is going to ruin. Watson murdered one of Tomochichi's relatives. Charles Wesley took the time in his report to the trustees to state that Watson was 'really disturbed in his senses,' but John Wesley neglects to mention Watson.³⁴⁰ This is curious considering that Watson had been released after John signed a petition on his behalf and that Wesley admitted him communion.³⁴¹ It may seem insignificant, until one reads further on. John Wesley's report on the 'Indians' is much more detailed and significantly more prejudiced and racist.

Beginning in paragraph 21, he lists his thoughts on the "Georgian Indians" in general and then in particular the Choctaws, Chickasaws, Cherokees, Yuchis, and the Creeks.³⁴² At the outset, he admits that these are for the most part based on second-hand reports from traders. In addition, he reveals that he received inconsistent descriptions from these traders. Yet, he insists that these reports are impartial since these traders have "relations of such as have been occasionally amongst them, and have no interest in making them better or worse than they are."³⁴³ His trust of the traders shows a definite shift in his thinking against the 'Indians.' In general,

It may be observed that they are not so properly nations as tribes or clans, who have wandered thither at different times, perhaps expelled [from] their native

³³⁹ Wesley, December 2, 1737, *Journal and Diaries I*, 18:200.

³⁴⁰ See note 45 in Wesley, December 2, 1737, *Journal and Diaries I*, ¶16 18:200 and for full meeting minutes see John Perceval and Great Britain, Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts, *Manuscripts of the Earl of Egmont Diary of Viscount Percival Afterwards First Earl of Egmont*, (London, H.M. Stationery office, 1920), 312-313.

³⁴¹ Wesley, December 2, 1737, *Journal and Diaries I*, ¶16 18:200.

³⁴² Wesley, Works, ¶16 18:201.

³⁴³ Wesley, Works, ¶21 18:201.

countries by stronger tribes; but how or when they cannot tell, being none of them able to give any rational account of themselves. They are inured to hardship of all kinds, and surprisingly patient of pain. But as they have no letters, so they have no religion, no laws, no civil government. Nor have they any kings or princes, properly speaking, their ‘micos’ or headmen having no power either to command or punish, no man obeying them any farther than he pleases. So that everyone doth what is right in his own eyes; and if it appears wrong to his neighbour the person aggrieved usually steals on the other unawares, and shoots him, scalps him, or cuts off his ears; having only two short rules of proceeding—to do what he will, and what he can.³⁴⁴

He propagates this whole paragraph with cultural assumptions. Since there is “no writing” using a proper alphabet there is “therefore no religion.” With echoes of the Doctrine of Discovery, he cannot accept anything other than a monarchy as “civil government.” As far as the violence perpetuated he did not see this, but rather heard about it. By accepting the stories at face value without considering the perspectives and motives of the speaker, he perpetuates stories that will further prejudice his audience and allows others to view these people as uncivilized and less than human and thus aligned perfectly with the premise of the Doctrine of Discovery. Further dehumanizing is his assertion that they are “surprisingly patient of pain.” Poupart exposes this stereotype of the stoic savage saying, “Like the knowledges and stories of Others under patriarchal oppression, American Indian people’s pain is not recognized nor validated by the dominant culture. Instead, white society uses negative constructions of Indians as subhuman and lacking a full range of human qualities and emotions in order to justify our disempowerment.”³⁴⁵

After making these statements he becomes increasingly vitriolic while giving slight reprieve to the “Choctaws.”

³⁴⁴ Wesley, Works, ¶22 18:201-202.

³⁴⁵ Lisa M. Poupart, "The Familiar Face of Genocide: Internalized Oppression among American Indians," *Hypatia* 18, no. 2, (Spring, 2003): 89.

They are likewise all, except (perhaps) the Choctaws, gluttons, drunkards, thieves, dissemblers, liars. They are implacable, unmerciful; murderers of fathers, murderers of mothers, murderers of their own children; it being a common thing for a son to shoot his father or mother because they are old and past labour; and for a woman either to procure abortion, or to throw her child into the next river, because she will go with her husband to the war. Indeed husbands, strictly speaking, they have none; for any man leaves his wife (so called) at pleasure, who frequently, in return, cuts the throats of all the children she has had by him. Whoredom they account no crime, and few instances appear of a young Indian woman's refusing anyone. Nor have they any fixed punishment for adultery; only if the husband take his wife with another man he will do what he can to both, unless speedily pacified by the present of a gun or a blanket.³⁴⁶

Only the Choctaws are mentioned by name as he conflates reports about whole nations and even generalizes about gender norms. He makes derogatory statements such as 'so-called wife' and 'whoredom' and attributes callous actions to them such as infanticide. How different is this from his account of his first meeting with Tomochichi's wife Sinauky, when he remarked that "Indians allow no man to touch or speak to a woman, except her husband, not though she be ill and even in danger of death."³⁴⁷ We already discussed ways in which cultural differences could have led to misunderstandings between men and women and thereby influenced these descriptions. Additionally, Pesantubbee also explains how French men dealt with the shortage of women in their colonies. Since they were refused a Roman Catholic wedding ceremony without Papal dispensation, many native women were married through native ceremonies which essentially resulted in concubinage.³⁴⁸ Descriptions such as these stereotyped Indigenous women in harmful ways. Wesley's perpetuation of stereotypes through these

³⁴⁶ Wesley, December 2, 1737, *Journal and Diaries I*, ¶23 18:202.

³⁴⁷ Wesley, February 14, 1736, *Manuscript Voyage Journal October 14, 1735 – February 16, 1735/36*, ed. W. Reginald Ward and Richard P. Heitzenrater, vol. 18 of *The Bicentennial Edition of the Works of John Wesley* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1988), 357.

³⁴⁸ Pesantubbee, *Choctaw Women in a Chaotic World: The Clash of Cultures in the Colonial Southeast*, 6, 100-105.

stories points to the danger of hearsay as a source of knowledge and how his reliance on it compromises his own integrity.

At this point, Wesley begins to outline characteristics of the various nations specifically.

The Choctaws only have some appearance of an entire nation, possessing a large extent of land, eight or nine hundred miles west of Savannah, and many well-inhabited towns. They are said to have six thousand fighting men, united under one head. At present they are in league with the French, who have sent some priests among them, by whom (if one may credit the Choctaw traders) ten or twelve have been baptized.³⁴⁹

In the first description of the Choctaw, he provides his definition of nationhood and thus sovereignty. He haltingly characterizes them as a nation due to the significance of their land holdings, their demarcated and static towns, the presence of a standing army under a single leader, and notably the acceptance of the christian faith. We may remember that his first impression of the Choctaw led him to believe that they were unspoiled and thus perhaps the most open to evangelization. However, from his journal it appears he has had little contact with members of the Choctaw Nation.

Next, he describes the Chickasaws, who he had met with most extensively when he first arrived in the colony. Initially, he seemed to be quite taken with them, but this description gives a far different account.

Next to these, to the north-east, are the Chickasaws. Their country is flat, full of meadows, springs, and rivers. In their fields, though six or seven hundred miles from the sea, are found sea-shells in great numbers. They have about nine hundred fighting men, ten towns, and one 'mico' (at least) in every one. They are eminently gluttons, eating, drinking, and smoking all day, and almost every night. They are extreme indolent and lazy, except in war: then they are the most indefatigable and the most valiant of all the Indians. But they are equally cruel

³⁴⁹ Wesley, December 2, 1737, *Journal and Diaries I*, ¶24 18:202.

with the rest, torturing and burning all their prisoners, whether Indian or European.³⁵⁰

He does not characterize the Chickasaws as a sovereign nation, perhaps because they have a ‘mico’ in each town instead of a monarchy. Instead of relating his own thoughts from 1736, he chooses repeat the account given to him by the “Frenchman” he met the previous summer. Curiously, he also uses the word “Indian” here instead of naming the various nations, even though he would have known the battles took place amongst the French, Natchez, Chickasaw, and Creek nations. His language homogenizes Indigenous peoples and erases distinctiveness.

He also describes the nation we hear least about in his journals, the Cherokee.

East of them, in the latitude of 35° and 36°, about three or four hundred miles from Savannah, lie the Cherokees. Their country is very mountainous, fruitful, and pleasant. They have fifty-two towns, and above three thousand fighting men. In each town are three or more headmen, who keep up a sort of shadow of government, having power to set the rest to work, and to punish such as will not join in the common labour. They are civil to strangers, and will do anything for them, for pay, being always willing, for a small piece of money, to carry a message for fifty or sixty miles, and, if required, a heavy burden too. But they are equally cruel to prisoners with the Chickasaws, though not equally valiant. They are seldom intemperate in drinking, but when they can be so on free cost. Otherwise love of drink yields to covetousness, a vice scarce to be found in any Indian but a Cherokee.³⁵¹

Again, he seems to disdain their governmental structure. His description of their willingness to do anything for money, only drinking when it is free, and especially of their covetousness that is “scarce to be found in any Indian but the Cherokee,” smacks of another stereotype which would be well known to Wesley. The Cherokee had

³⁵⁰ Wesley, Works, ¶25 18:202-203.

³⁵¹ Wesley, Works, ¶26 18:203.

intermarried with settlers from Scotland and there were traders amongst the Cherokees already in the 1720's.

One of his most scathing descriptions comes in his report on the Yuchis, which he has not mentioned previously.

The Yuchis have only one small town left (near two hundred miles from Savannah), and about forty fighting men. The Creeks have been many times on the point of cutting them off. They are indeed hated by most, and despised by all the other nations, as well for their cowardice as their superlative diligence in thieving, and for outlying all the Indians upon the continent.³⁵²

Wesley conveys the title of “nations” onto the Choctaw, Cherokee, Chickasaw, and Creek, in this paragraph leading one to believe that he is recognizing them as political entities. He does not give the same status to the Yuchis. Again, one wonders where and from whom he attained this description?

Finally, we come to his detailed report on the Creek Nation. He tells us,

The Creek Indians are about four hundred miles from Savannah. They are said to be bounded to the west by the Choctaws, to the north by the Chickasaws, to the east by the Cherokees, and to the south by the Altamaha River. They have many towns, a plain well watered country, and fifteen hundred fighting men. They have often three or four micos in a town; but without so much as the shadow of authority, only to give advice, which everyone is at liberty to take or leave. But age and reputation for valour and wisdom have given Chigilly, a mico of the Coweta Town, a more than ordinary influence over the nation—though not even the show of regal power. Yet neither age, wisdom, nor reputation can restrain him from drunkenness. Indeed all the Creeks, having been most conversant with white men, are most infected with insatiate love of drink, as well as other European vices. They are more exquisite dissemblers than the rest of their countrymen. They know not what friendship or gratitude means. They show no inclination to learn anything, but least of all Christianity, being full as opiated of their own parts and wisdom as either modern Chinese or ancient Roman.³⁵³

³⁵² Wesley, Works, ¶27 18:203.

³⁵³ Wesley, Works, ¶28 18:203-204.

Since he would have had the most contact with members of the Creek Nation through his interactions with Mary Musgrove, Tomochichi, and Oglethorpe's use of him following his brother's exit, we would expect to see a more detailed description. It is detailed but incongruent with the impression he has given thus far of his interactions with the Creek. Previously he seemed to appreciate Mary Musgrove but perhaps he did not consider Mary Musgrove representative since she was only "half Indian" and a woman. He also showed appreciation for Tomochichi previously but perhaps he is not recognizing the Yamacraw as part of the Creek Confederacy.

In fact, John Wesley's colleague John Ingham lived with Mary Musgrove and later worked amongst the Yamacraw. There is some disagreement as to whether Ingham traveled to live within the Creek Nation to teach but it is clear from Wesley's journals and corroborating journal entries from the Earl of Egmont and Oglethorpe that Ingham set up a school with the Yamacraw and taught the children. In this same report to the trustees, Wesley describes the school and Mr. Ingham's land. "A mile from this is Irene, a house built for an Indian school in the year 1736. It stands on a small round hill, in a little piece of fruitful ground, given by the Indians to Mr. Ingham."³⁵⁴ Corkran says Ingham even went so far as to create a "Creek-English lexicon and Grammar."³⁵⁵ Ingham eventually left the colony and did not return. He apparently meant to come back and showed the most effort to understand and communicate with the Yamacraw and the Creek Nations. With all these interactions you would expect a more positive report. It has

³⁵⁴ Wesley, Works, ¶16 18:200.

³⁵⁵ David H. Corkran, *The Creek Frontier: 1540-1783*, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1967), 98.

been noted that Chigilly, a Creek Mico, also wanted a school but Wesley apparently was unimpressed with him as well.³⁵⁶

By the time of his departure from Georgia, Wesley had become quite disillusioned and bitter. Nothing speaks to his disillusionment more than his journal entries as he approaches the English shores. On Jan 24, 1738 he laments,

My mind was now full of thought, part of which I writ down as follows: I went to America to convert the Indians; but Oh! who shall convert me? Who, what is he that will deliver me from this evil heart of unbelief? I have a fair summer religion. I can talk well; nay, and believe myself, while no danger is near: but let death look me in the face, and my spirit is troubled... A wise man advised me some time since, 'Be still and go on.' Perhaps this is best, to look upon it as my cross; when it comes, to let it humble me, and quicken all my good resolutions, especially that of praying without ceasing; and at other times to take no thought about it, but quietly to go on 'in the work of the Lord.'³⁵⁷

His dashed dreams of experiencing a pure faith have left him bereft. He writes only of himself and his own spiritual development with no thought for those he left behind. On February 1, 1738, he writes again with some thought of the 'Indians' saying,

It is now two years and almost four months since I left my native country in order to teach the Georgian Indians the nature of Christianity. But what have I learned myself in the meantime? Why (what I the least of all suspected), that I who went to America to convert others, was never myself converted to God. 'I am not mad,' though I thus speak, but 'I speak the words of truth and soberness'...³⁵⁸

Scholars agree that Wesley mischaracterized both the Nations and the representatives of the various Nations with which he interacted. He was far too dependent on colonist and white supremacist voices. basing his worldview on hearsay and stereotypes that would creep into his sermons and writings for the next couple of decades.

³⁵⁶ Clements and Sequivel. "John Wesley, First peoples of North America, and Christian perfection," 162.

³⁵⁷ Wesley, January 24, 1738, *Journal and Diaries I*, 18:211.

³⁵⁸ Wesley, February 1, 1738, *Journal and Diaries I*, 18:214.

Thom White Wolf Fassett says, “When persons travel from one culture to observe the patterns of another culture, they often find it difficult to reconcile what they feel and experience with what their culture has taught them to see.”³⁵⁹ John Wesley’s observations following from his trip to Georgia throughout his life become a lesson for non-Natives about how difficult it is to examine assumptions and interrogate worldview.

John Wesley’s Portrayal of Native Americans in Writings

These journal entries become more consequential to the Methodist ethos when we consider that Heitzenrater tells us that Wesley wrote with publication in mind. “What happened in Georgia on a larger scale and in a more complicated way, was that Wesley faithfully kept his brief daily diary and from time to time wrote up portions of it on a much larger scale with a view to use in the Journal later.”³⁶⁰ Even a cursory look shows that he ends his journal August 12, 1738, and publication occurs two years later. Therefore, he was editing and keeping an eye towards publication and the illustrations he conveys reach a larger audience beyond his own edification.

Furthermore, he was using his journal entries to craft letters to the mission society and the Georgia Board of Trustees. This means his words reached the eyes of the aristocracy even if it was through “restricted publication, in the sense of extended private circulation.”³⁶¹ In addition, he was acting as a “foreign correspondent of the Gentleman’s Magazine” which afforded his voice another venue to circulate his impressions, such as a

³⁵⁹ Thomas W. Fassett, “The History and Role of Methodism and Other Missionary Churches in the Lives and Culture of Native American Women,” (Unpublished paper presented at Women in New Worlds Conference, Cincinnati, Ohio, February 1-3, 1980), 2.

³⁶⁰ Richard P. Heitzenrater, ed., “Introduction: The Construction of Wesley’s Journal,” *Journal and Diaries, I*, vol. 18 of *The Bicentennial Edition of the Works of John Wesley* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1988), 18:90.

³⁶¹ Richard P. Heitzenrater, ed., “The Nature of Wesley’s Journal,” *Journal and Diaries, I*, vol. 18 of *The Bicentennial Edition of the Works of John Wesley* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1988), 37.

“fuller version of a conference with the Chickasaw Indians which was later to appear in the *Journal, Gentleman’s Magazine*”³⁶²

Beyond these uses, John Wesley’s motives create an important backdrop to these journals. Heitzenrater says, “The early diaries had a mixed character, being part engagement diary, part record, part a means of self-examination, and part the management of the small change of daily business.”³⁶³ As such, the entries, while perhaps written with an eye towards publication, are nonetheless candid thoughts. Outside of the goal of personal development, Wesley frankly explained in the *Gentleman’s Magazine* version that he was also writing in defense of his own conduct in the colony. As a result, what we encounter in Wesley’s journal entries are the polished version and as such perhaps even more disappointing to read.

Additionally, consider how the journal exemplifies Wesley’s inconsistency in relation to Native Americans. His journals cycle between positive and negative reflections. Similar patterns will emerge in the Methodist church’s efforts for the next two centuries as found in the stories of Methodist missionaries and agencies throughout history. Jody Owens writes about Wesley’s failure to develop reforms out of his experience and explains the chance Wesley missed. She reflects that if “Wesley [had] been able to consider the forms in which the gospel might manifest itself in Native American culture, he could have embarked upon a true restoration.”³⁶⁴ Furthermore, “had Wesley made a distinction between the [New Testament] gospel and the expression

³⁶² See note 32 in Richard P. Heitzenrater ed., “The Nature of Wesley’s Journal,” *Journal and Diaries, I*, vol. 18 of *The Bicentennial Edition of the Works of John Wesley* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1988), 37.

³⁶³ Richard P. Heitzenrater ed., “The Nature of Wesley’s Journal,” *Journal and Diaries, I*, vol. 18 of *The Bicentennial Edition of the Works of John Wesley* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1988), 37.

³⁶⁴ Jody Owens, “Restoring Faith and Practice?: John Wesley’s Missionary Journey to Georgia,” *Stone-Campbell Journal* 4, no. 1 (2001): 34.

of that gospel in the early centuries, he may have come to see that a similar kind of inculturation might occur among Native Americans and that new forms and expressions of faith and practice could emerge.”³⁶⁵ Could he have come to this conclusion with further exposure to the Yamacraw peoples, such as Ingham embarked on? How would the interactions have differed (and perhaps our history as Methodists), if indeed he had engaged in beloved speech and deep listening? One can only speculate, but what we do know is that his sermons over the next few decades show little change in his opinions.

Once Wesley returns home he describes Christians who are “more savage in their behaviour than the wildest Indians I have yet met with.”³⁶⁶ He reflects upon his mission to the “heathens.”³⁶⁷ Paging through his journals, one begins to wonder how these ideas and assumptions appear in John Wesley’s sermons. Not surprisingly he uses various terms referring to Native peoples depending on the situation. The following examples present some of his most familiar references to Native Americans. They also give evidence of his thought progression.

John Wesley Preacher

One of the earliest sermons upon his return is #28 Discourse VIII on the Sermon on the Mount. In his notes Albert Outler dates the first draft of Discourse VIII as 1736. He says it was first published in the second volume of his *Sermons on Several Occasions* in 1748 and continued to be published during his lifetime.³⁶⁸ Considering the early date

³⁶⁵ Owens, “Restoring Faith and Practice?” 34.

³⁶⁶ John Wesley, February 1, 1737, *Journal and Diaries I (1735-1738)*, 18:221.

³⁶⁷ Wesley, February 3, 1737, *Journal and Diaries I (1735-1738)*, 18:222.

³⁶⁸ Albert Outler’s notes say, “A first draft of ‘Discourse VIII’ seems to have been written in 1736. This sermon was first published in the second volume of his *Sermons on Several Occasions* (1748) and included in all subsequent collections of his Sermons published during his lifetime.” Albert C. Outler, ed. *John Wesley’s Sermons: An Anthology*. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1991), 239.

of its development it would appear that these statements may be based in some of his early observations. He writes,

With regard to most of the commandments of God, whether relating to the heart or life, the heathens of Africa or America stand much on a level with those that are called Christians...the generality of the natives of England, commonly called Christians, are as sober and as temperate as the generality of the heathens near the Cape of Good Hope. And so, the Dutch or French Christians are as humble and as chaste as the Choctaw or Cherokee Indians. It is not easy to say, when we compare the bulk of the nations in Europe with those in America, whether the superiority lies on the one side or the other. At least the American has not much the advantage. But we cannot affirm this with regard to the command now before us. Here the heathen has far the pre-eminence. He desires and seeks nothing more than plain food to eat and plain raiment to put on. And he seeks this only from day to day. He reserves, he lays up nothing; unless it be as much corn at one season of the year as he will need before that season returns. This command, therefore, the heathens, though they know it not, do constantly and punctually observe. They 'lay up for themselves no treasures upon earth;' no stores of purple or fine linen, of gold or silver, which either 'moth or rust may corrupt,' or thieves break through and steal'.³⁶⁹

John Wesley names specific nations and he compares Native Americans favorably with Christians, accentuating positive attributes such as humility, chastity, and a simple life. Unfortunately, his language still places a judgment value on the character of the Chickasaw and Cherokee peoples and his generalization objectifies them. The influence of the Doctrine of Discovery is evident in his reference to them as well as those from Africa as "heathens."³⁷⁰ This word provides a means by which he can proceed with a polemical argument for pointing out his disappointment with Christians of his own country who we can but assume he would consider "civilized." It is also evident in his pronouncement that "the American has not much the advantage."³⁷¹ It evokes a question

³⁶⁹ John Wesley, Sermon 28, "Upon Our Lord's Sermon on the Mount," §9, in *Sermons I*, ed. Albert C. Outler, vol. 1 of *The Bicentennial Edition of the Works of John Wesley* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1984), 612.

³⁷⁰ Wesley, Sermon 28, "Upon Our Lord's Sermon on the Mount," Works, 612.

³⁷¹ Wesley, Sermon 28, "Upon Our Lord's Sermon on the Mount," Works, 612.

posed by Thom White Wolf Fassett when he mused about what could have been accomplished if instead of conquest of the Americas by the European immigrants there had been an appreciation for the wisdom that could be found among Indigenous people?³⁷² Wesley does not see this possibility.

Wesley continues,

But how do the Christians observe what they profess to receive as a command of the most high God? Not at all; not in any degree; no more than if no such command had ever been given to man. Even the good Christians, as they are accounted by others as well as themselves, pay no manner of regard thereto. It might as well be still hid in its original Greek for any notice they take of it. In what Christian city do you find one man of five hundred who makes the least scruple of laying up just as much treasure as he can?³⁷³

We can only surmise that his motivation is to goad his audience into understanding anew their view of wealth and work. He expressed similar attitudes in his journal about the simple life he expected to find in Georgia amongst the Chickasaw and Cherokee. Obviously, undermining noble savage stereotypes is the last thing on his mind in this discourse. This example points to the ways in which language may be used to shame and dehumanize both the peoples being illustrated and those in the congregation.

At the same time there is a ray of hope. Wesley's main premise is chipping away at the underpinnings of the colonial mindset. The concept of Manifest Destiny and its links with capitalism have yet to be named as such in 1748 when this sermon was first published. This does not mean that it was not entering into the consciousness of those who benefited from the Doctrine of Discovery. His sermon questions the ethics of both

³⁷² Thom White Wolf Fassett, "Politics of Religion—Native Spirituality & Christian Practice" (lecture, Moravian College, Bethlehem, PA, Friday March 9, 2018).

³⁷³ Wesley, Sermon 28, "Upon Our Lord's Sermon on the Mount," § 9, *Works*, 1:612.

the mindset and the actions of garnering wealth and resources both “unjustly” and in excess of what is needful.

Even [Good Christians] do not scruple the thing, but the manner of it. They do not scruple the ‘laying up treasures upon earth,’ but the laying them up by dishonesty. They do not start at disobeying Christ, but at a breach of heathen morality. So that even these honest men do no more obey this command than a highwayman or a housebreaker. Nay, they never designed to obey it. From their youth up it never entered into their thoughts. They were bred up by their Christian parents, masters, and friends, without any instruction at all concerning it; unless it were this, to break it as soon and as much as they could, and to continue breaking it to their life’s end.”³⁷⁴

Later he makes his case stronger,

the labouring after a larger measure of worldly substance, a larger increase of gold and silver; the laying up any more than these ends require is what is here expressly and absolutely forbidden.³⁷⁵

Further on he lays out the consequences of striving even if wealth alludes them,

Let us but open our eyes, and we may daily see the melancholy proofs of this: men who desiring, resolving to be rich, ‘coveting after money, the root of all evil, have already pierced themselves through with many sorrows’, and anticipated the hell to which they are going.³⁷⁶

He finishes with an unannotated quote pointing to the insatiable desire that continually grows as a result of this striving which is evident in colonizing behavior, “Amidst our plenty something still ... To me, to thee, to him is wanting! That cruel something unpossessed Corrodes and leavens all the rest.”³⁷⁷ He then lays out the boundaries of wealth by making allowances for paying debts and living simply. He again focuses the lens upon the “heathen” as an example for how “christians” should conduct themselves,

³⁷⁴ Wesley, § 9, *Works*, 1:612.

³⁷⁵ Wesley, § 12, *Works*, 1:612.

³⁷⁶ Wesley, § 15, *Works*, 1:612.

³⁷⁷ Wesley, § 20, *Works*, 1:612.

[We are not forbidden to] provide for our children and for those of our own household. This also it is our duty to do, even upon principles of heathen morality. Every man ought to provide the plain necessities of life both for his own wife and children, and to put them into a capacity of providing these for themselves when he is gone hence and is no more seen. I say, of providing I say, of providing these, the plain necessities of life-not delicacies, not superfluities-and and that by their diligent labour; for it is no man's duty to furnish them any more than himself with the means either of luxury or idleness.³⁷⁸

It is perhaps not surprising that he cannot refrain from counterbalancing this elevation of the “heathen” by once again populating his illustration with denigrating judgments.

But if any man provides not thus far for his own children (as well as for ‘the widows of his own house’, of whom primarily St. Paul is speaking in those well-known words to Timothy), ‘he hath’ practically’ denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel,’ or heathen.³⁷⁹

Further on when describing a christian who insists on accumulating excess wealth, he accuses them of having, “practically ‘denied the faith, and is worse than an ‘African or American infidel’ .”³⁸⁰ Finally failing to acknowledge that the “heathens” could possibly have knowledge of the divine at all he states, “When will ye awake and see that the open, speculative heathens are nearer the kingdom of heaven than you?”³⁸¹

Ironically John Wesley’s sermon # 38 titled “A Caution Against Bigotry” gives us a bigoted picture of the Creeks, Cherokees, and Chickasaws. He says that the “Ruler of this world,” namely the devil, appears to each human being differently in order to play upon their minds and keep them from “crying out to God” for help. He compares the

³⁷⁸ Wesley, § 11, *Works*, I:612.

³⁷⁹ Wesley, § 11, *Works*, I:612.

³⁸⁰ Wesley, § 12, *Works*, I:612.

³⁸¹ Wesley, § 13, *Works*, I:612.

ways in which the English are just as beguiled by the devil as people from other countries, providing a few examples,

As gross and palpable are the works of the devil among many (if not all) the modern heathens. The natural religion of the Creeks, Cherokees, Chicasaws, and all other Indians bordering on our southern settlements (not of a few single men, but of entire nations) is to torture all their prisoners from morning to night, till at length they roast them to death; and upon the slightest undesigned provocation to come behind and shoot any of their own countrymen. Yea, it is a common thing among them for the son, if he thinks his father lives too long, to knock out his brains; and for another, if she is tired of her children, to fasten stones about their necks, and throw three or four of them into the river one after another.³⁸²

Wesley does not gloss over anything but he embellishes beyond what we have of the “Frenchman’s” account. To begin with he is once again conflating the three Nations and decrying them all. In addition, though one would expect him to condemn torture, to say that they tortured without provocation is false since the French attacked them. He continues to embellish what he heard and to perpetuate stories that present Native families as callous and unloving. He did not witness such atrocities himself and certainly did not hear about them from the Chickasaws during his interview with them. It may be of small consequence that by mentioning the effect of the devil’s work on them, he is also assuming that the devil would worry about the Creek, Cherokee, and Chickasaw nations; this interest would imply that they do in fact have souls and that they are human. At the same time, he does not hold back from accusing his own nation as well.

It were to be wished that none but heathens had practised such gross, palpable works of the devil. But we dare not say so. Even in cruelty and bloodshed, how little have the Christians come behind them! And not the Spaniards or Portuguese alone, butchering thousands in South America. Not the Dutch only in the East Indies, or the French in North America, following the Spaniards step by step. Our own countrymen, too, have wantoned in blood, and exterminated whole nations:

³⁸² Wesley, Sermon 38, “A Caution Against Bigotry,” § 9, in *Sermons II*, ed. Albert C. Outler, vol. 2 of *The Bicentennial Edition of the Works of John Wesley* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1985), I:61.

plainly proving thereby what spirit it is that dwells and works in the children of disobedience.³⁸³

His words once again take a step forward and a step back in regards to his critique of his own country while also homogenizing and defaming the Creek, Cherokee, and Chickasaw. These sermons are important because they become part of a larger canon of study material within the Methodist movement. Outler tells us that it was, “John Wesley’s preaching that defined his vocation preeminently and he declared, ‘My tongue is a devoted thing.’”³⁸⁴ Sermons not only spread the gospel message of the Methodist revival but also provided devotions for the movement and reflection for his preachers. “He began to publish sermons... in 1746 with an eye toward helping the reader ‘see in the clearest manner what those doctrines are which I embrace and teach as the essentials of true religion.’”³⁸⁵ Unfortunately, the use of these sermons spread Wesley’s prejudicial remarks about Native Americans even further abroad. However, Wesley’s sermons were not the only writings that brought his impressions of Native Americans to a larger audience.

John Wesley Publisher

John Wesley was a prolific writer. In addition to sermons, he also wrote pamphlets and articles. One titled “Doctrine of Original Sin” appeared in a publication from Philadelphia. In this treatise Wesley argues against Pelagianism, describing how original sin exhibits itself and he uses the “Indians” as an illustration.

If these then were so stupidly, brutishly ignorant, so desperately wicked; what can we expect from the Heathen world, from them who had not the knowledge either of his law or promises? Certainly we cannot expect to find more goodness among

³⁸³ Wesley, Sermon 38, “A Caution Against Bigotry,” § 10, *Works*, II:61

³⁸⁴ Wesley, To the Revd. John Burton, (October 10, 1735), *Letters I*, in *Works*, 25:439.

³⁸⁵ Albert Outler, *John Wesley's Sermons: An Anthology*, 9.

them. But let us make a fair and impartial inquiry: and that not among wild and barbarous nations, but the most civilized and refined.³⁸⁶

He begins with a look at the biblical record and then follows quickly with a survey of the “heathens” who are most “civilized.” He eventually arrives at the heathens of America.

It is true, that in the new world, in America, they seem to breathe a purer air, and to be in general men of a stronger understanding, and a less savage temper. Among these then we may surely find higher degrees of knowledge as well as virtue. But in order to form a just conception of them, we must not take our account from their enemies; from any that would justify themselves by blackening those whom they seek to destroy. No, but let us inquire of more impartial judges, concerning those whom they have personally known, the Indians bordering upon our own settlements, from New-England down to Georgia.³⁸⁷

We hear some echoes of his earlier beliefs in his introduction of those who breathe “a purer air.” He makes another interesting comment about “impartial judges” amongst the settlers, as if there could be such a person. He continues to homogenize as he did in previous examples and to denigrate their knowledge as it does not ascribe to a western european school of thought.

We cannot learn, that there is any great difference, in point of knowledge, between any of these, from east to west, or from north to south. They are all equally unacquainted with European learning, being total strangers to every branch of literature having not the least conception of any part of philosophy, speculative or practical.³⁸⁸

³⁸⁶ John Wesley, “The Doctrine of Original Sin: According to Scripture, Reason and Experience” (1757), *The Works of John Wesley*, Vol. 12: Doctrinal and Controversial Treatises I, ed. Randy L. Maddox (Nashville: Abingdon, 2012), 179.

³⁸⁷ Wesley, “The Doctrine of Original Sin: According to Scripture, Reason and Experience” (1757), *The Works of John Wesley*, Vol. 12: Doctrinal and Controversial Treatises I, ed. Randy L. Maddox (Nashville: Abingdon, 2012), 178.

³⁸⁸ Wesley, “The Doctrine of Original Sin: According to Scripture, Reason and Experience” (1757), *The Works of John Wesley*, Vol. 12: Doctrinal and Controversial Treatises I, ed. Randy L. Maddox (Nashville: Abingdon, 2012), 178.

He criticizes what he perceives to be a lack of governmental structure, which appears to come right out of his trustee report.

Neither have they (whatever accounts some have given) any such thing as a regular civil government among them. They have no laws of any kind, unless a few temporary rules made in and for the times of war. They are likewise utter strangers to the arts of peace, having scarcely any such thing as an artificer in a nation.³⁸⁹

Seemingly no longer entranced by their simplicity, he now describes their life with contempt.

They know nothing of building; having only poor, miserable, ill contrived huts, far inferior to many English dog-kennels. Their clothing, till of late, was only skins of beasts, commonly of deer, hanging down before and behind them. Now, among those who have commerce with our nation, it is frequently a blanket wrapt about them. Their food is equally delicate; pounded Indian corn sometimes mixed with water, and so eaten at once: sometimes kneaded into cakes, meal and bran together, and half baked upon the coals. Fish or flesh, dried in the sun, is frequently added to this; and now and then a piece of tough, fresh-killed deer. Such is the knowledge of the Americans, whether in things of an abstruser nature, or in the affairs of common life. And this, so far as we can learn, is the condition of all, without any considerable difference.³⁹⁰

To bring his point home he moves quickly into their religious practices. Without recognition of the different cultures, languages, and beliefs among the nations about which he is offering a critique he says,

in point of religion, there is a very material difference between the Northern and Southern Indians. Those in the North are idolaters of the lowest kind: If they do not worship the devil appearing in person, (which many firmly believe they do, many think incredible) certainly they worship the most vile and contemptible idols. It were more excusable if they only ‘turned the glory of the incorruptible God into the image of corruptible man’ yea, or ‘of birds, or of four-footed beasts,

³⁸⁹ Wesley, “The Doctrine of Original Sin: According to Scripture, Reason and Experience” (1757), *The Works of John Wesley*, Vol. 12: Doctrinal and Controversial Treatises I, ed. Randy L. Maddox (Nashville: Abingdon, 2012), 178-179.

³⁹⁰ Wesley, “The Doctrine of Original Sin: According to Scripture, Reason and Experience” (1757), *The Works of John Wesley*, Vol. 12: Doctrinal and Controversial Treatises I, ed. Randy L. Maddox (Nashville: Abingdon, 2012), 179.

or reptiles,' or any creature which God has made. But their idols are more horrid and deformed than any thing in the visible creation: and their whole worship is at once the highest affront to the divine, and disgrace to the human nature. On the contrary, the Indians of our southern provinces do not appear to have any worship at all. By the most diligent inquiry from those who had spent many years among them, I could never learn that any of the Indian nations, who border on Georgia and Carolina, have any public worship, of any kind: nor any private. For they have no idea of prayer. It is not without much difficulty that one can make any of them understand what is meant by prayer. And when they do, they cannot be made to apprehend, that God will answer or even hear it. They say, 'He that sitteth in heaven is too high, he is too far off to hear us'. In consequence of which they leave him to himself, and manage their affairs without him.³⁹¹

No longer partial to the Choctaws, he now acknowledges the Chickasaws as the exception before landing back in a long diatribe about religious failings and the familiar comments about the lack of familial nurture and care.

Only the Chickasaws, of all the Indian nations, are an exception to this. I believe, it will be found on the strictest inquiry, that the whole body of southern Indians, as they have no letters and no laws, so, properly speaking, have no religion at all. So that everyone does what he sees good: and if it appears wrong to his neighbour, he usually comes upon him unawares, and shoots or scalps him alive. They are likewise all (I could never find any exception) gluttons, drunkards, thieves, dissemblers, liars. They are 'implacable', never forgiving an injury or affront, or being satisfied with less than blood. They are 'unmerciful', killing all whom they take prisoners in war, with the most exquisite tortures. They are murderers of fathers, murderers of mothers, murderers of their own children: It being a common thing for a son to shoot his father or mother, because they are old and past labour, and for a woman either to procure abortion, or to throw her child into the next river, because she will go to the war with her husband. Indeed husbands, properly speaking, they have none; for any man leaves his wife, so called, at pleasure; who frequently in return, cuts the throats of all the children she has had by him.³⁹²

³⁹¹ Wesley, "The Doctrine of Original Sin: According to Scripture, Reason and Experience" (1757), *The Works of John Wesley*, Vol. 12: Doctrinal and Controversial Treatises I, ed. Randy L. Maddox (Nashville: Abingdon, 2012), 179-180.

³⁹² Wesley, "The Doctrine of Original Sin: According to Scripture, Reason and Experience" (1757), *The Works of John Wesley*, Vol. 12: Doctrinal and Controversial Treatises I, ed. Randy L. Maddox (Nashville: Abingdon, 2012), 180-181.

At this point he writes favorably about the spirituality of the Chickasaw peoples but quickly clarifies that even they suffer in the throes of the hold of original sin on their souls.

The Chicasaws alone seem to have some notion of an intercourse between man and a superior being. They speak much of their ‘Beloved Ones’; with whom, they say, they converse both day and night. But their ‘Beloved Ones’ teach them to eat and drink from morning to night, and in a manner from night to morning: for they rise at any hour of the night when they wake, and eat and drink as much as they can, and sleep again. Their Beloved Ones likewise expressly command them, to torture and burn all their prisoners. Their manner of doing it is this: They hold lighted canes to their arms and legs, and several parts of their body, for some time, and then for a while they take them away. They also stick burning pieces of wood in their flesh: in which condition they keep them from morning to evening. Such are at present the knowledge and virtue of the native heathens, over another fourth part of the known world.³⁹³

He uniquely combines his own experience with that of the “Frenchman” he met before moving onto his experience with Chigilly.

In what Heathens, in Europe, Asia, Africa, or America, is nature now endowed with this light and power? I have never found it in any Heathen yet: and I have conversed with many, of various nations. On the contrary, I have found, one and all, deeply ignorant of the very end of their existence. All of them have confirmed what an heathen meeko (or chief) told me many years ago. ‘He that sitteth in the heaven knoweth why he made man: but we know nothing.’³⁹⁴

However, Wesley also had moments of insight that present a more temperate view. In 1743 he wrote “An Earnest Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion” describing a meeting with someone who he caught denigrating American Indians and his response to them,

It is now some years since I was engaged unawares in a conversation with a strong reasoner, who at first urged the wickedness of the American Indians, as a

³⁹³ Wesley, “The Doctrine of Original Sin: According to Scripture, Reason and Experience” (1757), *The Works of John Wesley*, Vol. 12: Doctrinal and Controversial Treatises I, ed. Randy L. Maddox (Nashville: Abingdon, 2012), 181.

³⁹⁴ Wesley, “The Doctrine of Original Sin: Part II The Scriptural Method of Accounting for This Defended” (1757), *The Works of John Wesley*, Vol. 12: Doctrinal and Controversial Treatises I, ed. Randy L. Maddox (Nashville: Abingdon, 2012), 247.

bar to our hope of converting them to Christianity. But when I mentioned their temperance, justice, and veracity, (according to the accounts I had then received,) it was asked, “Why, if those Heathens are such men as these, what will they gain by being made Christians? What would they gain by being such Christians as we see everywhere round about us?” I could not deny they would lose, not gain, by such a Christianity as this. Upon which she added, “Why, what else do you mean by Christianity?” My plain answer was, “What do you apprehend to be more valuable than good sense, good nature, and good manners? All these are contained, and that in the highest degree, in what I mean by Christianity. Good sense (so called) is but a poor, dim shadow of what Christians call faith. Good nature is only a faint, distant resemblance of Christian charity. And good manners, if of the most finished kind that nature, assisted by art, can attain to, is but a dead picture of that holiness of conversation which is the image of God visibly expressed. All these, put together by the art of God, I call Christianity.” “Sir, if this be Christianity,” said my opponent in amaze, “I never saw a Christian in my life.”³⁹⁵

Granted Wesley qualifies his answer by including the aside that he was answering “according to the accounts I had then received.” However, to include this within a pamphlet indicates that he would still consider evangelizing the “American Indians” and thus viewed them as human.

Wesley and Beloved Speech

Wingeier-Rayo argues that by the 1770’s Wesley begins to enter a third phase of his development. He says, “although Wesley did not travel to another continent after returning from his missionary experience in Georgia, he did continue to read and sought new understandings.³⁹⁶ He first read David and John Brainerd’s work in 1749, but he revisited it and published an abridged version in 1768.³⁹⁷ Brainerd was a missionary appointed “to the Indians by the Scottish SPCK” and Wesley required “in the ‘Large

³⁹⁵ John Wesley, “An Earnest Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion” (1743), *The Works of John Wesley*, Vol. 11: The Appeals to Men of Reason and Religion and Certain Related Open Letters, ed. Gerald R. Cragg (Nashville: Abingdon, 1989), 54.

³⁹⁶ Wingeier-Rayo, “A Wesleyan Theology of Religions: A Re-Reading of John Wesley Through His Encounters with Peoples of Non-Christian Faiths,” 21.

³⁹⁷ See note 98 in John Wesley, December 4, 1749, *Journal and Diaries III (1743-54)*, ed. W. Reginald Ward and Richard P. Heitzenrater, vol. 20 of *The Bicentennial Edition of the Works of John Wesley*, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1991), 315.

Minutes' that 'every Preacher read carefully over the Life of David Brainerd. Let us be followers of him as he was of Christ, in absolute self-devotion, in total deadness to the world, and in fervent love to God and man. Let us but secure this point, and the world and devil must fall under our feet."³⁹⁸ John Wesley's devotion to Brainard may not have indicated a change of heart towards the Indians but it does indicate his appreciation for the mission to the Natives.

In view of this brief analysis, it is perhaps no wonder that Methodists have had a conflicted history of engagement with Native Americans. John Wesley vacillated in his views with the Creek, Choctaw, and Chickasaw from the beginning. Unfortunately attempts to lift John Wesley up as a bastion of hope for tolerance and cultural appreciation falls flat in too many cases. In some ways he was ahead of his time, but in others he was ingrained in his own cultural assumptions.

For Wesley reform was needed and that reformation could not take place in Europe. In the mind of the young missionary that reformation would take place in Georgia.³⁹⁹ This ultimately led to his disillusionment and bitterness that limited his ability to hear and kept him from pursuing further relationships with Indigenous peoples. Instead he spent the next 30 years perpetuating stereotypes and derogatory stories about peoples who might have transformed his life in positive ways.

When he allowed himself to engage in deep listening we observe his personal growth and a change in his worldview. Such was his experience with the Chickasaw men

³⁹⁸ See note 98 in John Wesley, December 4, 1749, *Journal and Diaries III (1743-54)*, ed. W. Reginald Ward and Richard P. Heitzenrater, vol. 20 of *The Bicentennial Edition of the Works of John Wesley*, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1991), 315.

³⁹⁹ Owens, "Restoring Faith and Practice?" 31.

he met. He may not have completely embraced what they said, but that moment stayed with him throughout his life and continued to work upon his consciousness.

As John Wesley faced the end of his life he still spoke of the “Indians.” He wrote to Francis Asbury November 25, 1787.

one thing has often given me concern ... the progeny of Shem [Indians] seem to be quite forgotten. How few of these have seen the light of the glory of God since the English first settled among them! And now scarce one in fifty among whom we settled, perhaps scarce one in an hundred of them are left alive? Does it not seem as if God had designated all the Indian nations not for reformation, but destruction? How many millions of them have already died in their sins! Will neither God nor man have compassion upon these outcasts of men? Undoubtedly with man it is impossible to help them. But is it too hard for God? ... Pray ye likewise the Lord of the harvest, and he will send out more labourers[sic] into His harvest ...”⁴⁰⁰

Wesley almost plaintively pleads with Asbury to remember these people who continue to prick at his heart. His biblical reference to the “progeny of Shem” holds particular interest because it will appear at various times throughout the next century as Methodist missionaries theologically and Biblically reflect on their mission. His recognition of the genocide that has taken place is also telling. Unfortunately, he interprets it theologically instead of ethically, and his regret seems to be more heavily leaning toward their loss of their salvation rather than the loss of their lives. This attitude continues throughout the 19th century and becomes the justification for intertwining government policy and ideologies leading to detrimental ecclesial decisions. The next chapter will provide an overview of the continued relationship of Methodist missionaries and Native Peoples as the colonies expand both geographically and ideologically.

⁴⁰⁰ see note †Wade Crawford Barclay, *Early American Methodism, 1769-1844, Missionary Motivation and Expansion, Volume One* (New York: The Board and Missions and Church Extension of the Methodist Church, 1949), 201.

Chapter III

Scriptural Holiness Meets Manifest Destiny

*Christianity alone has the secret of life which carry all the motives and conditions of a true and permanent civilization.*⁴⁰¹

Similar to John Wesley's experiences, there were instances when Methodist missionaries and pastors began to forge meaningful relationships with Native peoples but also occasions when their own worldview precluded them from creating community. Sometimes non-Native ignorance and inability to listen hindered the ministry. At other times euro-christian white settler/immigrant worldviews led to willful neglect, abuse, and murder perpetuated the legacy of the Doctrine of Discovery.

As this chapter delves into Methodist history it does so in order to reveal both historical patterns as well as intersections of colonialism, racism, and gender roles. It will not only inquire into Methodist history but also interrogate the history of the North American continent. Because of the limited nature of a dissertation, this project will narrow its focus to a chronological study of particular people and events which make up a very small portion of the history of the United States, The United Methodist Church, and its predecessor denominations. It will also include the history of the colonies of France and Spain with its primary focus on the British colonies as they shift to the governance of the United States. We will look at some seminal decisions by the United States government as well as the churches. This survey and analysis will primarily focus on the territory and nations found within the OIMC and its predecessors. The Choctaw,

⁴⁰¹ Francis E. Leupp, *In Red Man's Land: A Study of the American Indian* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1914), 148.

MVSOKE, and Cherokee as well as the Kiowa Nations will be presented because these are the focus of this dissertation.

Early Ministry Efforts with Native Americans

After John Wesley's sojourn in the colony of Georgia, King George III of England signed a Proclamation of 1763 which prohibited any English settlement west of the Appalachian Mountains and required settlers in those regions to return east in an attempt to ease tensions with Native Americans.⁴⁰² By the time Asbury had been appointed to the colonies in 1771 and Wesley wrote to him on November 25, 1787 concerning the "progeny of Shem," this decree was defunct and the empire which proclaimed it could no longer enforce it.⁴⁰³

Undoubtedly sensing the importance of securing their borders, one of the first acts of the Continental Congress on July 12, 1775, created three departments of Indian Affairs in order to "preserve peace and friendship" and to prevent the Indigenous Nations taking part in the war with Britain.⁴⁰⁴ On September 17, 1787, the same year as Wesley's letter to Asbury, the members of the Constitutional Convention signed the United States Constitution. Article 1, Section 8 states, "The Congress shall have Power to . . . regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States, and with the Indian tribes..."⁴⁰⁵ This clause is generally seen as the principal basis for the United States government's broad power over Native Americans. By 1789 the Constitution is ratified.

⁴⁰² For an excerpt see Virgil J. Vogel, *This Country Was Ours; A Documentary History of the American Indian* (New York: Harper & Row, 1972), 55.

⁴⁰³ See previous chapter and see note †Wade Crawford Barclay, *Early American Methodism, 1769-1844, Missionary Motivation and Expansion, Volume One* (New York: The Board and Missions and Church Extension of the Methodist Church, 1949), 201.

⁴⁰⁴ Bureau of Indian Affairs, *U.S. Office of Indian Affairs Annual Reports of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs 1824-1831*, with a foreword by Dee Brown and an Introduction by John M. Carroll, vol. I, (New York: AMS Press, INC., 1976), xiii.

⁴⁰⁵ Vogel, *This Country Was Ours; A Documentary History of the American Indian*, 74.

In August 1789, Indian affairs are brought under the jurisdiction of the War Department. The Federal government of the United States appointed Indian agents as liaisons to the Indigenous nations and empowered these agents to negotiate treaties and trade agreements.

Unlike John Wesley, who was interested in the political negotiations between the crown and the Yamacraw and Creek Nations, there are few entries in Asbury's published journals and letters referring to missionary engagement with Native Americans and even less interest in political ramifications.⁴⁰⁶ On March 5, 1806 after passing through Georgetown and Alexandria he reflects, "...company does not amuse, congress does not interest me, I am a man of another world in mind and calling: I am Christ's; and for the service of his church."⁴⁰⁷

Concerning missions, he wrote in his journal on April 3, 1789, "I wish to send an extra preacher to the Waxsaws, to preach to the Catabaw Indians: they have settled amongst the whites on a tract of country twelve miles square."⁴⁰⁸ And later his July 25, 1789 journal notes included mention of the Seneca nation.

We rode through a heavy rain to Yohogany, to brother Moore's alive to God; and there are openings in many places. I wrote a letter to Cornplanter, chief of the Seneca nation of Indians. I hope

⁴⁰⁶ For more information on the political aspects of the Wesley brother's ministry and trade agreement negotiations see Heather Ann Clements and Cassandra Shea Sequivel. "John Wesley, First peoples of North America, and Christian perfection." *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 46, no. 2 (September 2011). and Julie Anne Sweet, "Charles Wesley: Georgia's First Secretary for Indian Affairs," *Methodist History* Volume L, no.4, (July 2012).

⁴⁰⁷ Francis Asbury, *The Journal of the Rev. Francis Asbury, Bishop of The Methodist Episcopal Church*, vol. III, *From January 1, 1801 to December 7, 1815* (New York: Lane & Scott, 1852), 217. Asbury, Francis. *Journal of Rev. Francis Asbury: Bishop of The Methodist Episcopal Church*. Vol. II, *From January 1, 1787 To December 31, 1800*. New York: New York: Lane & Scott, 1852.

⁴⁰⁸ Francis Asbury, *The Journal of the Rev. Francis Asbury, Bishop of The Methodist Episcopal Church*, vol. II, *From January 1, 1787 To December 31, 1800* (New York: Lane & Scott, 1852), 49.

God will shortly visit Cornplanter, chief of a tribe of Seneca Indians living on the upper Allegheny River, communicated with the Methodist bishops desiring that ministers be sent to his people.⁴⁰⁹

Nevertheless, historian Wade Barclay says, “neither Coke nor Asbury felt deeply the obligation to organize systematic missionary work among Indians.”⁴¹⁰ He cites Coke’s journal entry as typical, “We have in this state [North Carolina] got up to the Cherokee Indians, who are in general a peaceable people. I trust the grace of God will in time get into some of their hearts.”⁴¹¹ Barclay goes on to say,

It cannot be said that the missionary zeal of the earliest Methodist pioneers expressed itself in extensive efforts for the conversion of the Indians. Wherever their labors extended they must have come in contact with them but evidence is lacking that, at any time during the closing years of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth, organized effort was made by Methodists for their evangelization.⁴¹²

For the most part Asbury’s entries in his journals relate to incidences of “savage” Indians who massacred white settlers or took them captive. In fact, near the close of his life, unlike Wesley, Asbury became even more solidified in his deleterious opinions. On September 26, 1813 he laments that “the Creek nation have taken up the hatchet” and as a result they will suffer the white vengeance “for their barbarian warfare on unoffending women and children[,]” praying that God will save them from the “rage of the

⁴⁰⁹ Francis Asbury, *The Journal of the Rev. Francis Asbury, Bishop of The Methodist Episcopal Church*, vol. II, From January 1, 1787 To December 31, 1800 (New York: Lane & Scott, 1852), 57.

⁴¹⁰ Wade Crawford Barclay, *Early American Methodism, 1769-1844, Missionary Motivation and Expansion, Volume One* (New York: The Board and Missions and Church Extension of the Methodist Church, 1949), 200.

⁴¹¹ Wade Crawford Barclay, *Early American Methodism, 1769-1844, Missionary Motivation and Expansion, Volume One* (New York: The Board and Missions and Church Extension of the Methodist Church, 1949), 201-202.

⁴¹² Wade Crawford Barclay, *Early American Methodism, 1769-1844, Missionary Motivation and Expansion, Volume One* (New York: The Board and Missions and Church Extension of the Methodist Church, 1949), 201-202.

heathen.”⁴¹³ This is only one of a few times he mentions the nations that are of interest to this dissertation.

Curiously, Asbury also wishes to emulate David Brainerd, a famous missionary to Native Americans in New England. He read Brainerd’s writings quite a few times and on June 26, 1782 Asbury found him “so Methodistical.”⁴¹⁴ Apparently Asbury turns to Brainerd when he feels discouraged in his ministry and seeks comfort.⁴¹⁵ While he appreciated the man he does not share the same passion and regard for the peoples with whom Brainerd ministered. In the same entry on the 26th, he states, “O how many thousands of poor souls have we to seek out in the wilds of America, who are but one remove[sic] from the Indians in the comforts of civilized society, and considering that they have the Bible in their hands, comparatively worse in their morals than the savages themselves...”⁴¹⁶

By the time of Asbury’s death in 1816 the landscape was literally changing. The Louisiana Purchase transferred the “euro-christian legal preemptory right of (christian) Discovery,” of what the French called the Louisiana territory, from France to the United States.⁴¹⁷ This permission provided the “Corps of Discovery,” led by Lewis and Clarke, access to more land for mapping and measuring with an eye towards settlement.

⁴¹³ Francis Asbury, *The Journal of the Rev. Francis Asbury, Bishop of The Methodist Episcopal Church*, vol. III, *From January 1, 1801 to December 7, 1815* (New York: Lane & Scott, 1852), 423.

⁴¹⁴ See Francis Asbury, *The Journal of the Rev. Francis Asbury, Bishop of The Methodist Episcopal Church*, vol. I, *From August 7, 1771 To December 31, 1786* (New York: Lane & Scott, 1852), 193, 297, 447-448. And Francis Asbury, *The Journal of the Rev. Francis Asbury, Bishop of The Methodist Episcopal Church*, vol. III, *From January 1, 1801 to December 7, 1815* (New York: Lane & Scott, 1852), 208.

⁴¹⁵ See note 52 Christopher M. B. Allison, “The Methodist Edwards John Wesley’s Abridgement of the Selected Works of Jonathan Edwards,” *Methodist History* 50, no. 3 (April 2012): 155.

⁴¹⁶ See Francis Asbury, *The Journal of the Rev. Francis Asbury, Bishop of The Methodist Episcopal Church*, vol. I, *From August 7, 1771 To December 31, 1786* (New York: Lane & Scott, 1852), 448.

⁴¹⁷ Tinker, “Rites of Discovery: St. Junipero, Lewis and Clark,” 97.

Additionally, Jefferson's Indian policy set the tone for the strategy followed by the United States of America into the 19th century. In 1802 Jefferson addressed the Miami, Potawatomi, and Wea Nations explaining the benefits of farming and manufactured goods, which the United States would provide.⁴¹⁸ On January 18, 1803 he addressed the United States Congress with the same ideas,

In order to counteract [their refusal to sell their lands] which the rapid increase of our numbers will call for, two measures are deemed expedient. First, to encourage them to abandon hunting, to apply to the raising of stock, to agriculture... and thereby prove to themselves that less land and labor will maintain them in this better than in their former mode of living. ... Secondly, to multiply trading houses among them, and place within their reach those things which will contribute more to their domestic comfort than the possession of extensive but uncultivated wilds... in bringing together their land and our sentiments, and in preparing them ultimately to participate in the benefits of our government, I trust and believe we are acting for their greatest good.⁴¹⁹

To someone steeped in white settler/immigrant culture Jefferson's plans may sound reasonable. However, even a cursory look at his policy reveals the dominant culture's assumptions about the superiority of a capitalistic system and the commodification of the land. Disregarding the cultural and religious value of the land for Indigenous peoples, Jefferson presents an occupier's perspective; he is unable or unwilling to recognize their sovereign right to determine how best to live with the land. Furthermore, Jefferson's view also assumes that encouraging them to abandon hunting is for their greatest good. Historian Bruce David Forbes gives a plausible explanation for the insistence by lawmakers and missionaries to convert Native men to farmers. He

⁴¹⁸ Vogel, *This Country Was Ours; A Documentary History of the American Indian*, 82.

⁴¹⁹ Vogel, 83.

explains how the protestant work ethic caused missionaries to view “hunting as sport, while farming was properly industrious labor.”⁴²⁰

These themes would be picked up by christians and inculcated with their theological worldview and their evangelistic messages throughout the 19th century and into the next. McLoughlin, says, “Christianity, in its American form, was based on a competitive, materialistic, aggressive ethic completely at odds with everything in the corporate, communal religion of the Indians.”⁴²¹ These assumptions also undercut community values and disrupted national sovereignty rights to determine gender roles. McLoughlin explains, “the Christian way of life totally disrupted the familial structure and the prescribed roles of male and female in Indian life. Christians scorned the communal farms in which women and children cultivated the fields while the men were hunters and warriors.”⁴²² Women’s relationship to the land and the community was eroded, particularly for the matriarchal southeastern tribes where women traditionally held leadership positions and had influence in political matters.

The influence of the Doctrine of Discovery on the sovereignty of Indigenous nations will become increasingly codified in the 19th century jurisprudence of the United States and by midcentury it will become entangled with the doctrine of Manifest Destiny. For instance, in 1817 the United States Congress passed the “General Crimes Act,” which

⁴²⁰ Bruce David Forbes, “Methodist Mission Among the Dakotas: A Case Study of Difficulties,” in *Rethinking Methodist History A Bicentennial Historical Consultation*, ed. Russell E. Richey and Kenneth E. Rowe (Nashville: Kingswood Books, 1985), 54.

⁴²¹ William G. McLoughlin, *The Cherokees and Christianity, 1794-1870: Essays on Acculturation and Cultural Persistence*, ed. Walter H. Conser (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1994), 16.

⁴²² McLoughlin, *The Cherokees and Christianity, 1794-1870: Essays on Acculturation and Cultural Persistence*, 16.

extended the federal jurisdiction of criminal laws into Indian country.⁴²³ As a result, United States Federal crimes committed by non-Natives on Native American territories would be prosecuted exclusively by The United States courts.

Amid all this change Methodists continued to equivocate in regards to mission with Indigenous peoples. Bruce David Forbes argues that part of the reason lies in the Methodist system which they regarded as “...missionary in character” due to the mobility of the circuit riders.⁴²⁴ Additionally, as the country grew, Methodism grew and the church allied itself more closely with the United States government. The Methodist Episcopal Church (MEC) was noticeably silent on the disappearing sovereignty rights. Methodist historian Frederick A. Norwood explains that, “Methodist preachers took a very paternalistic attitude toward Indians as sometimes misguided children ... which was merged with ignorance of the real issues in Indian affairs.”⁴²⁵ The church’s attitude toward mission changed when the Civilization Act passed on March 3, 1819. The Act provided money for the education of Native Americans to stimulate the “civilization of the Indians.”⁴²⁶ Serendipitously, the MEC just so happened to organize the Methodist Missionary Society at the same time, “to assist the Annual Conferences more effectually to extend their missionary labors.”⁴²⁷

⁴²³ This is the beginning of eroding sovereignty which will result in rulings that perpetuate violence against women such as the *Oliphant* decision. For more information see, *Oliphant v. Suquamish Tribe*, 435 U. S. 191 (1978).

⁴²⁴ Forbes, “John Jasper Methvin: Methodist ‘Missionary to the Western Tribes’ (Oklahoma),” 66.

⁴²⁵ Frederick A. Norwood. "The Invisible American - Methodism and the Indian," *Methodist History* 8, no. 2 (January 1970): 5-6.

⁴²⁶ Nathan Bangs, *An Authentic History of the Missions Under the Care of the Missionary Society of The Methodist Episcopal Church*, (New York: J. Emory and B. Waugh, 1832), 42.

⁴²⁷ Susan E. Warrick, “She Diligently Followed Every Good Work”: Mary Mason and the New York Female Missionary Society.” *Methodist History* 34, no. 4 (July 1996): 229.

Methodist Missions

As The Methodist Episcopal Church become more intentional with its mission efforts, John Wesley's words hauntingly reverberate across the decades, "I have not as yet found or heard of any Indians on the continent of America who had the least desire of being instructed."⁴²⁸ While his journal entry referred to his own failed mission, it also pointed to the inherent problem with a pedagogy that would be perpetuated by his spiritual progeny in the United States. James B. Finley one of the first Methodist missionaries to the Wyandots, wrote, "The doctrine always taught, and the principle acted upon, were, that they must be first civilized before they can be Christianized."⁴²⁹ John H. Pitezel, an Amer-european Methodist missionary, acknowledged, "[i]n the school and in the field, as well as in the kitchen, our aim was to teach the Indian to live like white people."⁴³⁰ Norman James Williamson, historian and anthropologist, elaborates further, "For the missionary, Christian was synonymous with white. A Christian Indian was to be a white Indian. The missionaries then compounded the error by attempting to mould that potential white Indian into their image of a good white man, a thing [the missionaries] were incapable of achieving in their own society."⁴³¹

In 1820 William Ryland, Chairman of the Mission Society of the MEC, appealed to the General Conference to begin mission efforts saying, "In a particular manner the

⁴²⁸ John Wesley, October the 7th, 1737, *Journal and Diaries I (1735-1738)*, ed. W. Reginald Ward and Richard P. Heitzenrater, vol. 18 of *The Bicentennial Edition of the Works of John Wesley* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1988), 18:195.

⁴²⁹ James B. Finley, *Life Among the Indians: Personal Reminiscences and Historical Incidents Illustrative Of Indian Life And Character*, ed. Rev. D. W. Clark, D. D. (Cincinnati: The Methodist Book Concern, 1860), 277.

⁴³⁰ John H. Pitezel, *Lights and Shades of Missionary Life: Containing Travels, Sketches, Incidents, and Missionary Efforts, During Nine Years Spent in the Region of Lake Superior* (Western Book Concern, 1857), 57.

⁴³¹ Norman James Williamson, "Abishabis the Cree," *Studies in Religion* 9, no. 2 (June 1, 1980): 224.

Committee solicit the attention of the Missionary Society Conference of the MEC to the condition of the Aborigines of our country, the Indian tribes. American Christians are certainly under peculiar obligations to impart to them the blessings of civilization and Christian light.”⁴³² Citing the ten thousand dollars annually provided by the United States government for the building of schools, he describes the mission field as “whitening to the harvest.”⁴³³ He decries the fact that funds are already flowing to other denominations.

Using the unofficial Methodist mission to the Wyandot Nation as an example, he presents the argument that the Wyandot mission is going strong and others could be started for the “brothers of the forest.”⁴³⁴ Ryland suggests the money be used for the boys to study agriculture and the mechanic arts which are “suited to the condition of the Indians” and that they will teach the girls, “spinning, weaving, and sewing.”⁴³⁵ The mission will begin with “a view to the ulterior object of Christian instruction, both to the youth and the adult” which will be accomplished best “by means of a common language by the influence, which a teacher will have over the youth; and by the free; access which will be gained, through them, to their parents, and friends.”⁴³⁶

Ryland seeks to stir the hearts of the gathered preachers saying, “Indeed, many of the Indians themselves, bordering on our improved settlements, are roused to a sense of their deplorable condition. With outstretched arms they cry to us, and say, ‘Come and help us!’ [We], [y]our committee believe it a call of Providence, which should be

⁴³² Bangs, *An Authentic History of the Missions Under the Care of the Missionary Society of The Methodist Episcopal Church*, 41.

⁴³³ Bangs, 37.

⁴³⁴ Bangs, 41.

⁴³⁵ Bangs, 42.

⁴³⁶ Bangs, 42.

obeyed.”⁴³⁷ Ryland’s clarion call coincides with a growing concern by Methodist leaders concerning resources.. Methodist Historian David Hempton in *Methodism: Empire of the Spirit*, points out that “as with the empires that sheltered them, the Methodist missionary enterprise was a complex mixture of idealism, competition, self-interest, and control.”⁴³⁸ “Nathan Bangs stated that the American society was organized to impose formal ecclesiastical control over missions, to improve fundraising, to carve out a separate denominational niche by stopping money given by Methodists from going to their rivals, to seize new opportunities, and to spread the ideals of scriptural holiness to the entire world.”⁴³⁹

Eager to begin, Ryland plans to evangelize the parents through the children. He asserts that the civilization of the Indians lies in the indoctrination of white settler cultural norms in their children. Reminiscent of Jefferson’s comments in 1803, Ryland assumes that farming and a trade are best use of a young Indian boy’s intellect and strength and that homemaking skills such as sewing will make little civilized ladies out of the girls.

David Hempton says this is part of the reason Methodist missions faltered amongst Native Americans.

Right from the start the Methodist mission was defined in terms of bringing the blessings of “civil and domestic economy” to the native population. Peddling the superiority of a settled farming economy over a nomadic hunting tradition, the Methodists found it difficult to make connections with the radically different Native American culture. With little appreciation of the customs, ceremonials, and symbols of their evangelistic targets, the Methodists relied on their traditional

⁴³⁷ Bangs, 43.

⁴³⁸ David Hempton, *Methodism: Empire of the Spirit*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 159.

⁴³⁹ Hempton, *Methodism: Empire of the Spirit*, 159.

methods but could not convert a sufficiently critical mass to enable the mission to proceed dynamically with indigenous leaders, language, and methods.⁴⁴⁰

Most disturbing, but not surprising, is Ryland's statement about language.

Repeatedly non-Native Methodist missionaries have the expectation that the Native Americans they work with will learn the "common language" of the colonizer. While it appears that some white missionaries tried to learn the languages of the people they were ministering with, this was not the norm. Pitezel, said, "[s]ome attention was paid to the Indian language, sufficient for me to read with readiness, their hymns and scriptures, translated into the Ojibwe, so that the Indians could understand."⁴⁴¹ However, "[a]fter a short time the services of an interpreter were dispensed with in this work. Most of what was acquired of the language, otherwise of practical benefit, was in colloquial intercourse."⁴⁴²

Hempton critiques the missionaries saying,

The language problem was particularly formidable, for the Methodists so much relied on preaching, teaching, and reading that the lack of linguistically qualified personnel and materials in native languages was a serious barrier to progress. Perhaps even more profoundly, the Methodists, no doubt sharing the general chauvinism of the age, were unwilling to commit sufficient time and resources to a mission that seemed to be declining in worth and importance throughout the nineteenth century. With a few notable exceptions, most Methodist missionaries to the Native Americans were itinerant preachers who served for relatively short periods of time, never mastered the native language, and placed a low value on the culture to which they were assigned.⁴⁴³

The expectation that non-Native missionaries would at least try to learn the Native languages is reasonable. These are not immigrant populations, these are the original

⁴⁴⁰ Hempton, 155-156.

⁴⁴¹ John H. Pitezel, *Lights and Shades of Missionary Life: Containing Travels, Sketches, Incidents, and Missionary Efforts, During Nine Years Spent in the Region of Lake Superior* (Western Book Concern, 1857), 58.

⁴⁴² Pitezel, *Lights and Shades of Missionary Life: Containing Travels, Sketches, Incidents, and Missionary Efforts, During Nine Years Spent in the Region of Lake Superior*, 58.

⁴⁴³ Hempton, *Methodism: Empire of the Spirit*, 156.

inhabitants of the land and from a Native perspective the Methodist missionaries are visitors in their countries.⁴⁴⁴ One can harken back to Ingham and Brainerd, as well as many Moravians and some Roman Catholics for missionaries who were known for learning the language of the peoples with whom they worked. Nonetheless Ryland assumed that the most efficient means of civilizing people will be through a “common language” which will be English.

Ryland finishes by painting a dubious picture of Native peoples “bordering on our improved settlements,” “roused to a sense of their deplorable condition,” “crying out for salvation, with outstretched arms.” Echoing the Doctrine of Discovery and *terra nullius*, his view perpetuates the supremacist white cultural norm concerning property and what constitutes improvement.

Ryland’s words struck a chord. According to Hempton, the success of the Wyandot mission awakened the church to the possibility of mission societies.⁴⁴⁵ John Stewart worked unofficially with the Wyandot Nation since 1814. Ryland used Stewart’s success to argue for further mission efforts. What Ryland did not consider in his argument was John Stewart’s mission methodology. An examination of the Wyandot mission provides some insights for Methodist work with other nations.

To begin, Stewart was half African American and half Native American and he made use of his identity to form lasting relationships.⁴⁴⁶ The story of Stewart’s meeting with the Wyandot Nation is told by Superintendent Finley and written by Nathan Bangs.

⁴⁴⁴ Notably, two boards already established in the Cherokee Nation were named, “The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions” and the “United Foreign Missionary Society,” Bangs, *An Authentic History of the Missions Under the Care of the Missionary Society of The Methodist Episcopal Church*, 42-43.

⁴⁴⁵ Hempton, *Methodism: Empire of the Spirit*, 158.

⁴⁴⁶ Hempton, 155.

Their description conveys some white settler/immigrant assumptions which may or may not reflect Stewart's thoughts. However, they also describe some interesting behaviors. At his first introduction Stewart sat amongst the Wyandots as they danced and he sang.⁴⁴⁷ The next day he asked permission to share his faith and proceeded to preach only after he was given permission to speak.⁴⁴⁸ When only one woman showed up to meet with him he showed respect and spoke with her.⁴⁴⁹ We do not know if she was an elder but she was described as "old" and the next day she was joined by an "old" man.⁴⁵⁰ The following days he met with the people in their homes visiting from cabin to cabin spending time talking and singing.⁴⁵¹ Stewart used interpreters but he also spent a great deal of time with the Wyandot people always quietly watching when they were dancing or performing ritual. Eventually he was brought for questioning before a council and apparently his answers met with their approval.⁴⁵²

According to Bangs, Stewart was replaced due to his health. However, Homer Noley tells us that in fact the mission to the Wyandots, which is the pride and joy of the Methodist conference, substituted white leaders for the black leaders who built the mission from nothing and kept Stewart on in an assistant capacity.⁴⁵³ Nevertheless the mission continued and soon they built a school.

The Wyandot mission points to the importance of the relationships that were built between the Wyandot council leadership, the missionaries, and Conference

⁴⁴⁷ Bangs, *An Authentic History of the Missions Under the Care of the Missionary Society of The Methodist Episcopal Church*, 50.

⁴⁴⁸ Bangs, 52.

⁴⁴⁹ Bangs, 52.

⁴⁵⁰ Bangs, 52.

⁴⁵¹ Bangs, 52.

⁴⁵² Bangs, 56.

⁴⁵³ Noley, *First White Frost: Native Americans and United Methodism*, 88-92.

Superintendent, James B. Finley. In this case it appears that John Stewart, who was both part Native American and lived with the Wyandots for a prolonged period, may have been more sensitive to the culture than some of the other missionaries. In 1820 a council consisting of “twelve chiefs and five queens, so called, female counsellors” thanked the other missionaries for coming and requested that “brother Stewart... stay among us and help us....”⁴⁵⁴ Finley, on the other hand is clearly in alignment with the United States government’s civilizing policies when he states matter-of-factly, “A man must be Christianized, or he can never be civilized. He will always be a savage till the grace of God makes his heart better, and then he will soon become civil and a good citizen.”⁴⁵⁵ Additionally, motivation may have made a difference because Stewart was an exhorter in the MEC who was led by the Spirit to the Wyandot people and Finley was sent by the conference.⁴⁵⁶ The importance of long term relationships and living amongst the people begins to emerge from the stories of missionaries such as John Stewart. His demeanor and the respect he pays to the “old” man and woman is also notable.

As the 19th century progresses the commitment to build trust between Indigenous peoples and non-Native missionaries, especially between Natives and white settler/immigrant missionaries, will become increasingly important. For members of the dominant settler culture to remain committed to Native Americans will also require a great deal of courage and character, as missionaries to the Cherokee Nation discovered.

⁴⁵⁴ Bangs, *An Authentic History of the Missions Under the Care of the Missionary Society of The Methodist Episcopal Church*, 69.

⁴⁵⁵ James B. Finley, *Life Among the Indians: Personal Reminiscences and Historical Incidents Illustrative Of Indian Life And Character*, ed. Rev. D. W. Clark, D. D. (Cincinnati: The Methodist Book Concern, 1860), 277.

⁴⁵⁶ Wade Crawford Barclay, *History of Methodist Missions: Early American Methodism, 1769-1844, Missionary Motivation and Expansion, Volume One*, (New York: The Board and Missions and Church Extension of the Methodist Church, 1949), 204.

White settler/immigrants categorized the Cherokee Nation as one of the Five Civilized Tribes. These also included the Creeks [MVSKOKE], Choctaws, Chickasaws, and Seminoles. As stated in chapter one, they were considered “civilized” because they not only adopted government structures similar to the United States, but they adopted agricultural techniques, white cultural norms, and many converted to Christianity. Despite their civilizing efforts they became targets for relocation policies as the settlers expanded westward.

The pressure on Nations such as the Cherokee, Creek [MVSKOKE], Choctaw, Chickasaw, and Seminole, to relocate further west from white settlements coincided with the missionary efforts which meant that the government began to undermine the very church missions they had previously supported. Methodist missionaries like William Capers worked with the Creek [MVSKOKE] Nation in Georgia, eastern Alabama, and part of the South Carolina Conference. He built relationships and schools, such as the Asbury Manual Labor School at Fort Mitchell. But starting in the 1820s a series of cases began to be heard in the United States Supreme Court which would seize those lands for the growing swell of white settlers. These heartbreaking legal cases found Methodist ministers on both sides of the debate about National Sovereignty.

One landmark decision came in 1823 when the Johnson v. M’Intosh Supreme Court ruling was handed down. Chief Justice John Marshall’s opinion in the unanimous decision held that “the monarchs of Europe ... were justified in assuming ‘ultimate dominion’ over newly ‘discovered’ lands of the continent because the Indians would be

adequately compensated with European civilization and Christianity.”⁴⁵⁷ This ruling not provided an excuse for confiscating land, but by adding the “discovery” phrase, he formally inducted the Doctrine of Discovery into U.S. law. Marshall further observed that the United States upon winning independence in 1776 became a successor nation to the right of land “discovery” and acquired the power of “dominion” from Great Britain. This, regardless of the present state of the religious affiliation of Indigenous peoples, their previous state as heathens at the time of initial colonial contact determined their sovereign right to the land.

Legal scholar, Steven T. Newcomb in *Pagans in the Promised Land*, assures us that this religious insertion into the court decision concretized the relationship between the Doctrine of Discovery, United States secular law, and the church.⁴⁵⁸ “Associate Justice Joseph Story, who was on the Supreme Court at the time of the Johnson ruling, provided further insight into the religious nature and historical background of Marshall’s concept of ‘discovery,’” when he published an explanation afterwards discussing the discovery principle “... in terms of the pope and in terms of the religious categorization of American Indians as ‘heathens.’”⁴⁵⁹

The Johnson v. M’Intosh case involved the validity of land sold by tribal chiefs to private persons in 1773 and 1775. The Court held that that Indian tribes had no power to grant lands to anyone other than the federal government of the United States. The United States, in turn, held title to all Indian lands based upon the belief that initial “discovery”

⁴⁵⁷ Newcomb, *Pagans in the Promised Land: Decoding the Doctrine of Christian Discovery*, 78-79.

⁴⁵⁸ See concluding chapter in Newcomb, 125ff.

⁴⁵⁹ Newcomb, 81-82.

of lands gave title to the government responsible for the discovery. Thus, Indian "...rights to complete sovereignty, as independent nations, were necessarily diminished, and their power to dispose of the soil, at their own will, to whomsoever they pleased, was denied by the original fundamental principle, that discovery gave exclusive title to those who made it."⁴⁶⁰

Essentially *Johnson v. M'Intosh* says Indians have only a right of occupancy and even that can be abolished. Marshall's decision had far reaching effects because it restrained sovereignty rights for Native peoples regarding the use and ownership of their lands and it also characterized Indigenous peoples, as inferior. Justice Joseph Story metaphorically described the Indians as being "bound to yield to the superior genius of Europe."⁴⁶¹ Therefore, "Indians were obligated, bound, or destined to eventually surrender or relinquish themselves to the physical control of the Europeans and to hand over the possession of their lands to them as well."⁴⁶² Furthermore, Chief Justice Marshall concretized the deleterious narrative of Indigenous peoples as

fierce savages... whose occupation was war, and whose subsistence was drawn chiefly from the forest. To leave them in possession of their country, was to leave the country a wilderness; to govern them as a distinct people, was impossible, because they were as brave and high spirited as they were fierce, and were ready to repel by arms every attempt on their independence. What was the inevitable consequence of this state of things? The Europeans were under the necessity either of abandoning the country, and relinquishing their pompous claims to it, or of enforcing those claims by the sword, and by the adoption of principles adapted to the condition of a people with whom it was impossible to mix, and who could not be governed as a distinct society, or of remaining in their

⁴⁶⁰ For excerpts and supporting and dissenting arguments see Vogel, *This Country Was Ours; A Documentary History of the American Indian*, 110-132.

⁴⁶¹ Newcomb, *Pagans in the Promised Land: Decoding the Doctrine of Christian Discovery*, 10.

⁴⁶² Newcomb, 10.

neighborhood, and exposing themselves and their families to the perpetual hazard of being massacred.⁴⁶³

His dehumanizing imagery entered United States law in perpetuity. He utilized the term heathen which “negate[d] (deny the existence, truth, or fact of) the original free and independent existence of American Indian nations and peoples on the basis of a claim that Christian europeans had ‘discovered’ the North American continent.”⁴⁶⁴ Also, by legally declaring a whole Nation to be heathens, Marshall in effect denies their humanity. Therefore, any honorable rules of engagement are unnecessary as the immediate consequences show. In 1829 a large exodus of the Creek Nation took place due to vigilantes who crossed into Georgia shooting “them as if though they were deer” and killing them as if they were “many wild Hogs.”⁴⁶⁵ Indians were not viewed as human beings; they had become target practice.

Around the same time, Methodist itinerant preacher, Richard Neely of Tennessee, literally circled the Cherokee border as it abutted the territory boundary of his circuit and in 1822 he began to preach among them.⁴⁶⁶ McLoughlin says, “The Methodist circuit riders, most of them young and themselves of little education, proved popular among the Cherokees.”⁴⁶⁷ Three of them married Cherokee women and became members of the Nation. In addition, as was the usual custom, preachers stayed in the homes of Cherokee parishioners so they shared meals and sleeping quarters. McLoughlin also points out that

⁴⁶³ Newcomb, 98-99.

⁴⁶⁴ Newcomb, 103.

⁴⁶⁵ Christopher D. Haveman, *Rivers of Sand: Creek Indian Emigration, Relocation, and Ethnic Cleansing in the American South* (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 2016), 74.

⁴⁶⁶ Bruce David Forbes, “‘And Obey God Etc.’: Methodism and American Indians,” in *Perspectives on American Methodism: Interpretive Essays*, ed. Russell E. Richey, Kenneth E. Rowe, and Jean Miller Schmidt (Nashville: Kingswood Books, 1993), 213.

⁴⁶⁷ McLoughlin, *The Cherokees and Christianity, 1794-1870: Essays on Acculturation and Cultural Persistence*, 29.

their theological stress on grace, forgiveness, and encouragement to “backsliders” along with their “spirited camp meetings,” made their message attractive.⁴⁶⁸ But their commitment to building relationships and preaching are not the only reasons they are popular. They also joined with Cherokee leaders to protest the United States President’s removal policy.⁴⁶⁹

In 1827 the Cherokee Nation adopted a Constitution and in 1828 Cherokee leaders, Elias Boudinot and Sequoyah, began publishing a newspaper known as the Cherokee Phoenix. Unfortunately, adopting white settler/immigrant cultural ways was not enough. In December 1828, the Georgia Legislature declared all Cherokee lands to be liquidated and planned to open the territory for white settlement. Support from the United States federal government came in 1829 with Andrew Jackson’s inauguration. His administration promptly passed the Indian Removal Act on May 28th, 1830.

The Methodist Church was divided on the removal policies. Several missionaries, including two Methodists, were arrested and placed in chains by the United States government as punishment for protesting the Indian Removal Act.⁴⁷⁰ Instead of supporting the clergy, the Methodist conference disagreed with their political actions, “rebuked them,” and “repudiated their involvement in politics.”⁴⁷¹

On September 25, 1830 Francis Owen, Greenberry Garrett, Jacob Ellinger, Joseph Miller, William M. M’Farren, Nicholas D. Scales, James J. Trott, and Dickson C.

⁴⁶⁸ McLoughlin, 29.

⁴⁶⁹ McLoughlin, 29.

⁴⁷⁰ Fassett, “The History and Role of Methodism and Other Missionary Churches in the Lives and Culture of Native American Women,” 13.

⁴⁷¹ McLoughlin, *The Cherokees and Christianity, 1794–1870: Essays on Acculturation and Cultural Persistence*. 29.

M'Leod, Methodist missionaries in the Cherokee Nation, voted through a resolution for publication in the *Cherokee Phoenix*, and the *Cherokee Advocate and Journal*. They called upon the Tennessee Annual Conference to make a “public and official expression of sentiment on the subject of [the Cherokee] grievances” which included their concerns about the forced removal.⁴⁷² They sought to show their support for the Cherokee nation which was “firmly resolved not to remove from their present homes, unless forced to do so, either by power or oppression.”⁴⁷³ They also wrote that “a removal of the Cherokees to the west of the Mississippi would, in all probability, be ruinous to the best interests of the nation.”⁴⁷⁴

In 1831 The Cherokee Nation went before the United States Supreme Court attempting to sue the State of Georgia for passing laws that nullified their own laws and rendered their judicial system powerless. In *Cherokee Nation v. Georgia*, they argued that they had no voice or vote in Georgia Courts, leaving them without recourse. The Cherokee Nation was asserting its rights as a Sovereign foreign entity but Justice John Marshall denied the Cherokee court’s jurisdiction because it was the Supreme Court’s decision that “Indian tribes were domestic dependent nations.”⁴⁷⁵ This ruling was founded on the belief that American Indians were “unsophisticated” and incapable of self-sufficiency.⁴⁷⁶ According to Poupart, Marshall’s opinion echoed the paternalistic

⁴⁷² Russell E. Richey, Kenneth E. Rowe, and Jean Miller Schmidt, 1830 B “Missionaries Among the Cherokees in Georgia Protest Removal,” *The Methodist Experience in America II: Sourcebook*, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2000), 225.

⁴⁷³ Richey, Rowe, and Schmidt, 1830 B “Missionaries Among the Cherokees in Georgia Protest Removal,” 226.

⁴⁷⁴ Richey, Rowe, and Schmidt, 226.

⁴⁷⁵ Vogel, *This Country Was Ours; A Documentary History of the American Indian*, 114.

⁴⁷⁶ Poupart, “Crime and Justice in American Indian Communities,” 149.

attitude of many Americans and set the standard for American Indian policy for the next century.⁴⁷⁷

In September 1831 Samuel Worcester, a Congregational missionary to the Cherokee Nation, and 10 others were convicted and sentenced to four years' hard labor for violating a new Georgia law that forbade non-Indians to reside within the Cherokee Nation. *Worcester v. Georgia*, came before the Supreme Court in 1832. In this decision Justice Marshall stated: "The Cherokee Nation ... is a distinct community occupying its own territory, with boundaries accurately described, in which the laws of Georgia can have no force, and which the citizens of Georgia have no right to enter, but with the assent of the Cherokees themselves, or in conformity with treaties, and with the acts of Congress."⁴⁷⁸ In what seemed to be a reversal in favor of sovereign rights, Marshall ordered the men freed. Georgia refused and backed by the United States president, Andrew Jackson, the state negotiated with the men to drop the suit.

Two of the convicted men were Methodist missionaries, James Trott and Dickson McLeod.⁴⁷⁹ They never received support from their Annual conference.

The 1830 Tennessee Annual Conference not only refused to join the missionaries in protesting removal policies; they rebuked the missionaries for trying to push the conference into politics. The officer who arrested Trott described him as a preacher who had been discountenanced by his own Conference for his officious and over-zealous interference in Indian politics.⁴⁸⁰

⁴⁷⁷ Poupart, 149.

⁴⁷⁸ Vogel, *This Country Was Ours; A Documentary History of the American Indian*, 130.

⁴⁷⁹ Forbes, "'And Obey God Etc.': Methodism and American Indians," 224.

⁴⁸⁰ Forbes, 224.

McLaughlin tells us that the prevailing view published in the *New York Christian Advocate* in 1835 said, “With these matters it is not our providence to meddle. Our business is to ‘preach Christ crucified;’ and this, by the grace of God, we are resolved to do.”⁴⁸¹ The editor also expressed his objection “to the forcible ejection of people against their will,” but expressed “no opinion” on the justification of the removal program in general.⁴⁸² The MEC once again equivocated on its stance in regards to injustice toward Indigenous peoples. Forbes attributes diminished success in missions to the betrayal of the Cherokee and others during removal.⁴⁸³

Even with the extremely disappointing outcomes in the courts following what became known as the Marshall Trilogy, the Cherokee refused to leave their homelands. They resisted moving until a small group of families signed the 1835 Treaty of New Echota and ceded Cherokee lands in exchange for land in Indian Territory. Though the treaty was ratified by the United States Congress it was not ratified by the Cherokee Nation. The Cherokee experienced internal divisions due the betrayal and those who chose to remain and fight for their homeland were forcibly removed. In May, 1838 American soldiers forced families and citizens of the Cherokee Nation into internment camps where they faced cramped, unsanitary conditions throughout the summer. Between the camps and the 800-mile forced winter march to Oklahoma Indian Territory, 4,000 members, or at least one-quarter of the Nation, died from exposure, starvation, or disease on what has been called the “Trail of Tears.”⁴⁸⁴

⁴⁸¹ Forbes, 224.

⁴⁸² Forbes, 224.

⁴⁸³ Forbes, 224.

⁴⁸⁴ Poupart, “Crime and Justice in American Indian Communities,” 149.

From 1830 to 1840 thousands of Native Americans were forced on similar death marches from their lands to what became known as “Indian Territory” and is now called the state of Oklahoma. In 1836 the U.S. Army forcibly removed over 14,000 Creek/MVSKOKE citizens from Alabama to Oklahoma. Militias forcibly removed the Chickasaw, Choctaw, and Seminole peoples (including African freedmen and slaves who lived among them) from their traditional lands in the Southeastern United States. However, the “Indian Territory” to which they were moved was not vacant. Relocation would displace nations such as the Kiowa, Comanche, Arapaho, and many others.

As their desire grew for more land it became clear to the white settler/immigrants that the relocations had not gone far enough. A new ideology emerged known as Manifest Destiny, which justified further encroachment of Indian lands. Undergirded by the biblical narrative of the Promised Land, Manifest Destiny provided a righteous framework for acquiring more land, accumulating more wealth – or in the case of religious competition – saving more souls. Through the lens of United States exceptionalism euro-christian white settler/immigrants reimagined themselves to be called by God to find a new promised land. Rivers and oceans became the Red Sea, forests and deserts became the wilderness, and the promised land was ready for the taking and cultivating.⁴⁸⁵ The Cherokee, MVSKOKE, Chickasaw, Choctaw, and Kiowa peoples with their superstitions and “backward” ways were not using the land properly and became a “barrier” or “obstacle” to American “progress.”⁴⁸⁶ This vision of the world

⁴⁸⁵ Notice the word colonize comes from the root for cultivate like a vine. Newcomb, *Pagans in the Promised Land: Decoding the Doctrine of Christian Discovery*, 4-5.

⁴⁸⁶ Newcomb, 4-5.

paired with news that James Marshall discovered gold near Sutter's Fort, California led more settlers west with dreams of unlimited potential.⁴⁸⁷

Into this milieu Methodist missionaries continued to preach and teach, moving with the both Native and Non-Native peoples, to Indian Territory. The MEC moved with the expansion west but in 1844 the denomination split and The Methodist Episcopal Church, South (MEC, S) formed. At the same time The Indian Missionary Conference (IMC) formed. In 1845 it aligned itself with the MEC, S, and began to move into Indian Territory.

There are numerous examples of Methodist engagement with Indigenous peoples throughout the 19th century but the rest of this chapter will focus primarily on three missionaries and their context, Samuel Checote, John Chivington, and JJ Methvin. Their examples will exhibit different degrees of commitment to beloved listening and deepening relationships with Indigenous peoples.

The first example is Samuel Checote. He is a missionary who served in the middle of the 19th century, he was born in 1819 in the Creek homeland which is known as Alabama. A member of the MVSOKOKE/Creek Nation he attended Asbury Manual Labor School. His family was forcibly removed and relocated to Indian Territory in 1829. Checote became a local preacher in 1852 and a full member of the Indian Missionary Conference in 1854 in the MEC, S.⁴⁸⁸ In 1852, after christian teaching had been outlawed by the religious practitioners of the Creek Nation he helped negotiate with the council so that christianity could once again be taught in the Nation. In his autobiography he

⁴⁸⁷ See Benjamin Madley, *An American Genocide: The United States and the California Indian Catastrophe, 1846-1873* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016), 67f.

⁴⁸⁸ Oscar L. Fontaine, "Samuel Checote," in *The Encyclopedia of World Methodism Vol. I ed.* Nolan B. Harmon, (Nashville: United Methodist Publishing House, 1974), 461.

explains how “The Creeks in Council” made a law in 1844 prohibiting any citizens from “preaching under penalty of fifty lashes on the bare back for each violation.”⁴⁸⁹ He received 50 lashes and he says very simply, “I appeared before General Roley McIntosh, who was at that time chief of the Upper Creeks, and complained of the persecution, and requested he would stop it, and he did so.”⁴⁹⁰

Under Samuel Checote’s leadership the Bible and Methodist hymnal were translated into the Creek language. This was a difficult project to accomplish not only because of the translation itself but the prejudicial view of Indigenous languages by euro-christian white settlers. Homer Noley explains the challenge of confronting the “bigotry among the Methodist publishers and other non-Indian church officials, who fostered views” that Native peoples wanted to learn English instead of worshiping in their own languages.⁴⁹¹ In 1868 Checote became the first Native American clergyman to be appointed as a district superintendent.⁴⁹²

We also have examples of Checote’s encouraging words for his colleagues such as James McHenry who he said “Was always at his post working for his Master's cause.. [and] a prominent man among his people.”⁴⁹³ He was well respected by both christians and non-christians and eventually he was elected Principal Chief of the Creek Nation under a new constitutional government model. He was elected Principal chief three times

⁴⁸⁹ Russell E. Richey, Kenneth E. Rowe, and Jean Miller Schmidt, 1883a “Creek Chief Samuel Checote Pens Autobiographical Letter,” *The Methodist Experience in America II: Sourcebook*, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2000), 411.

⁴⁹⁰ Richey, Rowe, and Schmidt, 1883a “Creek Chief Samuel Checote Pens Autobiographical Letter,” 412.

⁴⁹¹ Noley, *First White Frost: Native Americans and United Methodism*, 157.

⁴⁹² At this time, it was called Presiding Elder and he held this position several times. Noley, *First White Frost: Native Americans and United Methodism*, 198 and “Samuel Checote,” in *The Encyclopedia of World Methodism Vol. I ed.* Nolan B. Harmon, (Nashville: United Methodist Publishing House, 1974), 461.

⁴⁹³ Noley, *First White Frost: Native Americans and United Methodism*, 199.

in 1867, 1872 and 1879.⁴⁹⁴ Homer Noley also tells us that the 10th Annual Conference met in 1853 at the Creek Agency on the invitation of Samuel Checote. He says that this is symbolic of the hospitality of the Creeks and also the patient work of Checote toiling alongside his two colleagues, Asbury and Essex.⁴⁹⁵ Even just a cursory view of Samuel Checote's life achievements indicate how his identity and value of relationships interact with his desire to listen and honor his own culture while also respecting others. The few stories we have of him give evidence of the respect he was given and the impact of his words on others as he advocated for a contextualized christianity and sought justice.

On the other end of the spectrum we have MEC missionary John Chivington. Chivington is described as one of those larger than life figures found in tales about Methodist circuit riders throughout the 19th century.⁴⁹⁶ Descriptions from some contemporaries stress his masculinity and his ability to perform feats of strength. One account appeared in the *Central Christian Advocate* from April 10, 1861, which described his appearance at the Annual Conference in Atchison, Kansas.

[He is] over six feet high, with all the full proportions of the best formed human being, from the crown of the head to the soles of his feet. His intellect is strong, and well trained for his work. He could readily take two ordinary men, one in each hand, and knock their heads together, were he assaulted or disposed to engage in such achievement.⁴⁹⁷

The descriptions of his imposing appearance are moderated by his sensitive temperament as befitting a warm-hearted Methodist,

⁴⁹⁴ "Samuel Checote," in *The Encyclopedia of World Methodism Vol. I ed.* Nolan B. Harmon, (Nashville: United Methodist Publishing House, 1974), 461.

⁴⁹⁵ Noley, *First White Frost: Native Americans and United Methodism*, 156.

⁴⁹⁶ For a prime example see Cartwright, Peter, and William Peter Strickland. *Autobiography of Peter Cartwright: The Backwoods Preacher*. Andesite Press, 2015.

⁴⁹⁷ Duane A. Smith, "Colorado's Joshua: John Chivington's Forgotten Years, 1860-1861" *Methodist History*, 29:3 (April 1991), 164.

At first sight he would appear as if he were too sturdy in his make of body and mind, to have any sympathy. But further acquaintance will soon show that he has all the fine feelings of human sympathy. He can, and does weep with those that weep, and rejoices with those that rejoice.⁴⁹⁸

However, he is foremost a man of the wilderness and wears the appropriate attire of a pioneer,

His cloak or traveling mantle has the inside of strong green baize, and reaches just below the hips. The outside is made of the skins of the Rocky Mountain wolves—a light gray color. A row of these wolf tails dangles from each shoulder, in two rows down to the lower edge of his Rocky Mountain mantle, for such we will call it.⁴⁹⁹

At the outset, Chivington's story seems rather banal. He was married with three children. He attended a revival meeting and “found God.” Ordained in 1853-54 in the MEC, he worked in the Wyandotte, Delaware, and Shawnee Indian Mission as a missionary to the Indians who had been relocated to what is now Kansas City Missouri.⁵⁰⁰ Unlike Checote, he did not practice a contextualized ministry. Gary L. Roberts describes his work to assimilate the Wyandotte into the dominant culture.⁵⁰¹

Historian Duane A. Smith states that Chivington stirred up some trouble in Missouri due to his outspoken Abolitionist stance so he transferred to the new Kansas-Nebraska Conference in 1856, and found himself in a more congenial atmosphere among settlers.⁵⁰² Roberts describes several instances of Chivington's garrulous and divisive

⁴⁹⁸ Smith, “Colorado's Joshua: John Chivington's Forgotten Years, 1860-1861” 164.

⁴⁹⁹ Smith, 164.

⁵⁰⁰ The spelling varies because there are at least three branches that descend from the original Wyandot Nation who originated in the Northeast, moved to Ohio, and were relocated to Indian Territory. The Wyandotte Nation is the branch with which Chivington would have been associated. For more information about the Wyandot Nation see Lloyd E. Divine Jr, *On the Back of a Turtle: A Narrative of the Huron-Wyandot People*, (Columbus, OH: Trillium, 2019).

⁵⁰¹ For Chivington's history with the Wyandotte and his organization of a Wyandotte Masonic lodge see Roberts, *Massacre at Sand Creek*, 64-65.

⁵⁰² Smith, “Colorado's Joshua: John Chivington's Forgotten Years, 1860-1861” 165.

behavior that caused conflict both in the military and the church resulting in multiple appointment changes. One example from March 1858 describes the kind of speech Chivington engaged in from the pulpit and in his professional demeanor. When he heard that a certain minister did not preach “fire and brimstone” sermons, Chivington accused the man of preaching a “mutilated” gospel.⁵⁰³ He subsequently received critique from his colleagues not only because of what he said, but how he said it. Instead of confronting the preacher in person Chivington waited until the man was out of town before he chose to try and shame him to his peers.⁵⁰⁴

In 1860 Chivington made his way to Denver for the mission field.⁵⁰⁵ In the fall of 1861 he volunteered for a post in the militia as a combatant even though he was offered a noncombatant chaplain position.⁵⁰⁶ At the same time another Methodist, Colorado Territory Governor John Evans, was having trouble managing the ongoing negotiations with the Kiowa, Arapaho, Ute, Comanche, Apache, Cheyenne Nations living in the region of Denver. According to Roberts, Evans’ handling of the arrangements was clumsy and inept.

He paid little attention to the reasons the tribes provided for not attending [scheduled meetings]. Evans, and others in authority, never understood the ordinary seasonal movements of the tribes—or seriously tried to learn. This meant that any activities that brought Cheyennes or Arapahos closer to settlers were interpreted as threatening. Large tribal gatherings were seen as preparations for war. Small groups were regarded as war parties. Ordinary trade, buffalo hunting, coming out of winter encampments in the spring or going into winter encampments in the fall all had sinister meanings to whites the Indians encountered. Evans saw anything out of the ordinary (from his point of view) as evidence that war was inevitable.⁵⁰⁷

⁵⁰³ Roberts, *Massacre at Sand Creek*, 68.

⁵⁰⁴ Roberts, 68.

⁵⁰⁵ Roberts, 70.

⁵⁰⁶ Roberts, 72.

⁵⁰⁷ Roberts, 103-104.

Evans' ineptitude and Chivington's disposition led to one of the most disgraceful events in Methodist history. Throughout the spring into the summer of 1864 Evans' inability to lead and his desire to build a railroad clouded his judgment. Likewise, Chivington's brash argumentative behavior and political maneuvering caused increased frustrations and anxiety. Neither man was listening to the other, the white citizens of the town, the men under their command, or the Cheyenne or Arapaho peoples who were to be their primary concern. According to historian Gary L. Roberts, both Chivington and Evans allowed rumors of war to affect their judgement when there was no sign of aggression from the Cheyenne or Arapaho camped nearby.⁵⁰⁸ It became so untenable that Chivington's men began to complain publicly. On July 28, 1864 "the Journal published a letter from Fort Lyon which said, 'This war is nothing but a political hobby, so plain a blind man can see it, and the instigators of it should suffer. Who but them ought to atone for the lives already lost by their infernal scheming.'"⁵⁰⁹

Homer Noley, says, Evans, "created an atmosphere of paranoia, fear, and hatred among the whites living in the area."⁵¹⁰ In September under pressure from citizens, Chivington declared martial law in Denver and began to rule over the town like a tyrant.⁵¹¹ Throughout the summer there had been reports of skirmishes with some Natives but by the fall the Cheyenne and Arapaho had settled down for the winter at Sand Creek at the direction of Major Anthony.

By the time November arrived Denver and the surrounding garrisons were noticeably quiet. Black Kettle and White Antelope had just made a peace pact in

⁵⁰⁸ Roberts, 111-116.

⁵⁰⁹ Roberts, 120.

⁵¹⁰ Noley, *First White Frost: Native Americans and United Methodism*, 162.

⁵¹¹ Roberts, *Massacre at Sand Creek*, 122.

September with Evans and Chivington present so they were considered friendly.⁵¹² In fact Roberts cites a communication on November 16, when Major Anthony “advised General Curtis, ‘I am satisfied that all of the Arapahoes and Cheyennes who have visited this post desire peace.’”⁵¹³ Additionally Roberts argues persuasively that they were considered prisoners and as such were receiving rations and maintaining communication with United States military commanders. Evans headed to Washington DC and other commanders were seeking long-term solutions to the increasing non-Native settlement of the area. Unfortunately, Chivington took matters into his own hands. Unwilling to accept peace he secretly directed his men toward Sand Creek.

At dawn on November 29, 1864 Chivington led his men against the Cheyenne peace camp of Black Kettle. It was a complete surprise to the Cheyenne and Arapaho peoples.⁵¹⁴ Roberts describes the scene poignantly, “Still the believer, [Black Kettle] called out to them not to be afraid, that the soldiers would not harm them.”⁵¹⁵ Noley tells us that “over 500 elderly men, women, and children were massacred at Sand Creek” their bodies mutilated and desecrated.⁵¹⁶

Following the massacre, Chivington resigned his post and became embroiled in several scandals before returning to Colorado until his death. He would continue to attend Annual Conferences throughout his life but according to Noley, “the great prestige he once enjoyed and which had promised so much for him was gone.”⁵¹⁷ Descriptions of his life by subsequent generations indicate that he had uneasy relationships with both his

⁵¹² Roberts, *Massacre at Sand Creek*, 131.

⁵¹³ Roberts, *Massacre at Sand Creek*, 131.

⁵¹⁴ There were some Kiowa also present, such as Suanne Ware-Diaz’ great grandmother who was Cheyenne and Kiowa. Suanne Ware-Diaz, conversation with author, January 17, 2019.

⁵¹⁵ Roberts, *Massacre at Sand Creek*, 134.

⁵¹⁶ Noley, *First White Frost: Native Americans and United Methodism*, 164.

⁵¹⁷ Noley, 164.

colleagues and family. While he adopted an assimilationist stance which would be normative for many euro-christian white settler/immigrants of the 19th century, Chivington's inability to listen, combined with his violent behavior and unrepentant hubris, show little sign of beloved speech.

Massacres such as Sand Creek occurred so often throughout the 19th century that they could not be listed here. Important for this dissertation is the need to grasp how the dominant narrative was perpetuated by settlers in order to justify the violence. The dominant culture often placed the blame for the violence on the Indigenous peoples who defended their lands from military occupation. Some stories were embellished and some were completely fabricated in order to maintain the dominant narrative. Up until his death, Chivington boldly told his story denying he had committed any atrocities against women and children and insisting that he was a hero.⁵¹⁸ Romanticized versions of men such as Chivington covered over dehumanizing behaviors, perpetuated the myth of the rugged American pioneer, and emboldened further violent behavior. As the investigation of Sand Creek ended in 1867 it was clear to some key lawmakers that Indian policies needed to change. However, journalists fired the imaginations of white settlers by continuing to call for actions "a la Chivington."⁵¹⁹

As the century progressed it became more difficult to justify military solutions to what became known as the Indian Problem.⁵²⁰ Frederick A. Norwood notes, "the only ultimate solutions of the Indian problem, it was firmly believed, [were] (1) extermination

⁵¹⁸ Roberts, *Massacre at Sand Creek*, 201.

⁵¹⁹ Roberts, *Massacre at Sand Creek*, 165.

⁵²⁰ Labeling relations with Indigenous Nations as a "problem" will continue the dehumanization process. It will also provide a model for Nazi Germany's final solution to the Jewish Problem. For more information see-James Q. Whitman, *Hitler's American Model: The United States and the Making of Nazi Race Law* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2017) and John Toland, *Adolf Hitler: The Definitive Biography*, (New York: Anchor, 1992), 702.

and (2) assimilation.”⁵²¹ From the 1870s to the 1930s, assimilation took multiple approaches, with each striking deeply at the core of traditional tribal life.

In 1869 in response to Sand Creek and subsequent massacres, President Grant announced a church-related reform program to eliminate corruption and reduce violent conflict in federal-Indian relations. Commonly called his “Peace Policy,” the program included church nomination of and influence upon Indian agents, creation of the Board of Indian Commissioners (BIC), and expanded federal aid for Indian education and missions.⁵²² Under this policy pastors and missionaries working with Indigenous Nations became Indian agents aligned with the state. Grant explained that “the societies are allowed to name their own agents, subject to the approval of the Executive, and are expected to watch over them and aid them as missionaries, to Christianize and civilize the Indian, and to train him in the arts of peace.”⁵²³

According to Forbes the MEC had not invested money in Indian missions to any great degree for some time but once the money was made available through the Peace Policy they re-engaged.⁵²⁴ The MEC took advantage of the program to such an extent that indictments of favoritism followed. Forbes points out that Methodist influence was so pervasive in Washington DC through the 1870s that, “One member of the Board of Indian Commissioners declared that the BIC had been nothing but a Methodist Kitchen Cabinet.”⁵²⁵ By the time it ended in 1882, the supposed Peace Policy brought about the opposite effect of its intention. “Religious division and growing government

⁵²¹ Frederick A. Norwood, “Serpents and Savages,” *Religion in Life* 46, no. 3 (June 1977): 309.

⁵²² Forbes, ““And Obey God Etc.’: Methodism and American Indians,” 225.

⁵²³ Forbes, 225.

⁵²⁴ Forbes, 226.

⁵²⁵ Forbes, 226.

disenchantment brought a gradual withdrawal from the policy..." after it had perpetuated "sectarianism and intolerance and bigotry in America."⁵²⁶

In its place, new assimilationist policies emerged that continued to tear at the fabric of Indigenous societies. In his 1882 "Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs," U.S. Indian Commissioner Hiram Price commented on the need for the federal government to cooperate with religious societies in order to "civilize" the Indians:

One very important auxiliary in transforming men from savage to civilized life is the influence brought to bear upon them through the labors of Christian men and women as educators and missionaries. This I think, has been forcibly demonstrated among the different Indian tribes by the missionary labors of the various religious societies in the last few years. Civilization is a plant of exceeding slow growth, unless supplemented by Christian teaching and influences. ... In no other manner and by no other means, in my judgment, can our Indian population be so speedily and permanently reclaimed from the barbarism, idolatry, and savage life, as by the educational and missionary operations of the Christian people of our country.⁵²⁷

To advance the assimilation process, Price initially supported Captain Richard Henry Pratt's education policy that sought to "kill the Indian and save the man."⁵²⁸ Pratt advocated for a military model which separated children from their parents so they might assimilate faster and more completely into "mainstream" society.⁵²⁹

Concerning the boarding school model Poupart writes,

Despite the devastating effects of vast reductions in Indian landholdings and the erosion of tribal sovereignty, the forced removal of Indian children to off-

⁵²⁶ Forbes, 226.

⁵²⁷ Newcomb, *Pagans in the Promised Land: Decoding the Doctrine of Christian Discovery*, 13.

⁵²⁸ Captain Pratt opened the first Federal Boarding School in Carlisle Pennsylvania in 1879. It was called the Carlisle Indian Industrial school. See Richard H. Pratt, "Kill the Indian, and Save the Man" speech delivered in 1892 Reprinted in Richard H. Pratt, "The Advantages of Mingling Indians with Whites," *Americanizing the American Indians: Writings by the "Friends of the Indian" 1880–1900* ed. Francis Paul Prucha, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1973), 260–271.

⁵²⁹ For an in-depth study of Pratt and the reform movement see Mark Odis Hagenbuch, "Richard Henry Pratt, the Carlisle Indian Industrial School, and United States Policies Related to American Indian Education 1879 to 1904," (Ph.D. diss., The Pennsylvania State University, 1998).

reservation boarding schools was undeniably the most painful and damaging aspect of assimilation efforts. Torn from their families and placed in boarding schools, Indian children were indoctrinated into American life. Upon arrival, children were given Anglo names and groomed in the styles of the dominant culture. They received a Western education and were isolated from the knowledges (songs, dances, stories, and practices) of their people. If caught speaking their tribal languages or practicing their spiritual beliefs, children were strictly punished (often severely beaten). Many spent their entire childhood (from age six to 18) in a boarding school without being allowed a visit with family.⁵³⁰

Steve Newcomb says,

From a cognitive science perspective, those federal meanings have become part of the neural circuitry and structuring of our brains. As a result, non-Indian strands of meaning have become interwoven into our social and cultural lives as Indian people, thereby making the constraints of federal Indian law and policy an integral part of the fabric of our own imaginations and an integral part of the daily social interactions of Indian people in Indian communities. These observations provide a sense of the magnitude of the challenge our indigenous nations and communities face in the effort to decolonize our lives and our collective existence.⁵³¹

The devastation and trauma of separating children from their families and forced assimilation through the elimination of their language, religious rituals, and family nurture cannot be emphasized enough.⁵³² While the children were being stripped of their culture and language their parents were facing renewed threats to their land.

In 1882, a group of men formed the Indian Rights Association in order to monitor the Bureau of Indian Affairs and lobby for reform of United States Indian policy. By 1883 they had begun a series of conferences called the Lake Mohonk Conferences to

⁵³⁰ Poupart, "Crime and Justice in American Indian Communities," 149.

⁵³¹ Newcomb, *Pagans in the Promised Land: Decoding the Doctrine of Christian Discovery*, 19.

⁵³² The legacy of the boarding school system not only affects generations of children whose parents were separated from their cultural identity but also continues to perpetuate assimilation of children through the foster care system. One of the latest manifestations of this ideology came in the Indian Adoption Project formulated in the mid 20th century. For more information see, <https://www.theatlantic.com/family/archive/2019/02/indian-child-welfare-acts-uncertain-future/582628/?fbclid=IwAR0FDCr0T6Ej6wAOFebcnvYzhI03ISlmBv2Egn39WI1cnQJNGTX95p4Rqrs> and <https://pages.uoregon.edu/adoption/topics/IAP.html>

consider the Indian Problem.⁵³³ Speakers at these conferences included Senator Henry L. Dawes, chair of the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs and U.S. Indian Commissioner Price. In addition, many of the speakers and participants were Methodist, including the president of the Board of Indian Commissioners from 1881 to 1890 Clinton B. Fisk, and Daniel Dorchester, Superintendent of Indian Education.⁵³⁴

Educator Mark Odis Hagenbuch says these meetings,

were suffused with a deep religious atmosphere. Evangelical Protestant social action was sweeping the country which gave strength and support to social reform and humanitarianism. The Social Gospel movement of the late nineteenth century proclaimed that the church had a duty to help their fellow man and deal with human problems here on earth, in contrast to the earlier doctrine of individual salvation.⁵³⁵

Hagenbuch explains that the philosophies of the Lake Mohonk reformers were steeped in the belief that the “communal and tribal life of the American Indian was an evil that had to be destroyed” and in order “to assimilate and civilize the American Indian, he needed to be detribalized.”⁵³⁶ Moreover, “Missionaries and other non-Indians had long advocated the elimination of tribal communalism and the introduction of private property, so that Indians might ‘advance in civilization’ and melt into American culture.”⁵³⁷

The result of their deliberations was the Dawes Severalty Act of 1887 which targeted Indian landholdings. The General Allotment Act, or the Dawes Act, imposed individual land ownership on sovereign nations who had previously held land in

⁵³³ Hagenbuch, “Richard Henry Pratt, the Carlisle Indian Industrial School, and United States Policies Related to American Indian Education 1879 to 1904,” 36.

⁵³⁴ Forbes, “‘And Obey God Etc.’: Methodism and American Indians,” 227.

⁵³⁵ Hagenbuch, “Richard Henry Pratt, the Carlisle Indian Industrial School, and United States Policies Related to American Indian Education 1879 to 1904,” 27.

⁵³⁶ Hagenbuch, 27.

⁵³⁷ Forbes, “‘And Obey God Etc.’: Methodism and American Indians,” 226.

common. The Cherokee, Choctaw, and MVSKOKE/Creek Nations that had been relocated to Indian Territory, as well as Plains tribes such as the Kiowa who had been forced onto reservations were now forced to divide up their land according to allotments set by the government. Once the size of each allotment was set and distributed, any remaining lands were opened for white settlement.

This policy marked a significant reduction in Indigenous lands “through governmental confiscation and allotment – dividing tribal lands into individual parcels and selling the surplus to white squatters” or offering it through means such as the Land run of 1889.⁵³⁸ Although land titles were to be held in trust by the government for twenty five years, “surplus” reservation land was offered for sale immediately, and much allotted land passed into non-Native hands over time.⁵³⁹

The Dawes Act also formally introduced the concept of tribal enrollment and blood quantum measurement. Paul Spruhan, legal scholar, explains the convoluted history of Native Identity determined by blood quantum levels and describes the legal processes which the Dawes Act set in motion.⁵⁴⁰ Suffice it to say that the United States Supreme Court and the Congress created an inconsistent definition of Indigenous identity which seems to have suited the purposes of further land acquisition for white settlers. Initially the United States government tried to impose a system of paternal inheritance which meant that nations who culturally recognized matrilineal descent found some tribal members deprived of their right to allotment. This was followed by a more restrictive measurement that raised the required percentage of Native blood to 50% in order to

⁵³⁸ Poupart, “Crime and Justice in American Indian Communities,” 149.

⁵³⁹ Forbes, “‘And Obey God Etc.’: Methodism and American Indians,” 227.

⁵⁴⁰ For a comprehensive historical review and analysis see Spruhan, Paul, A Legal History of Blood Quantum in Federal Indian Law to 1935. South Dakota Law Review, Vol. 51, No. 1, 2006.

qualify for a land parcel. Concurrently, the United States government required Indigenous nations to sign agreements to begin the allotment process but they did not require requisite proof of blood quantum for the signatories. Eventually blood quantum percentages and tribal membership determinations came under the purview of the tribal governments, but in any case, as Spruhan says, the result was a system which “regulated who was an Indian and who was not...who had the correct fraction of blood quantum...” and ultimately tribal membership was often determined by strict blood level guidelines or enrollment.⁵⁴¹

If a person’s Indigenous identity is determined by their tribal enrollment and their enrollment determines their land rights and resources, then assimilation and absorption can potentially be achieved within a couple of generations through the intermarriage of Natives and non-Natives. Therefore, policies such as the Dawes Act not only provided further means of confiscating land but also undermined traditional culture, added to the loss of social structure, and promoted competition where it had not existed previously. By 1906 “any Indian declared ‘competent’ could secure the title at once,... tribal governments were declared dissolved, and the two territories of Oklahoma and Indian Territory merged into the state of Oklahoma which was admitted to the union as the forty-sixth state in 1907.”⁵⁴² The United States government rescinded the Dawes Act in 1934 but the damage to Indigenous culture had already been accomplished.

This event brings into focus the effect of the Social Gospel which not only influenced Indian policy as evidenced by the Lake Mohonk reformers but also influenced

⁵⁴¹ Linda Tuhiwa Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*, (London: Zed Books, 2012), 22.

⁵⁴² Vogel, *This Country Was Ours; A Documentary History of the American Indian*, 189-190.

the MEC and Methodist missions. The Social Gospel is often envisioned as a reforming and a renewal movement for justice within the church. However, some Amer-european christians, such as those involved in the organizations above, clouded by their own colonizing cultural lenses, interpreted paternalistic actions as social justice. For some Methodists, sanctification merged with Manifest Destiny couched in religious imagery. This ideology then expanded into an imperialism that extended the political grasp of the United States beyond North American borders to the detriment of others. It became the driving force behind efforts such as annexation of the Philippines and the encroachment of Indian Territory into Oklahoma statehood.

In his essay “From Denominationalism to Americanism,” historian Sidney E. Mead argues that religion became so intertwined with the government in the United States of America that American imperialism at the turn-of-the-20th century was justified using religious terms and theological concepts. He quotes Sen. Albert J. Beveridge of Indiana, a graduate of Methodist school Indiana Asbury University and a noted imperialist. Beveridge advocated for Oklahoma statehood and defended the annexation of the Philippines in 1900 saying,

we will not renounce our part in the mission of the race, trustee, under God, of the civilization of the world... He has made us... The master organizers of the world to establish system where chaos reigns... He has made us adept in government that we may administer government among savage and senile peoples... And of all our race, he has marked the American people as his chosen nation to finally lead in the regeneration of the world. This is the divine mission of America, and it holds for us all the profit, all the glory, all the happiness possible to man.⁵⁴³

⁵⁴³ Sidney E. Mead, *Lively Experiment: The Shaping of Christianity in America*, (Harper & Row, 1976), 153 – 154.

As we have seen, christianity became intertwined with state sanctioned violence and domination demonstrated by the principles first set forth in the Doctrine of Discovery. European Nations occupied, confiscated, and settled lands belonging to Indigenous sovereign nations. The United States continued this colonial project supported by the concept of Manifest Destiny which by the late 19th century would be expanded to noncontiguous lands beyond North America. Mead points out that "the foundation of the whole structure was the idea of progress."⁵⁴⁴ The Union victory in the United States Civil War was understood to have provided proof of the superiority of the industrial development and free capitalism of the Northern United States. The twisted narrative of success intertwined white supremacy, philanthropy, and patriotism so that by 1900 Darwin's theory of evolution had been reframed to justify progress as predestined for Anglo Saxons, given by God, for the betterment of humanity.⁵⁴⁵

The MEC evidences this distorted view of the Social Gospel through the work of both laity and clergy including one of The Methodist Episcopal Church's most vocal and visible bishops from the late 19th century, Bishop Matthew Simpson. James E. Kirby writes, "Bishop Simpson, like others caught up in the optimism of the late nineteenth century and influenced by Darwin, did believe there was constant upward progress in the world."⁵⁴⁶

In his "Address to the British Conference, "in 1870, Simpson described God's works manifest in human activity that were making the United States "a kind of central

⁵⁴⁴ Mead, *Lively Experiment: The Shaping of Christianity in America*, 145.

⁵⁴⁵ Mead, *Lively Experiment: The Shaping of Christianity in America*, 151-153.

⁵⁴⁶ James E. Kirby. "Matthew Simpson and the Mission of America," *Church History* no. 3 (1967): 302.

spot for the whole earth.”⁵⁴⁷ Throughout his career Simpson expressed a relationship between revivalistic faith, personal holiness, and progress, especially conflating it with what both Mead and Kirby call “Americanism.”⁵⁴⁸ Methodist historian James E. Kirby says that when Bishop Simpson spoke of the “Christian principles” he meant “the principles of personal liberty, equal rights, freedom of conscience, and supreme responsibility to God.”⁵⁴⁹

Simpson reflected a generation of Methodist preachers and leaders who influenced American values in the latter 19th and early 20th centuries. Kirby presents Simpson’s theological underpinnings which he says are based in Simpson’s theological understanding of human beings.⁵⁵⁰ He quotes Simpson’s writings “The Inheritance of the Christian” (1862) and “Christian Activity” (1871) as examples:

Man’s intellect, “which was given him that he might see the truth in all its purity, and that the truth should elevate, expand, ennoble, and prepare him for glorious enterprise,” was clouded as a result of his sin. This in turn destroyed his ability to rule over the earth and chaos resulted...But God was unwilling that his plans for creation should be thwarted and extended himself to mankind through his son. This cleared the intellect of all those who accepted him and enabled them once again to see “the truth and possess it in its own unveiled purity, grandeur, and power.” It also placed upon redeemed men the necessity to continue the mission of Christ in order that in time all mankind might be restored to their rightful place as rulers in the lower order and society elevated to its intended perfection. Although “it is the plan of God that society shall be elevated, that the world shall be advanced,” it will be done through human agency.⁵⁵¹

⁵⁴⁷ Matthew Simpson, *Address to the British Conference (August 25, 1870) Scrapbook, Matthew Simpson Papers, The Library of Congress, Washington, D. C.*; quoted in James E. Kirby, “Matthew Simpson and the Mission of America,” *Church History*, no. 3 (1967): 302.

⁵⁴⁸ For examples see his inaugural address in 1840 in George R. (George Richard) Crooks, *The Life of Bishop Matthew Simpson, of The Methodist Episcopal Church* (New York, Harper, 1890), 481 and Matthew Simpson, “Liberia Mission”, *Western Christian Advocate*, XVII (February 6, 1850), 21.

⁵⁴⁹ Kirby, “Matthew Simpson and the Mission of America,” 303.

⁵⁵⁰ Kirby, 301.

⁵⁵¹ Kirby, 301.

Kirby reiterates that “Although the language in which [Simpson’s] message is couched is that of the New Testament and American revivalism, it is, nevertheless, clear that its real content is as much informed by ‘Americanism’ as by Christianity.”⁵⁵² The influence of “Americanism” becomes explicit in other writings. Kirby says that Simpson believed the world was embarking on a new age which America had been uniquely prepared for by God. In his notes on “Missionary Sermon” Simpson writes,

In the discovery of America the spiritual need of the Aborigines was a strong motive to induce the Spanish Queen Isabella to give her jewels to aid Columbus. Yet, when the ships of the navigator were upon the sea, the prows of the vessel seem to have turned aside in the direction of the West Indies, thus reserving the northern continent for the ship of an English discoverer, and the Protestant Church.⁵⁵³

Furthermore in his article “Early Settlements” he writes,

Plymouth [colony] was made under very unfavorable conditions. The soil on which they settled was poor, and the climate was inclement. But they were religious men. They came not, like the colony at St. Augustine, to destroy others, but to seek safety for themselves. They came not to amass fortunes, but to serve God. They brought the Bible with them, and they planted the school. The result is well known.⁵⁵⁴

According to Simpson, the new age required a holy people to take full advantage of the gift God was giving to the world. In an article on missions Simpson declares that “the prosperity of a government depends upon the character of its citizens.”⁵⁵⁵ From his view, holiness had spread across the land and as a result God blessed the United States.

⁵⁵² Kirby, 299.

⁵⁵³ Kirby, 302.

⁵⁵⁴ Matthew Simpson, "Early Settlements", *Western Christian Advocate*, XVI (July 11, 1849), 109; quoted in James E. Kirby, "Matthew Simpson and the Mission of America," 303.

⁵⁵⁵ Matthew Simpson, "Liberia Mission," *Western Christian Advocate*, XVII (February 6, 1850), 21; quoted in James E. Kirby, "Matthew Simpson and the Mission of America," 303.

For example, Simpson's description of the California expedition led by John C. Fremont was interpreted as an example of God's providence.

As men say, 'it happened'—yes, it just 'happened' that seven days before the papers were signed by the Mexican government our own Fremont had hoisted the Stars and Stripes, and California was ours; so that, instead of that gold-field going into the hands of a foreign power, it has come into the hands of a Protestant nation, to be used for better purposes. Now, hath not God given us these means?⁵⁵⁶

Simpson makes it clear in this writing on missions that God's providence is evident in the nation's wealth. Simpson also noted, that "upon the enlargements of commerce we greatly rely for a strong arm in missionary movements. This is an element of power that the heathen world have no conception of."⁵⁵⁷

These beliefs and the resulting worldview further concretized and normalized colonizing actions reflected in both the political views and religious views of the day. Simpson's access to a large audience through his editorial duties at the *Western Christian Advocate* and then through his status as a Bishop gave him great influence with the settler culture and important political leaders in the government of The United States.⁵⁵⁸ Kirby speaking of Simpson tells us "what is operative in the thought of Methodism's late nineteenth century spokesman is the identification of the message and mission of the Christian faith with the national destiny of the United States of America... [which] sees God as the champion of America, endorsing American purposes, and sustaining American

⁵⁵⁶ Matthew Simpson, "The Missionary Cause," *The Methodist*, II (November 23, 1861), 362, quoted in Kirby, "Matthew Simpson and the Mission of America," 304.

⁵⁵⁷ Matthew Simpson, "'The Cause of Missions,'" *Western Christian Advocate*, XVI (May 16, 1849), 77, quoted in Kirby, "Matthew Simpson and the Mission of America," 304.

⁵⁵⁸ Kirby, "Matthew Simpson and the Mission of America," *Church History*, 300.

might.”⁵⁵⁹ Simpson’s views will influence Methodist missiology into the twentieth century.

One missionary who somewhat embraced these principles was sent to the Kiowa Nation when the United States began to transition its Indian policy from annihilation to assimilation. John Jasper (J.J.) Methvin, was born in 1846 and his tenure straddled the 19th and 20th centuries. The MEC, S, licensed him to preach in 1870. He was ordained and served as a circuit rider until 1887 when he was appointed to Anadarko, Oklahoma in the IMC.⁵⁶⁰ He prepared to go alone, but his wife insisted that the family, including all five children, undertake the venture together.⁵⁶¹

Methvin ministered primarily to the Kiowa but also to the Comanche and Apache. Norwood points out that prior to the 1880s, no one volunteered to go to the “nomadic tribes” of western Oklahoma, “the so-called wild tribes.”⁵⁶² All MEC, S missionary work in Indian Territory was concentrated among the “settled” nations of eastern Oklahoma that had been moved forcibly from their homelands east of the Mississippi River.⁵⁶³

Methvin presents his thoughts about the Kiowa, Comanche, and Apache peoples when he first arrived in Anadarko, in a *Methodist Review of Missions* article from 1893. He says the western tribes are “[a] people wholly given over to superstition and idolatry, nomadic in their habits, with no settled homes, a babel of unwritten dialects, habits and

⁵⁵⁹ Kirby, "Matthew Simpson and the Mission of America," *Church History* 306.

⁵⁶⁰ Leland Clegg and William B. Oden, *Oklahoma Methodism in the Twentieth Century* (Oklahoma Conference, The Methodist Church, 1968), 34.

⁵⁶¹ This was his first wife, not the Mrs. Methvin Virginia Louke met in the 1940s. Ida May Swanson came to the Methvin Institute in 1893 and would later become the second Mrs. Methvin that Virginia knew. Frederick A. Norwood, "American Indian Women: The Rise of Methodist Women's Work 1850-1939," in *Women in New Worlds II: Historical Perspectives on the Wesleyan Tradition*, ed. Rosemary Skinner Keller, Louise L. Queen, Hilah F. Thomas (Nashville: Abingdon, 1982), 185-186.

⁵⁶² Norwood, "American Indian Women: The Rise of Methodist Women's Work 1850-1939," 185.

⁵⁶³ Norwood, 185.

customs degrading, corrupted to even a lower degradation by the vices learned from contact with white men and Mexicans.”⁵⁶⁴

According to Tash Smith Methvin made some mis-steps with the Kiowa when he first arrived. Over time he became more aware of the protocols and values of the Kiowa culture through his growing friendship with the Kiowa Chief Stumbling Bear. At one point Stumbling Bear made it clear that, “Not all of the ways of the white man are better than all of the Indian ways. Some Indian ways are best.”⁵⁶⁵ As Methvin became conscientized to the Kiowa worldview the Kiowa elders placed more trust in him. Eventually Stumbling Bear would establish the Mt. Scott Church with Methvin’s help.⁵⁶⁶ Chief Stumbling Bear’s daughter, Virginia had been educated at the Carlisle Indian School and later became an interpreter for the Kiowa Mission. Eventually her daughter and son attended Methvin’s school and began a “dynasty” of Methodist leaders and preachers.⁵⁶⁷

Methvin’s connection with Chief Stumbling Bear speaks to the power of relationships and the importance of practicing the hospitality of listening. Stumbling Bear was willing to guide Methvin and in turn Methvin listened and learned. He may not have completely abandoned his prejudices about Kiowa culture but he seems to have appreciated the cultural differences enough to defend them to his superiors.

Historian Tash Smith indicates that Methvin tried remain within the confines of the expectations of his superiors within the IMC. Smith says, “The IMC wanted a quick transformation of Indians into something similar to white society: regular church services

⁵⁶⁴ J.J. Methvin, “Work Among the Wild Tribes,” *Methodist Review of Missions*, 14, no. 4 (October, 1893): 204 in Forbes, “John Jasper Methvin: Methodist ‘Missionary to the Western Tribes’ (Oklahoma),” 46.

⁵⁶⁵ Tash Smith, *Capture These Indians for the Lord: Indians, Methodists, and Oklahomans, 1844-1939* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2014), 88.

⁵⁶⁶ Smith, *Capture These Indians for the Lord: Indians, Methodists, and Oklahomans, 1844-1939*, 125.

⁵⁶⁷ Norwood, “American Indian Women: The Rise of Methodist Women's Work 1850-1939,” 193.

in permanent structures, paid assessments for the conference's yearly budgets, and an English-speaking membership.”⁵⁶⁸ He goes on to assert that Methvin’s actions and the opinions of the Kiowa men and women he served give further insight to his worldview. Smith says the Kiowa did not embrace white culture and they “demanded concessions on Methvin's part and were more receptive to his message when it included a Native perspective, and his success came from his ability to make these concessions.”⁵⁶⁹

Before Methvin arrived, the Kiowa were corralled into an ever-smaller territory. Unlike the forced relocation policies used to move the eastern nations, the Kiowa Nation was forced to occupy lands considered to be the homeland of the Wichita Nation.⁵⁷⁰ The new boundaries were determined by the Treaty of Medicine Lodge which formed The Kiowa-Comanche-Apache Reservation (KCA reservation) consisting of three and a half million acres.⁵⁷¹ The Kiowa signed the treaty October 21, 1867 along with the Comanches, Kiowa-Apaches, Cheyennes, and Arapahoes.

Anthropologist Mildred P. Mayhall describes the negotiations and indicates that the interpretation was limited because the main interpreter “spoke only Comanche [thus], the peace provisions may not have been clear to all the Indians.”⁵⁷² She bases her observation on the evidence that they “agreed to things they had expressly said they did not want.”⁵⁷³ Though the peace had been broken before the year was out, the treaty was considered a success by the United States government because it not only provided for

⁵⁶⁸ Smith, *Capture These Indians for the Lord: Indians, Methodists, and Oklahomans, 1844-1939*, 103.

⁵⁶⁹ Smith, 103.

⁵⁷⁰ The land forming the Kiowa reservation was both a parcel the territory where the Kiowa had lived and hunted as a nomadic people and a portion of the “settled” homeland of the Wichita. Suanne Ware-Diaz, conversation with author, January 17, 2019.

⁵⁷¹ Isabel Crawford, *Kiowa: A Woman Missionary in Indian Territory*, with an introduction by Clyde Ellis, (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1998), x.

⁵⁷² Mildred P. Mayhall, *The Kiowas*. (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1987), 240.

⁵⁷³ Mayhall, *The Kiowas*. 241.

the completion of the Transcontinental Railroad but in their minds it “settled the fate of the buffalo and Indian forever.”⁵⁷⁴

During Methvin’s tenure, the work of the Dawes Commission brought further upheaval to the Kiowa. Following the treaty of Medicine Lodge and throughout the 1870s the Kiowa resisted the enforcement of the treaty boundaries. They engaged in warfare with the United States which led to the eventual capture and incarceration of many of their most gifted leaders. The men were sent to a Florida prison run by then Lieutenant R. H. Pratt who would take lessons learned from them for his education program in Carlisle. In the meantime, the pressure to adopt agricultural practices increased and white settlement continued to multiply. On October 6, 1892 the Jerome Agreement was drawn up allotting 160 acres of land to each member of the Kiowa Nation. Even though the Kiowa refused to accept the agreement the United States government finalized it in 1900. The unallotted land was sold at auction and the final 480,000 acres were opened for settlement in September of 1906.

Notably, Methvin took a lead role in these negotiations. When the Kiowa leaders protested the Jerome Agreement Methvin offered his church to them to draft their formal protest. Smith reports, “With over four hundred Kiowas and Comanches present, including Quanah Parker and Lone Wolf, whose lawsuit over the matter would eventually make its way to the Supreme Court and lead to the infamous 1903 decision *Lone Wolf v. Hitchcock*, which allowed the federal government to abrogate Indian treaties, Methvin assisted the Indians in drafting their protest, much to the dismay of Jerome Commission

⁵⁷⁴ Mayhall, *The Kiowas*. 242.

members.”⁵⁷⁵ When the Jerome Commission members tried to sway Methvin he “refused their request because it was not ‘honest dealing.’”⁵⁷⁶

Just before this, in 1890, Methvin established a church and a day school called the Methvin Institute. Similar to other missionaries of his time he sought to assimilate the children to the settler/immigrant cultural norms.⁵⁷⁷ However Methvin did not advocate for children to be separated from their families.

The Methvin Institute did not last long but it educated many of the future leaders of the conference. He struggled with the IMC and the MEC, S Women’s Missionary Society because the work was slow and church officials expected to see assimilation occur at a faster pace. Their diminishing support of the mission coincided with Oklahoma becoming a state in 1907 and at the same time the Indian Mission Conference was absorbed by the white Oklahoma Conference of the ME, S. Despite this Methvin remained and continued to walk the fine line between honoring Kiowa culture and assimilation. Many of the Indigenous leaders he mentored would continue to share the gospel and seek to maintain their identity as Indigenous peoples.⁵⁷⁸

Even though his school closed in 1907, he continued to serve the conference and advocate for Native leadership. One example of Methvin’s sensitivity can be found in his advocacy for elders. He learned quickly to approach the elders first and through their influence the ministry would grow. Likewise, he would recommend elders to lead which went against the conference view that he should be concentrating on young leadership.

⁵⁷⁵ Smith, *Capture These Indians for the Lord: Indians, Methodists, and Oklahomans, 1844-1939*, 95.

⁵⁷⁶ Smith, 95.

⁵⁷⁷ “Methvin did not learn to speak Kiowa and maintained that the Indians must fully assimilate white ways if they were to survive extinction.” Clyde A. Milner, and Floyd A. O’Neil, ed., *Churchmen and the Western Indians, 1820-1920*, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1985), XIII.

⁵⁷⁸ Smith, *Capture These Indians for the Lord: Indians, Methodists, and Oklahomans, 1844-1939*, 158.

The white conference leaders accused Methvin of having “old fashioned” ideas because they wanted him to train the young people before they became “inculcated by their Native heritage.”⁵⁷⁹ Methvin had more insight than his superintendents because he knew the elders had more prestige in the Kiowa culture.⁵⁸⁰

He also wrote prolifically about his experiences until his death in 1941. Smith recalls his advice to missionaries, “Methvin described what traits made an individual successful in the mission field. Missionaries could not hold a superiority complex over the Indians but instead must show a ‘sympathetic interest in the people.’”⁵⁸¹

The twentieth century brought more changes to Indian Policy instituted by the United States government but the assimilationist tendencies and paternalistic measures continued. By 1928 criticism of the Dawes Act called for a change in the law and policy. Lands had not only been diminished due to the government sales of unallotted lands but also due to families selling or being swindled out of their lands. According to the Meriam Report “it almost seems as if the government assumed that some magic and individual ownership of property would in itself prove an educational civilizing factor, but unfortunately, this policy has, for the most part, operated in the opposite direction.”⁵⁸² The failure, according to the Meriam Report, was due to whites eager to use the land and “idleness” on the part of “Indians.”⁵⁸³ The terminology and tone of this report give us some indication of the underlying cultural assumptions about Native peoples by the committee.

⁵⁷⁹ Smith, 159.

⁵⁸⁰ For more on Methvin and his disagreements with the Missionary Conference and mission boards see chapter 6 in Tash Smith, *Capture These Indians for the Lord: Indians, Methodists, and Oklahomans, 1844-1939* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2014).

⁵⁸¹ Smith, *Capture These Indians for the Lord: Indians, Methodists, and Oklahomans, 1844-1939*, 104.

⁵⁸² Vogel, *This Country Was Ours; A Documentary History of the American Indian*, 195.

⁵⁸³ Vogel, 195.

The governments answer to remedy the situation was the Indian Reorganization Act (IRA), also known as the Wheeler-Howard Act of 1934. American Indians were given United States citizenship in 1924 and this new act reintroduced tribal government and rescinded bans on Native cultural and religious practices. “Unfortunately, the IRA, also known as the New Deal for Indians, still limited self-government. It gave the Secretary of the Interior veto power over the use of natural resources, negotiating power of mineral, land, and water rights, approval of appointments to tribal courts, tribal election rules, and constitutional changes.⁵⁸⁴ Furthermore, any self-governing tribal courts developed on Indian lands must adopt United States polity which further eroded traditional tribal values and beliefs.⁵⁸⁵ Scholarships and funds were to be provided for tribes to reestablish themselves, but according to Vogel they were woefully underfunded.⁵⁸⁶ Also Vogel tells us “all the tribes of Oklahoma, listed by name, and composing the largest Indian population of any state at the time, were excluded from all significant portions of the IRA.”⁵⁸⁷

This meant nations within the Methodist Church conference, including those presented in this dissertation, (i.e. the Kiowa, Cherokee, Choctaw, Muskogee/Creek nations), were left without exclusive entitlement to their lands, rights to develop their own government system, the right to incorporate, and the ability to vote against the application of the IRA (a special vote was to take place within one year by every nation who qualified).⁵⁸⁸ Due to protest, the Oklahoma Indian Welfare Act of 1936 was passed

⁵⁸⁴ Vogel, 196.

⁵⁸⁵ Poupart, “Crime and Justice in American Indian Communities,” 150.

⁵⁸⁶ Vogel, *This Country Was Ours; A Documentary History of the American Indian*, 196.

⁵⁸⁷ Vogel, 196.

⁵⁸⁸ see report concerning the House Resolution authorizing the committee on interior and insular affairs to investigate the Bureau of Indian affairs, pursuant to H. Res. 698 (82d cong.), December 15, 1952, 1035-39. in Vogel, *This Country Was Ours; A Documentary History of the American Indian*, 197 – 202.

which provided Indigenous nations within Oklahoma some of the rights under the IRA including the restriction of “Indian ownership,” the ability to organize and adopt a constitution, as well as incorporate.⁵⁸⁹

By the mid-1940s when Virginia Louke arrived in Oklahoma, a handbook for Federal Indian Law had been compiled in an effort “to systematize and interpret [the] extensive body of legal information.”⁵⁹⁰ According to the author Felix S. Cohen, the fundamental principle of Indian law is that “those powers which are lawfully vested in an Indian tribe are not, in general, delegated powers granted by express acts of Congress, but rather inherent powers of a limited sovereignty which has never been extinguished.”⁵⁹¹ The key phrase here being “limited sovereignty” which continued the paternalistic relationship between the United States government and various Nations.

Further changes by the IRA included recommended adjustments for engagement with Indigenous peoples. The Meriam Report, officially known as *The Problem of Indian Administration*, included a section on “Missionary Activities Among the Indians.”⁵⁹² This section presented various findings regarding the failure by churches, mission boards, and missionaries. It was critical of various aspects of mission work including the inability to “study sympathetically and understandingly the Indians’ own religions and ethics and to use what is good in them as the foundation upon which to build.”⁵⁹³ The report denounced missionary attempts to “blindly to destroy the whole Indian religion” when

⁵⁸⁹ Vogel, 203 – 205.

⁵⁹⁰ Vogel, 205.

⁵⁹¹ Vogel, 206.

⁵⁹² Lewis Meriam, et al, *The Problem of Indian Administration, Report of a Survey Made at the Request of Honorable Hubert Work, Secretary of the Interior*, Prepared by Brookings Institute For Government Research (Washington, D.C: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1928), 812.

⁵⁹³ Meriam, *The Problem of Indian Administration, Report of a Survey Made at the Request of Honorable Hubert Work, Secretary of the Interior*, 845.

indeed they may have attacked “some of the very elements of religious belief which the missionary himself espouses and which he hopes the Indian will adopt.”⁵⁹⁴ Furthermore, the authors asserted that by condemning “all things Indian, the Indian is rendered hostile, and in self-defense clings all the more tenaciously to his religion.”⁵⁹⁵ Furthermore, it cited governmental challenges caused by “factionalism among the Indians...[which] caused great difficulty in the administration of Indian affairs...” because religious disagreements between tribal officials prevented collaboration.⁵⁹⁶

Essentially the Meriam Report recommended that missionaries adjust their tactics and proclaim a new gospel that values traditional practices because findings “generally reveal strong intimations if not positive assertions of the first principles of many of the great doctrines of world religions, and therefore the mind of the missionary should be sympathetically engaged to discover if perchance the Indian, too, has not worshipped at the altar of the unknown God.”⁵⁹⁷ Through this report Secretary of the Interior, John Collier, a member of the Seneca Nation, forced denominations to decide what they believe to be essential to religious belief and practice in order to make adjustments to their missiological approaches. In 1934 MEC mission executive Mark Dawber followed Secretary Collier’s lead and proposed a controversial new mission policy of inculturation stating, “Indian missions of the future must find some way to interpret Christianity in terms of some of the religious ceremonies that are already accepted by Indians.”⁵⁹⁸

⁵⁹⁴ Meriam, *The Problem of Indian Administration, Report of a Survey Made at the Request of Honorable Hubert Work, Secretary of the Interior*, 846.

⁵⁹⁵ Meriam, 846.

⁵⁹⁶ Meriam, 844.

⁵⁹⁷ Meriam, 845.

⁵⁹⁸ Russell E. Richey, Kenneth E. Rowe, and Jean Miller Schmidt, 1934a “Mission Executive Mark Dawber Proposes New Directions in Native American Ministries,” *The Methodist Experience in America II: Sourcebook*, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2000), 538.

It appeared that the United States government was finally acknowledging Native Peoples right to publicly reclaim their unique cultural practices and was moving towards recognizing their right to determine their own future. Unfortunately, these ideas would face backlash in the decades to follow. Criticism of the IRA and its restoration of tribal sovereignty came from those who supported assimilation. They advocated for the elimination of the federal trust relationship based on the belief that nations could lift themselves out of poverty if governmental assistance were suspended.

The Methodist Church also appeared to be moving towards this position. In 1944, the General Conference adopted a resolution affirming “that American citizens of Indian ancestry should be regarded as citizens and no longer as wards of the government. They should be accorded the same opportunities, educational, economic and religious, that are enjoyed by other citizens; they should also be asked to assume the same responsibilities.”⁵⁹⁹

Poupart writes,

A federal report released in 1949 recommended the “total assimilation of the Indians into the mass of the population as full tax paying citizens” and termination of the federal wardship status in 1953. Two decades after the cessation of formal assimilationist policies, the Termination Act passed. It ended federal recognition of certain Nations and eliminated aid and services in a renewed effort to assimilate Nations into mainstream America.⁶⁰⁰

To continue the absorption process Congress passed The Indian Relocation Act in 1956. It encouraged Native Americans, who lived on or near Indian reservations to relocate to urban areas for supposedly greater employment opportunities. The relocation

⁵⁹⁹ The Methodist Church, *Doctrines and Discipline of the Methodist Church, 1944: (The Methodist Episcopal Church, the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, the Methodist Protestant Church)* (Methodist Publishing House, 1944), 570-571.

⁶⁰⁰ Poupart, “Crime and Justice in American Indian Communities,” 150.

program resulted in a migration to relocation centers organized by the United States government to provide training and jobs. According to Poupart, "To boost assimilation, many relocation programs required participants to sign an agreement indicating that they would not return to their reservations upon completing the program."⁶⁰¹ The Indian Relocation Act succeeded in luring people away from their communities and by the 1980s, "more than half of the 1.6 million Indians in the U.S. had been scattered to cities across the United States."⁶⁰²

It is telling that the MEC and MEC, S merged in 1939 but was not until 1959 that The Methodist Church saw the need to form the Oklahoma Indian Mission Conference. Explaining the effects of the Indian Relocation Act Homer Noley says, "many people were stranded and stayed in these new urban communities" which set in motion a crisis within the Oklahoma Indian Mission.⁶⁰³ He quotes Forbes Durant from 1962 who said "the Relocation Program sponsored by the Federal Government has screened the families and moved them to various places for employment. It leaves many of our rural churches with a few potential leaders and financial support is decreasing."⁶⁰⁴ The cycle had turned again towards eliminating Indigenous culture.

Throughout his ministry Methvin seemed to struggle between two positions. He cared deeply about the souls of the Kiowa men and women he worked with and yet he also adhered to many of the dominant cultural expectations. His ecumenical partners felt he was too lenient in regards to cultural accommodations and yet he also thought assimilation was the best chance for the survival of the Kiowa people. Throughout his

⁶⁰¹ Poupart, 149-150.

⁶⁰² Poupart, 151.

⁶⁰³ Noley, *First White Frost: Native Americans and United Methodism*, 220.

⁶⁰⁴ Noley, 221.

ministry and into retirement the one thing that is striking is his continued advocacy and justice for Indigenous leaders, pastors, and churches. He fought for funding and fairness. He especially spoke out against what he perceived as misuse by white churches and pastors in the Oklahoma Conference of funds earmarked for work with “full bloods.”⁶⁰⁵

Methvin’s story is another example of The Methodist Church’s struggle with its missiological methods and ministry with Native Americans. This chapter attempted to begin the process of answering Rev. Tinker’s call for non-Native Methodists to “dig up” the history of Methodist missions and interrogate the missiological struggle. Since the colonial history of the United States lives within each one of us who inhabit this land, a significant piece of identity formation and worldview analysis involves examination of history. This chapter presents one example of the kind of historical analysis that will help euro-christian white settler/immigrants to better understand the history of colonization and how it has formed our identity.

Even though this chapter presented a limited overview of the history of the United States and Methodist missions, hopefully it has inspired the reader to delve more deeply into the history of Indigenous peoples of North America. Analysis like this can help to build the trust necessary for relationships with Indigenous peoples. The more we euro-christian settler/immigrants know about the history of colonization and how it has affected our identity as human beings and as United Methodists, the deeper we can engage in relationships.

In addition, studying the narratives such as the Sand Creek Massacre bring to our consciousness the depth of trauma our culture and our church has perpetrated against

⁶⁰⁵ Especially see chapter 4 Tash Smith, *Capture These Indians for the Lord: Indians, Methodists, and Oklahomans, 1844-1939* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2014), 125ff.

Native Americans. It raises our awareness to the connection between christianity and the violence that continued throughout the 19th century as well as ways in which the church covered over the true stories. Raising awareness about these acts also conscientizes white settlers to stop the cycles of violence that continue through our words or actions.

Additionally, the examination of leaders and missionaries such as Checote, Chivington, and Methvin provided concrete examples of Methodists who engaged in ministry with Native Americans. From their stories it appears that local missionaries such as the Cherokee missionaries, Checote, and Methvin tended to be more sensitive to the political whirlwinds that affected the Nations and more apt to join with the people to advocate for more humane treatment. Whereas church conferences, superintendents, and itinerant preachers, such as those who refused to help the Cherokee, and were further removed from the people seemed to be less aware and far less sympathetic. The most destructive examples, such as Chivington, demonstrate it clear the kinds of hubris that can go unchecked when preachers neglect to listen and build long term relationships.

The stories also give evidence of Methodist missionaries that were aware of their cultural identity and as a result approached their ministry contextually. The work done with the Wyandot Nation continued because, for the most part, missionaries such as John Stewart were attentive and listened. In some cases, the missionaries such as Finley did not attend as closely as they might have to their own preconceived ideas but they did advocate with their people when they were facing unjust policies such as forced relocation.⁶⁰⁶

⁶⁰⁶ The Wyandot also faced multiple relocations.

Since colonizing practices involve silencing voices it follows then that part of the decolonizing process would provide space for marginalized voices to speak. Thus, as we turn to the next chapter we will examine the history of Methodist missions again through the lives of some of the women whom the church tried to marginalize. In spite of the efforts of some to limit their influence the women prevailed and shaped Methodist missions into the twentieth century.

Chapter IV

Methodist Women's View on Lived Holiness

*“It is the choice for good and resistance to evil that fulfills human life, I believe. It is acting for justice and against injustice that gives life ultimate meaning, including the act of remembering those witnesses who went before us. It is speaking out in the public space, and doing it in time, that makes human society possible at all.”*⁶⁰⁷

David Hempton tells us “...Methodism was without question preponderantly a women's movement.”⁶⁰⁸ Despite this, Methodism was also comprised of “a predominantly male leadership and a predominantly female membership.”⁶⁰⁹ However the number of female leaders began increasing throughout the nineteenth century. It is important to acknowledge that most of these female leaders were white women. While there were some African American deaconesses, the women's missionary efforts in the MEC and MEC, S both domestic and foreign were primarily made up of Americans. This chapter will present stories of Methodist women's leadership as it pertains to Native American missions in the United States in the 19th and 20th centuries. It will also provide historical context and insights into the lives of the women I met with from the OIMC.

Missiologist Dana L. Robert points out that historically Methodist women concerned themselves with the personal and ethical aspects of mission.⁶¹⁰ Moreover they “incorporated the liberation of women from oppressive social, cultural, religious, and economic structures into their mission theories.”⁶¹¹ They also prioritized the concerns of

⁶⁰⁷ Peggy Billings, *Speaking out in the Public Space: An Account of the Section of Christian Social Relations, Women's Division, the United Methodist Church, 1968-1984* (New York: Women's Division, General Board of Global Ministries, United Methodist Church, 1995), viii.

⁶⁰⁸ Hempton, *Methodism: Empire of the Spirit*, 145.

⁶⁰⁹ Hempton, 150.

⁶¹⁰ Robert, *American Women in Mission: The Modern Mission Era 1792-1992*, 410.

⁶¹¹ Robert, 410.

women and children and used holistic measures which sought to meet the needs of people among whom they lived.⁶¹² Robert says, there are two concepts inherent in Methodism that set it apart from other denominations and aided in its missionary efforts. The first was the emphasis on “human cooperation in one's own salvation” and the second was the empowerment of women.⁶¹³ Theresa Hoover, former Associate General Secretary of the Women’s Division of the General Board of Global Ministries of The United Methodist Church, concurs,

In general, our predecessors did not claim leadership on the basis of exceptional spiritual gifts, nor were they called to the preaching ministry. Instead they were inspired to meet the combined evangelical, physical, and social needs of marginal people – especially women and children, who could not be reached by male missionaries abroad and who were ignored by church inside it home. They did this chiefly by establishing mission institutions staffed by women.⁶¹⁴

The mission efforts began when leading men of The Methodist Episcopal Church formed The Methodist Missionary Society in 1818 to bring John Stewart's successful work among the Wyandot Nation of Ohio into the fold of The Methodist Episcopal Church.⁶¹⁵ Immediately, one of those leaders, Joshua Soule moved that “the females attached to the Methodist congregations be invited to form a Society auxiliary” that would support their work.⁶¹⁶ The New York Female Missionary Society organized on July 5, 1819, at the Wesleyan Seminary on Forsyth Street. Mary Mason was elected its first director.⁶¹⁷ Historian and missions scholar Susan E. Warrick explains that the

⁶¹² Robert, 410, 412.

⁶¹³ Robert, 139.

⁶¹⁴ Theresa Hoover, *With Unveiled Face: Centennial Reflections on Women and Men in the Community of the Church*, (New York: Women's Division, General Board of Global Ministries, The United Methodist Church, 1983), 13.

⁶¹⁵ Warrick, "She Diligently Followed Every Good Work": Mary Mason And The New York Female Missionary Society, 216.

⁶¹⁶ Warrick, 216.

⁶¹⁷ Warrick, 217.

auxiliaries multiplied throughout the connection at the local church level and spread by word of mouth as women moved from church to church and organized new groups.⁶¹⁸

The mission work became a successful site of burgeoning women's leadership. The auxiliaries supported missionaries such as James B. Finley with money and books.⁶¹⁹

Relationships marked the growth of the movement. Relationships not only formed among members of the Missionary Society but also with the missions they supported.⁶²⁰ For instance, correspondence between the women and the Wyandot leaders began in 1826 and two Wyandot chiefs, Between-the-Logs and Mononcue, visited with the Mason's in July of 1826.⁶²¹ The Wyandot leaders met with the Missionary Society later that month as they engaged on a speaking tour of New York congregations.⁶²²

Even though Mary Mason remarked in her diary that her visit with the Wyandots inspired her renewed interest in the mission work, she was not immune to the influence of the Doctrine of Discovery. Reflecting the dominant understanding of the "frontier" as Terra Nullius, Mary urged women not to "deny the small subscription this institution solicits, to extend the bare necessities of life to our dear brethren who are spending their strength and wasting their health in traversing dreary mountains and pathless forests to carry the glad tidings of free salvation to the scattered inhabitants of the wilderness

....⁶²³

Mary Mason's words reflected the dominant societal norms concerning Indigenous peoples. Yet her leadership and that of other women within the mission

⁶¹⁸ Warrick, 218.

⁶¹⁹ Warrick, 219.

⁶²⁰ Warrick, 220.

⁶²¹ Warrick, 219.

⁶²² Warrick, 220.

⁶²³ Warrick, 217.

movement during this time began to challenge gender norms. Methodist women were not only organizing missions but they were becoming leaders in the American Holiness Movement. Phoebe Palmer, a leader in the movement, had been holding regular prayer meetings in her home for both men and women in the 1830s. Dana Robert tells us, “As women across Methodism experienced holiness, they felt freed from the silence imposed on them by American society and they began to speak out in church and to commit themselves to social service and mission work on behalf of others.”⁶²⁴ For both leaders of the movement and women who were appointed missionaries, “mission work, especially, required the special consecration and sacrificial submission to God's will that could be obtained through an experience of ‘perfect love.’”⁶²⁵ The experience of sanctification and the pursuit of holiness provided a platform for missions. Their new-found freedom combined with their success as fund-raisers, lobbyists, and organizers gave women increasing influence in mission work.⁶²⁶

Unfortunately, as Robert explains, “the female missionary Society of The Methodist Episcopal Church, founded in 1819, only lasted for 40 years until it was thwarted by local ministers who did not want money to bypass the local church treasury.”⁶²⁷ Nonetheless, the women persisted and the mission work continued. On March 22, 1869, Warrick tells us that eight women braved a storm to meet at the Tremont Street Church in Boston, where they organized the Woman’s Foreign Missionary Society of the MEC to send single women to the mission field. Perhaps it is not surprising that several managers of

⁶²⁴ For more on sanctification see further resources in footnote 27 Robert, *American Women in Mission: The Modern Mission Era 1792-1992*, 140.

⁶²⁵ Robert, 144.

⁶²⁶ Warrick, "She Diligently Followed Every Good Work": Mary Mason And The New York Female Missionary Society, 229.

⁶²⁷ Robert, *American Women in Mission: The Modern Mission Era 1792-1992*, 193.

the new society's New York Branch were former managers of the New York Female Missionary Society.⁶²⁸ The women of the MEC, S, organized their Women's Foreign Missionary Society in 1878. This organization would support Methvin's work on the KCA reservation.

Unfortunately, the cycles of success followed by curtailment of their funds and work by the men would continue. Due to institutional discrimination, women's missionary organizations sought to become autonomous and control their own funding. They not only wanted to separate themselves from male oversight but they also wanted the discretion to extend their reach beyond the social concerns being addressed by the larger church.⁶²⁹ The lessons they learned about exerting leverage and the importance of building ecumenical relationships helped them as they navigated challenges to their missionary activities.⁶³⁰

As the work continued it also adjusted. Dana Robert explains a common missiology the women developed in the latter half of the 19th century was called "Women's Work for Women."⁶³¹ She provides examples from foreign missions but some of the same principals can be found in use in Oklahoma with Native Americans. Essentially single non-Indigenous women missionaries went into the field with the understanding that they were evangelizing heathen women through the civilizing process of education thereby elevating the social status of their heathen sisters.⁶³² Unfortunately,

⁶²⁸ Warrick, "She Diligently Followed Every Good Work": Mary Mason And The New York Female Missionary Society, 229.

⁶²⁹ Alice Knotts, *Fellowship of Love: Methodist Women Changing American Racial Attitudes, 1920-1968* (Nashville, TN: Kingswood Books, 1996), 34.

⁶³⁰ For more information see Alice L. Hageman, "Women and Missions: The Cost of Liberation," in *Sexist Religion and Women in the Church No More Silence*, (New York: Association Press, 1974), 167-193.

⁶³¹ Robert, *American Women in Mission: The Modern Mission Era 1792-1992*, 130.

⁶³² Robert, 130.

their efforts perpetuated some of the same colonizing tendencies presented by non-Native male preachers and missionaries in the last chapter. Their work often viewed christianity as superior to non-christian religions and thus “was often perceived by the missionized as cultural imperialism designed to tear down their own customs and societies.”⁶³³

However, “women's work for women” mitigated the colonizing tendencies because they took women's victimization seriously, confronted patriarchy, and “[i]ts focus on global sisterhood and the essential unity of humankind was a valuable corrective to patriarchal notions that valued men over women, and boys over girls in many parts of the world.”⁶³⁴ Unfortunately their understanding of intersectionality was limited at this time, since ultimately “women’s work for women” was based in the belief that “worldwide unity of the female gender outweighed class, national, or racial categories.”⁶³⁵

Around the same time the missionary societies formed, white women became increasingly concerned about Indigenous women. In the spring of 1879 Mary L. Bonney, a Baptist school teacher, encouraged by Mrs. John Jacob Astor and supported by Harriet Beecher Stowe, decided to organize the Women's National Indian Association made up of Christian women. Historian Cathleen Cahill tells us,

The first voices among this new generation of reformers were women who urged Congress to maintain the nation’s honor by upholding treaties. These women had been influenced by the long history of white women’s work on behalf of vulnerable groups of people. Mary Bonney and Amelia Quinton of the Chestnut Street School for Girls in Philadelphia, ...organized a group under the name Indian Treaty-Keeping and Protective Association, emphasizing a strategy of urging Congress to keep its promises and recognize treaty stipulations. Their group continued to grow and incorporated in 1883 as the nondenominational Women’s National Indian Association (WNIA). Its members initially focused on

⁶³³ Robert, 136.

⁶³⁴ Robert, 136.

⁶³⁵ Robert, 133, 136.

enormous petition drives urging Congress to uphold treaties, collecting 100,000 signatures in 1883 alone.⁶³⁶

The Association “launched a campaign to inform the public of the needs, capabilities, and progress of the Indians;” and it “raised money to send workers to the reservations to assist the Indians in home building, to establish hospitals, and to teach in the schools.⁶³⁷ This work coincided with Pratt’s experiment with his Federal Boarding School in Carlisle Pennsylvania mentioned in chapter 3. The WNIA, disagreed with Pratt’s model and pressed for schools to remain on the reservations or close to home so that children could maintain a stable home life.⁶³⁸ In this case their efforts worked to keep families together, unfortunately sometimes their advocacy had harmful consequences.

For instance, Mary Lowe Dickinson, a Methodist laywoman and WNIA president in 1885, gave a speech praising The Allotment Act and called for continued need for similar work:

Mrs. Dickinson acknowledged the Divine guidance in and upon our labors; referred to some difficulties overcome in work; contrasted the progress of Indians in the present with the story of their past; spoke of new Governmental justice; glanced at the work accomplished and that proposed by this at the favorable attitude of Congress, and the Executive, and at advancement in legislation and educational work; spoke of the invasions of Indian lands and of Indian outbreaks; referred to the work of The Rights Association, and considered the redistribution of lands and the legislation still needed on Indian behalf.⁶³⁹

⁶³⁶ Cathleen D. Cahill, *Federal Fathers and Mothers: A Social History of the United States Indian Service, 1869-1933*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 22-23.

⁶³⁷ Mark Odis Hagenbuch, “Richard Henry Pratt, the Carlisle Indian Industrial School, and United States Policies Related to American Indian Education 1879 to 1904” (Ph.D. diss., The Pennsylvania State University, 1998), 21.

⁶³⁸ Hagenbuch, “Richard Henry Pratt, the Carlisle Indian Industrial School, and United States Policies Related to American Indian Education 1879 to 1904,” 21.

⁶³⁹ Women's National Indian Association, *Annual Report of the Women's National Indian Association: President's Address* (Philadelphia, PA, 1885), 9.

Not surprisingly, Henry L. Dawes, author of the Allotment Act, appreciated the work of WNIA. Dawes once stated, “The new Indian policy of the government...was born of and nursed by the women of this Association.”⁶⁴⁰ Not long after this the men formed the Indian Rights Association and co-opted the social advocacy work of the WNIA leaving them to concentrate on missionary activities. Ironically after all was said and done reformers who viewed themselves as “friends of the Indian” such as the WNIA, joined unknowingly with others who saw an opportunity for seizing more Indigenous lands.⁶⁴¹

Unfortunately, the WNIA caused more harm than good with their support of the Allotment Act. Unlike the Lake Mohonk reformers and the early work of the WNIA who tried to solve the “Indian Problem” without any Native American voices present, the value of relationship and listening would influence non-Native women who actually lived amongst the Native peoples.

In 1880 women of the MEC began advocating for missions in the United States and took the lead in organizing Home Missionary Societies. Even though they would not be officially recognized until 1890, they were determined to begin to send missionaries. Once the WNIA increased their focus on mission they also began plans to sponsor a missionary. These organizations worked together to place women in the field. One such woman was Frances L. Gaddis. In July 1885 she arrived on the Pawnee reservation in Indian Territory with her young son who was about fourteen. Her ministry under the auspices of the WNIA, consisted of a sewing circle, Sunday school, some minor medical

⁶⁴⁰ Hagenbuch, “Richard Henry Pratt, the Carlisle Indian Industrial School, and United States Policies Related to American Indian Education 1879 to 1904,” 22.

⁶⁴¹ Forbes, “‘And Obey God Etc.’: Methodism and American Indians,” 227.

procedures, and worship services. She drew 27 members including three chiefs.⁶⁴² She sought to align her ministry with a denomination and it continued under Women's Home Missionary Society sponsorship until 1907.

Meanwhile, the MEC, S Methodist women served in IMC as missionaries and teachers. Their work began with the Harrell International Institute, in Muskogee in Indian Territory. In 1886 the school became a principal project of the Woman's Board of Missions MEC, S.⁶⁴³ Forbes tells us that prior to the 1880s, all MEC, S missionary work in Indian Territory was concentrated among the Nations of eastern Oklahoma that had been moved forcibly from their homelands east of the Mississippi River.⁶⁴⁴ This remained their focus until J. J. Methvin, who we met in chapter 3, began his ministry amongst the Western tribes in Anadarko Oklahoma at which point the Women's Home Missionary Society supported his work.⁶⁴⁵

Methvin's wife worked with him at the mission along with a few other women. Forbes says that women participated in the mission "aiding Indian women" as well as teaching children from the Kiowa, Apache, Comanche, Caddo, and Delaware tribes.⁶⁴⁶ One notable woman is Helen Brewster, who was assigned to "camp work." Camp work involved visiting and living with the Native peoples in their own cultural surroundings. We are told that Brewster learned more than one language, engendered the admiration of Methvin and engaged with several leaders including Comanche leader Quannah Parker.⁶⁴⁷ Methvin wrote about her:

⁶⁴² Norwood, "American Indian Women: The Rise of Methodist Women's Work 1850-1939," 179.

⁶⁴³ Norwood, 185.

⁶⁴⁴ Norwood, 185..

⁶⁴⁵ Leland Clegg and William B. Oden, *Oklahoma Methodism in the Twentieth Century* (Oklahoma Conference, The Methodist Church, 1968), 34.

⁶⁴⁶ Norwood, "American Indian Women: The Rise of Methodist Women's Work 1850-1939," 186.

⁶⁴⁷ Norwood, 186.

Miss Brewster's camp work is the most difficult work we have in all this field, I suppose, but it is a very essential factor in successful missionary operations here. . . . her work as Bible woman and teacher down among the Comanches, excites my continual admiration. So far as her own race is concerned, she is alone, being twenty miles away from any white. She goes into the homes of the Comanches and Mexicans, reads and talks and prays with them, eats with them, and in a kind, patient, cheerful way has won their affection. She has learned their language and can already speak it.⁶⁴⁸

We need to be cautious about taking missionary descriptions at face value because of the cultural misunderstandings that often occur. We do not know for certain if she “won their affection,” but Methvin’s remarks indicate she is living out what it means to be a beloved woman. She engaged in the hospitality of listening in the language of the people. She both attended to her own identity and attended to their context. Her sensitivity to the culture and facility with languages is remarkable. Methvin did not speak the languages. One of the reasons he gave for insisting that the Kiowa learn the English language was due to the difficulty of learning the numerous dialects.⁶⁴⁹

It appears Brewster also forged trusting relationships because some of the men and women came to her to talk about their marriages. Norwood described a conversation with a man named Horse who said “disconsolately, ‘I would love to be a Christian, I earnestly long to be one but you know how I am all tangled up by having two wives. I say to you younger men, Don’t let your life get tangled up in that way.’”⁶⁵⁰ Norwood tells us missionaries such as Brewster and Methvin were concerned about the condition of women’s lives and Brewster “seemed well able to take such polygamous customs in stride” while ministering with the women to try and improve their lives.⁶⁵¹

⁶⁴⁸ Norwood, 187.

⁶⁴⁹ Smith, *Capture These Indians for the Lord: Indians, Methodists, and Oklahomans, 1844-1939*, 92.

⁶⁵⁰ Norwood, “American Indian Women: The Rise of Methodist Women's Work 1850-1939,” 188.

⁶⁵¹ Norwood, 187-188.

Historian Tash Smith tells another story about Helen Brewster. He relates that she was fired by an IMC missionary to the Comanche Nation named William Brewer. Brewer denounced assimilation policies and criticized Methvin's missionary practices. Tash says that by the turn of the century, "Missionaries who dismissed Indian culture completely risked alienating their audience, while those who assumed Indian culture themselves angered their church superiors."⁶⁵² It would make sense that Helen Brewster's culturally sensitive engagement with the Comanche and Kiowa would have needed and received the support of a missionary like Methvin.

Apparently Methvin found Brewer to be too independent and arrogant for his taste because Brewer styled himself as an expert with Indian culture and languages.⁶⁵³ This rift in their relationship widened when Brewer, without consulting Methvin, removed Helen Brewster after she told him that she lied about being a Southern Methodist in order to get the appointment.⁶⁵⁴ While the men struggled over power, Helen Brewster continued about her work. She steadfastly stayed in her position and remained an active missionary for years with the Comanche. We cannot know all the circumstances of this encounter but Helen's competency in ministry speaks for itself and the degree to which Methvin trusts her is evident.

White women such as Helen Brewster were not the only ones working in the Indian Mission Conference. Indigenous women also led in the mission. Norwood writes, "Beyond uplifting [Indigenous] women's role within the home, Christian missions also endowed them with greater dignity and worth by providing outlets for service and

⁶⁵² Smith, *Capture These Indians for the Lord: Indians, Methodists, and Oklahomans, 1844-1939*, 103.

⁶⁵³ Smith, 101.

⁶⁵⁴ Smith, 102.

leadership in the church”⁶⁵⁵ Norwood shares a number of stories about women from the KCA reservation who were mentored by Methodist Missionaries. One notable woman is Hazel Lonewolf who eventually became Hazel Lonewolf Botone. She graduated from Methvin Institute, and supported both her husband and her son who became local preachers. Norwood tells us she performed the typical activities a preacher’s wife might engage in such as playing the piano, teaching Sunday School, and encouraging the women’s groups. But she also served as president, vice-president, and spiritual life secretary in the Woman's Society of Christian Service, and when her husband died 1961, she continued his ministry for another 10 years.⁶⁵⁶ The Botone’s have been an influential family in Methodism and I interviewed one of Hazel’s grandchildren, Rev. Julienne Judd, for this dissertation.

By the late 1890s, nine missionary societies were organized in Indian Territory by the WFMS of the MEC, S but they became increasingly smaller as the white population increased because the MEC, S church chose to concentrate on the settlers.⁶⁵⁷ By the early 20th century women’s mission boards had raised significant funds and had founded “schools and colleges, homes and settlement houses” and had invested in lands and assets and been supporting active foreign missionaries.⁶⁵⁸ Historian Alice Knotts in her book *Fellowship of Love*, describes how men in the MEC and particularly the MEC, S soon took notice of these organizations and their assets and began machinations that would ultimately dissolve these organizations into the larger church mission societies. She describes how men curtailed women’s leadership and assumed administrative oversight

⁶⁵⁵ Norwood, “American Indian Women: The Rise of Methodist Women's Work 1850-1939,” 192.

⁶⁵⁶ Norwood, 194.

⁶⁵⁷ Norwood, 187.

⁶⁵⁸ Knotts, *Fellowship of Love: Methodist Women Changing American Racial Attitudes, 1920-1968*, 36.

of their organizations leaving them with “only token power.”⁶⁵⁹ Notably the men also shut down the independent women's journal which had been expounding upon “the cause of uplifting the Negro race.”⁶⁶⁰ Another casualty was the Indian Mission.

All these decisions were carried out in the name of expediency and efficiency. Further disruption to the MEC, S missionary effort occurred with the dissolution of the separate Indian Mission Conference in 1906.⁶⁶¹ With Oklahoma statehood the MEC, S chose to form the Oklahoma Conference. The Indian Mission Conference would be reestablished in 1918 but by that time the funding had been funneled into rural church support.⁶⁶²

Alice Knotts says that through these experiences Methodist women, of the MEC, MEC, S and The Colored Methodist Episcopal Church (CME) became acutely aware of the ways in which the comprehensive and complicated intersections of their gender and their work in race relations could be subverted. These lessons spurred them on to create more subversive and savvy organizing.⁶⁶³

Mary Agnes Dougherty in her book, *My Calling to Fulfill*, explains that Methodist women were becoming more socially active in the 19th century but she also adds that deaconesses in particular were taking practical steps in order to “buffer the dehumanizing impact of industrial capitalism.”⁶⁶⁴ The women’s Mission societies in the early 20th

⁶⁵⁹ Knotts, 36-37.

⁶⁶⁰ Knotts, 36-37.

⁶⁶¹ Norwood, "American Indian Women: The Rise of Methodist Women's Work 1850-1939," 187

⁶⁶² Norwood, 187

⁶⁶³ See footnote 33 for differing views between men and women of this historical account. Knotts, *Fellowship of Love: Methodist Women Changing American Racial Attitudes, 1920-1968*, 37.

⁶⁶⁴ Mary Agnes Theresa Dougherty, *My Calling to Fulfill: Deaconesses in the United Methodist Tradition* (New York: Women’s Division, General Board of Global Ministries, the United Methodist Church, 1997), ix.

century had begun to integrate social services into their missiological practice.⁶⁶⁵ Dana L. Robert explains that women stressed relationships and concern for the welfare of the whole person.⁶⁶⁶ As the Social Gospel became more prevalent and provided theological underpinning for the ministry of male urban pastors, it also spoke through the witness of the Methodist deaconesses. Dougherty describes how the Women's Foreign Missionary society of the MEC gave birth to the modern deaconess movement within Pan Methodism. Returning from missions in India in 1886, Isabella Thoburn joined with Lucy Rider Meyer in November of 1887 and enlisted powerful white men in the denomination to advocate for formal recognition of the office of Deaconess.⁶⁶⁷ That recognition came at the General conference of 1888. Other Methodist denominations organized deaconess ministries over the next twenty years. The United Brethren in Christ followed in 1897, the MEC, S in 1902, The Evangelical Association in 1903, and The Methodist Protestant Church in 1908.⁶⁶⁸

By October 1885 the MEC Chicago Training School for City, Home and Foreign missions had been established. Lucy Ryder Meyer began the school to train women missionaries in Bible study, theology, church history, Christian education, and eventually medicine along with practical fieldwork amongst the poor.⁶⁶⁹ By the turn of the 20th century the curriculum had expanded into "psychology, ethics, sociology, and educational methods."⁶⁷⁰

⁶⁶⁵ Mead, *Lively Experiment: The Shaping of Christianity in America*, 118, 121.

⁶⁶⁶ Robert, *American Women in Mission: The Modern Mission Era 1792-1992*, 410.

⁶⁶⁷ Mary Agnes Theresa Dougherty, *My Calling to Fulfill: Deaconesses in the United Methodist Tradition* (Women's Division, General Board of Global Ministries, the United Methodist Church, 1997), 24.

⁶⁶⁸ Mary Agnes Theresa Dougherty, *My Calling to Fulfill: Deaconesses in the United Methodist Tradition* (Women's Division, General Board of Global Ministries, the United Methodist Church, 1997), x.

⁶⁶⁹ Robert, *American Women in Mission: The Modern Mission Era 1792-1992*, 154.

⁶⁷⁰ Robert, 156.

Though social theory may have influenced the curriculum Dougherty points out that the deaconess movement applied that theory in practical ways to minister with the poor, particularly poor women and children.⁶⁷¹ According to Dougherty in the beginning women who claimed the Deaconess office wanted to infuse it with a “mother” element.⁶⁷² Building upon their sisters who had served as leaders in the early Methodist movement, they saw themselves as set apart for the ministry of Christian service. Theresa Hoover asserts, “Our foremothers were social feminists, who interpreted the gospel calling them to extend the nurturing protection of their homes into the whole world.⁶⁷³ Their actions bespoke of the hospitality of listening and the importance of relationships. They visited homes, and provided staples such as food and clothing, as well as medical care and “a sympathetic ear and comforting words.”⁶⁷⁴ These values can be seen in the non-Native women who would become missionaries and serve as Deaconesses in the IMC and OIMC.

Women's work in the MEC expanded into a broader movement in the 20th century. Even though the women were not perfect by any means, Knotts lays out a compelling argument as to why women and particularly Methodist women were at the heart of transforming human relations in the United States and beyond during the 1920s and following. She describes how

⁶⁷¹ Mary Agnes Theresa Dougherty, *My Calling to Fulfill: Deaconesses in the United Methodist Tradition* (Women’s Division, General Board of Global Ministries, the United Methodist Church, 1997), Mary Agnes Theresa Dougherty, *My Calling to Fulfill: Deaconesses in the United Methodist Tradition* (Women’s Division, General Board of Global Ministries, the United Methodist Church, 1997), viii-ix.

⁶⁷² Mary Agnes Theresa Dougherty, *My Calling to Fulfill: Deaconesses in the United Methodist Tradition* (Women’s Division, General Board of Global Ministries, the United Methodist Church, 1997), vii.

⁶⁷³ Hoover, *With Unveiled Face: Centennial Reflections on Women and Men in the Community of the Church*, 13-14.

⁶⁷⁴ Mary Agnes Theresa Dougherty, *My Calling to Fulfill: Deaconesses in the United Methodist Tradition* (Women’s Division, General Board of Global Ministries, the United Methodist Church, 1997), ix.

Methodist women were linked by religious beliefs and by structures which allowed freedom of opinion and dialogue on controversial issues. Discussion and disagreement within a framework of voluntary commitment and connection provided a healthy environment that enabled persons to reevaluate their attitudes and uproot their prejudices. growth and development are nurtured more easily when fear does not contribute to the erection and maintenance of barriers. Methodist women worked for race relations earlier than other mainline denominational groups precisely because they adhered to a gospel message which some of them interpreted as transcending race, class, and gender. They also came from a religious tradition that, since its earliest roots, understood that spiritual life is related to all aspects of life. Consequently... Methodist women accepted as their Christian and civic responsibility the task of influencing the quality of human relations of their communities and their nation.⁶⁷⁵

White Methodist women worked across the nation with all races and ethnicities toward breaking down all racial barriers.⁶⁷⁶ One of the markers of Methodist women was their persistence and genuine human caring that characterized the process.⁶⁷⁷ Methodist women made changes in their own lives and their organizational structure at the same time that they worked for broader social change.⁶⁷⁸ Their example testifies to the value of engaging in relationships through activism which can bring forth change.

Knotts makes a good point when she explains the difference between institutions and movements. She explains that movements often act quickly and take more risks but they also have a tendency to occur over a limited period of time, pursuing a particular task, and afterwards disperse.⁶⁷⁹ Institutions, on the other hand, can appear to be indecisive and make compromises but also end up making significant progress over a longer period of time.⁶⁸⁰ She says that following the unification which formed The

⁶⁷⁵ Knotts, *Fellowship of Love: Methodist Women Changing American Racial Attitudes, 1920-1968*, 18.

⁶⁷⁶ Knotts, 19.

⁶⁷⁷ Knotts, 19.

⁶⁷⁸ Knotts, 19.

⁶⁷⁹ Knotts, 21.

⁶⁸⁰ Knotts, 21.

Methodist Church in 1939, Methodist women, and in particular the Women's Division, used the strengths of both in their work.

The work in racial justice over the 20th century is complex and instructive for understanding the work of the women within The United Methodist Church. Because of the limited scope of this project I will point to some instances of women's work which immediately affected the women of the OIMC presented in this dissertation.⁶⁸¹ To begin one can see that the structure The Women's Division had a collaborative model in place with division heads for Foreign Missions, Home Missions, and Christian Social Relations and local church activities all of which coordinated and implemented programs amongst each other. They even went so far as to rotate who chaired the meetings.⁶⁸² Furthermore, the connectionalism inherent in Methodism created a network of communication and conversation between local and national levels. These structures helped foster relationships and raise sensitivity between different worldviews of their members and staff. Though it would be easy to praise the work of women at this point, Knotts reminds us that there was still tension between different points of view and that "ideological gaps developed most frequently around social issues and race relations."⁶⁸³

⁶⁸¹ For a review of women's work in Racial justice concerning The Methodist Church see Mary K. Cavazos, "Queen's Daughters: African American Women, Christian Mission and Racial Change, 1940–1960," (Ph.D. diss., Drew University, 2007).; a review of antilynching campaign and civil rights organizing see Knotts, Alice. *Fellowship of Love: Methodist Women Changing American Racial Attitudes, 1920-1968*. Nashville: Kingswood Books, 1996. For more on Racial justice within the Women's Division structure see Peggy Billings, *Speaking out in the Public Space: An Account of the Section of Christian Social Relations, Women's Division, the United Methodist Church, 1968-1984* (New York: Women's Division, General Board of Global Ministries, United Methodist Church, 1995); and Theresa Hoover, *With Unveiled Face: Centennial Reflections on Women and Men in the Community of the Church*, (New York: United Methodist Church, 1983).

⁶⁸² Knotts, *Fellowship of Love: Methodist Women Changing American Racial Attitudes, 1920-1968* 22.

⁶⁸³ Knotts, 23.

Further restructuring agreements in 1964 reallocated the administration and funding of the Women's Division which led their mission institutions such as schools, community centers, hospitals, and clinics as well as missionary personnel be moved from the Women's Division to the national and world divisions.⁶⁸⁴ They did retain the schools of Christian mission and education for mission.⁶⁸⁵ Once again the pattern was repeated and Women's ministries fought for their funding and the right to exist. Racial Justice Activist Peggy Billings says "... The division as a whole was fully aware that many church leaders thought they had finally cut us down to size, that without our institutions and our missionaries, the Women's Division would not be a significant force."⁶⁸⁶

However, once again the women creatively reimagined themselves and their calling. Because of the restructuring the Women's Division now had more time to devote to social justice issues and building coalitions. Staff began building relationships with groups outside of the church and religious organizations such as the National Welfare Rights Organization and the Department of Police which gave rise to the National Interreligious Task Force on Criminal Justice in 1970.⁶⁸⁷ After engaging with the Department of Police representatives and other general secretaries of the other divisions in the newly formed United Methodist Church, the Women's Division started to engage in conflict resolution training that they would then offer to local United Methodists.

Influenced by the 1968 Kerner Commission Report the Women's Division became engaged in what Billings calls "tension spots" in the United States.⁶⁸⁸ The Kerner report

⁶⁸⁴ Billings, *Speaking out in the Public Space: An Account of the Section of Christian Social Relations, Women's Division, the United Methodist Church, 1968-1984*, 25.

⁶⁸⁵ Billings, 25.

⁶⁸⁶ Billings, 26.

⁶⁸⁷ Billings, 27.

⁶⁸⁸ Billings, 26-28.

described the depth of divisions within the United States of America at the time and recommended community-based programs implementing the new federal civil rights statutes passed in the 1960s,

[F]oremost among them were the Poor People's Campaign, the Black Manifesto, Kent State and Jackson State, and the two political conventions in 1972 in Miami Beach and San Francisco. The lengthiest and most demanding was the relationship to the American Indian Movement (AIM) and the wounded knee uprising in 1973.⁶⁸⁹

Peggy Billings' presentation of this period during the 1960s and 70s provides a model for developing alliances or more precisely becoming antiracist decolonizing "accomplices".⁶⁹⁰

For example, on February 27, 1973, the American Indian Movement (AIM) began an armed occupation that would last 71 days at the historic battle site of Wounded Knee, South Dakota where the Seventh Cavalry massacred over 300 unarmed Sioux in 1890. "AIM did this to draw public attention to the Indians' economic plight, the repercussions of broken treaties, and what they considered political oppressions from the Bureau of Indian Affairs and Oglala Tribal Council led by Dick Wilson."⁶⁹¹

Armed with rifles they faced a United States force compiled of "units from the 82nd Airborne, two F4 Phantom jets, several National Guard helicopters, 17 armored personnel carriers, machine guns, flares, about 150 FBI agents, over 200 U.S. marshals, at least 100 police from the Bureau of Indian Affairs, several Justice Department officials, CIA investigators, and Secret Service Agents."⁶⁹² Historian Jill K. Gill observes that

⁶⁸⁹ Billings, 28.

⁶⁹⁰ see Jessica Powell & Amber Kelly. "Accomplices in the Academy in the Age of Black Lives Matter," *Journal of Critical Thought and Praxis*, 6, No. 2, (2017), 44.

⁶⁹¹ Jill K. Gill, "Preventing A Second Massacre at Wounded Knee, 1973: United Methodists Mediate For Peace," *Methodist History*, Vol. 43, no. 1 (October 2004), 45.

⁶⁹² Gill, "Preventing A Second Massacre at Wounded Knee, 1973: United Methodists Mediate For Peace," 45.

absent from most historical accounts of the event is the role that The United Methodist Church played. Peggy Billings tells us The United Methodist Women's presence seems to have gone unnoticed as well.

At this point the Women's Division representatives had been working with John Adams, a pastor and peace mediator, for over four years applying their skills for "negotiating in crisis situations among factions with very different agendas."⁶⁹³ They had built relationships and high levels of trust across the United States. They learned the importance of perseverance even and especially in the face of cutting criticism and had put their bodies on the line in more than one situation that could have become violent.⁶⁹⁴

News of the standoff came through an Oglala Sioux member of the National Council of Churches (NCC) at their meeting Pittsburgh. The NCC responded with a statement calling upon the United States government for restraint and selected two Methodists, Bishop James Armstrong of the Dakotas Area and Reverend Wesley Hunter, Executive Secretary of South Dakota's Association of Christian Churches, to be the Council's ambassadors at Wounded Knee.⁶⁹⁵ Bishop Armstrong proceeded to choose Reverend Homer Noley (Choctaw), and Reverend John Adams (Non-Native) to accompany them. Noley chaired the NCC's Indian Task Force and served on The United Methodist Church Board of Global Ministries and Adams worked as Director of the Law, Justice and Community Relations Department of The United Methodist Board of Church and Society. Noley and Adams would become the negotiators between the American

⁶⁹³ Billings, *Speaking out in the Public Space: An Account of the Section of Christian Social Relations, Women's Division, the United Methodist Church, 1968-1984*, 28.

⁶⁹⁴ For further description of such cases see Billings, 29-31.

⁶⁹⁵ Gill, "Preventing A Second Massacre at Wounded Knee, 1973: United Methodists Mediate For Peace," 46.

Indian Movement and the U.S. government.⁶⁹⁶ According to Billings, The Women's Division Section of Christian Social Relations was part of an "ecumenical support network that supplied laity and clergy observers, medical personnel and equipment, food, blankets and other supplies in a steady, reliable stream into the crisis area."⁶⁹⁷

After interrogating John Adams AIM leaders made it clear that no NCC negotiators were to be fired upon.⁶⁹⁸ Jill K. Gill writes that Noley and Adams built trust by maintaining a neutral stance. Dennis Banks adds that, "the American Indian Movement saw evidence that the mainline churches were undergoing a conscious transformation in their understanding of Indian issues as well as church involvement in perpetuating past wrongs against Indian communities."⁶⁹⁹ On the other side, John Adams had earned the trust of the Justice Department because of his work with The United Methodist Women.⁷⁰⁰

According to Gill, the situation continued to escalate. John Adams later admitted that he should have also reached out to the tribal Chairman Dick Wilson.⁷⁰¹ By neglecting to follow proper protocol and assuming that the United States government was the only permission he needed to become a negotiator, he unwittingly increased the conflict. Those who were transporting food supplies and acting as observers were in a constant state of danger but they kept working. Ceasefires broke down throughout the negotiations so at times they were working under gunfire. When a storm broke out leaving the AIM

⁶⁹⁶ Gill, 46.

⁶⁹⁷ Billings, *Speaking out in the Public Space: An Account of the Section of Christian Social Relations, Women's Division, the United Methodist Church*, 31.

⁶⁹⁸ Gill, "Preventing A Second Massacre at Wounded Knee, 1973: United Methodists Mediate For Peace," 49.

⁶⁹⁹ Gill, 49.

⁷⁰⁰ Gill, 49.

⁷⁰¹ Gill, 49.

members without basic necessities the women continued to get supplies through even as Chairman Wilson wanted to enforce the US government's attempts to starve the AIM members out.⁷⁰² Adding to this chaos white vigilantes were firing on both sides to provoke fights.⁷⁰³ Both AIM and government officials later testified that the presence of Christian representatives prevented another massacre like the first Wounded Knee. Gill writes that, Homer Noley also stressed the importance of the church's actions at Wounded Knee saying, "The involvement of the churches is significant in that the church is showing courage and the ability to act in the presence of powerful human events. Let us hope that our action may be as profound as our silence has been in the past."⁷⁰⁴

This story illustrates the degree to which Methodist women were willing to place their own lives on the line for justice. The unnamed women who were there performed an important work not just for the continuance of the negotiations but as a witness to their own commitment to listen and remain in the midst of difficult situations. It also provides an insight to the importance of listening and honoring protocol when engaging in relationships with Native Americans.

As they worked together across racial boundaries, The Women's Division staff continued to interrogate their own identity both as individuals and as an organization. Billings admits the leaders in the Women's Division were mostly white northern european and North Americans. Through their ongoing commitment to listening the Amer-european women began to realize that they tended to look at ecumenical issues and social problems through the lens of Western theology. As Liberation Theology developed

⁷⁰² Gill, 53.

⁷⁰³ Gill, 53.

⁷⁰⁴ Gill, 53.

and social problems became evident around the world and Billings says “these changes had impact on the Women's Division. As women, we felt oppressed by the lack of full participation in church and society. Women's work and mission was undervalued – except for the funds that were raised, of course.”⁷⁰⁵ However she also says that “as North Americans, and a predominantly white organization with great assets, we were viewed as oppressors by some Third World people and alienated ethnic groups in the US”⁷⁰⁶ The Women’s Division staff realized that the whiteness and centrality of the United States leadership was problematic.⁷⁰⁷

Throughout the 60s the Women's Division pressed towards racial reconciliation by working to eliminate the Central Jurisdiction and to integrate the churches. Billings writes that in the 1970s this vision evolved as the women began to realize the intersections of gender and race and the cultural differences within racialized categories.⁷⁰⁸ She says, “the present need was for the Women's Division and UMW to become more inclusive in leadership at every level, and to find creative ways for our publications, language and organizational ‘culture’ to reflect our ethnic and cultural diversity.”⁷⁰⁹

Attempting to achieve this goal, the first Hispanic American women's seminar was held in 1972 with many learnings gleaned from the process not the least of which being the pluralism of cultural identity with Mexican Americans, Puerto Ricans, Cubans,

⁷⁰⁵ Billings, *Speaking out in the Public Space: An Account of the Section of Christian Social Relations, Women’s Division, the United Methodist Church*, 17.

⁷⁰⁶ Billings, 17.

⁷⁰⁷ Billings, 70.

⁷⁰⁸ Billings, 66.

⁷⁰⁹ Billings, 66.

Dominicans, Hondurans, and other women from Latin America.⁷¹⁰ Further seminars followed including one for Native Americans.

The feedback session following the seminars were instructive as well. The leaders held feedback seminars after each of these meetings where "officers and designated representatives of the Women's Division listened to the concerns of ethnic women about what they felt a truly inclusive UMW could be and do."⁷¹¹

Billings says that these meetings happened over a period of eight years with cross-cultural sharing amongst the ethnic minority groups and some white women.⁷¹² As a result of these meetings and "because the series extended over a period of years, strong bonds were created between women within each group and also between the groups."⁷¹³ In addition, the opening and closing worship services and daily meditations were contextualized with different cultural traditions and languages presented. The use of multiple languages led to further realizations. For instance, because of the diversity of languages for the Asian American group and the Native American group the only way to experience commonality was through English. Billings writes that the participants worked to overcome the language barriers by re-creating the experience of the early Christian community, "where each spoke in her own tongue but understood the others through the power of the Holy Spirit in their midst."⁷¹⁴ Another interesting aspect to these meetings was what Billings describes as "cultural night with music, song, dance, and storytelling."⁷¹⁵ Her observation is that "many of the women wept as they laughed,

⁷¹⁰ Billings, 65.

⁷¹¹ Billings, 66.

⁷¹² Billings, 66.

⁷¹³ Billings, 66 – 67.

⁷¹⁴ Billings, 67.

⁷¹⁵ Billings, 67.

experiencing a new the power of their heritage to shape who they were and how they experience the world."⁷¹⁶

The work of the Women's Division racial ethnic seminars demonstrates some of the aspects of beloved speech and the effects of engaging in beloved speech with one another. The hospitality shown for each other through deep listening, the relationships built over years amongst women from such different cultural backgrounds, and the ways in which identity and tradition were not only honored but featured as part of the relationship building process.

These listening sessions transformed the organization and awakened them to a deeper understanding of the work that lay ahead. Billings says that the reflection process led to a change in their charter. It would now be called a Charter for Racial Justice Policies and she explains that "this new charter emphasized institutional racism, and set international goals as well as domestic ones."⁷¹⁷ She also emphasized that this work was not only coming out of the section of Christian Social Relations but rather that all sections of the Women's Division were a part of the process and implemented church wide.⁷¹⁸

She wrote about how The Women's Division expanded their training beyond chairpersons to include all board members during this process.⁷¹⁹ She also gave evidence of the elimination of hierarchies and she explained that it was expected that these listening sessions would produce evaluation and analysis written in reports by staff. The degree of self-awareness is insightful,

⁷¹⁶ Billings, 67.

⁷¹⁷ Billings, 74.

⁷¹⁸ Billings, 74.

⁷¹⁹ Billings, 70.

...but staff and directors are not machines. They do not check their own humanity at the door. How one uses personal pain is a crucial test of leadership. It can be used to manipulate others, or used more maturely to heighten the learning experience, to enhance the spiritual quality of the moment, and to strengthen faith among the participants.⁷²⁰

Billings admits that the Native American women's seminar was the most challenging and the Women's Division staff found themselves “in the mostly unfamiliar terrain of Indian life and culture.”⁷²¹ Her own conscientization comes to the fore when she describes the complex history of injustice and intersectionality of identity even as Native Americans bear “the burden of the invisible minority.”⁷²² She explains,

Having been reduced by conquest, disease, forced migration, and cultural destruction to a tiny proportion of their former population, the various tribes that fall under the rubric of Native Americans are living on reservations protected by federal treaties, or scattered in urban communities from Metropolitan New York to Minneapolis to the bay area of San Francisco.

Billings also presents a concise but comprehensive outline of the issues facing Native peoples at the time including the "cultural renaissance" self-determination movements within the various nations, litigation pending in North American courts, and international tribunals of the United Nations over treaty rights and sovereignty, as well as the history of Native American boarding school education, and contemporary conception of Native American history and identity and classroom textbooks.⁷²³

It appears that the process the Native American seminar followed was very intentional about inclusivity. The women came from many different nations. Some lived on reservations and some had been relocated to the urban centers. Therefore, to reflect

⁷²⁰ Billings, 70.

⁷²¹ Billings, 70.

⁷²² Billings, 70.

⁷²³ Billings, 72 – 73.

this diversity, they held their meetings in rural, urban, and reservation settings. She described the experiences and feelings shared by the women concerning their particular history of Christianity and their Nations' relationship with the United States government. In addition, the depth of sharing indicates that deep trust was forming. The women discussed the difficulties of maintaining and retaining cultural identity and the pain of Christian shaming that caused them to give up their traditional ceremonies, dances, and music, cutting them off from their roots.⁷²⁴ It was expressed by the group that "given the former federal policy of assimilation and relocation, it is a miracle that any aspect of culture survived."⁷²⁵ It is extraordinary that within three years these women not only shared with each other their personal experiences but did so in the presence of Women's Division staff and white women. This again gives evidence to the degree to which relationships were being built, listening was being honored, and voices were being heard.

There were two notable outcomes of these meetings. First Billings described the progression of the relationships with the women. Considering that they began the process as a cross-cultural experience with little commonality except through their membership as United Methodist Women she marveled at how the women's "surface formality gave way to the no-nonsense approach and rich humor."⁷²⁶ Second, there were some concrete changes in the Women's Division, the United Methodist Women, and The United Methodist Church as a result. The Native American Women's Caucus was organized and became a bridge between congregations and the larger church and raised the visibility of Native American issues to the General Agencies and General Conferences to follow.⁷²⁷ In

⁷²⁴ Billings, 72 – 73.

⁷²⁵ Billings, 72.

⁷²⁶ Billings, 71.

⁷²⁷ Billings, 71.

addition Billings saw that the “Native American Women's Caucus created great excitement among Native American women across the church.”⁷²⁸

In particular she pointed out the role that Billie Nowabbi played in the process and education. Serving as staff on both the Women's Division and National Division she presented program segments on organizational structure.⁷²⁹ As a result, “...[t]he participants were able to work through what had been their traditional role in church and society to the awareness that Christianity, rightly understood, was a liberating influence on women. Through the seminars, they could see many new possibilities for their ministry as lay women.”⁷³⁰

This process empowered the Native women in new ways and opened new horizons of understanding for their white sisters. Billings writes, “the Women's Division had always believed in empowerment but we did not always know to call it that. We used quainter terms like ‘leadership development’ or ‘opportunities to serve,’”⁷³¹ Through these meetings Native women's voices began to impact all levels of The United Methodist Church and beyond to other church organizations, inter-church and ecumenical organizations such as NCC and the WCC and NGO’s.

Remembering those who went before us can be difficult if we do not share their stories. Voices become lost and memories fade. This short survey sought to bring some Methodist women into the spotlight. Their stories portray white euro-christian women who are bound by their time and cultural assumptions similar to the male missionaries

⁷²⁸ Billings, 73.

⁷²⁹ Billings, 73.

⁷³⁰ Billings, 73.

⁷³¹ Billings, 32.

and leaders. However, they also give evidence of a worldview that seeks to serve the whole human being and is willing to honor a different cultural context.

Peggy Billings says that in one way or another, Methodist women played a role in every social revolution in our nation in the 20th century.⁷³² From this chapter it is evident that the seeds of this movement come from the struggles of women in the 19th century. Women such as Mary Mason, who organized and maintained mission boards in spite of efforts to stop their work. Women such as Helen Brewster who committed themselves to listening and learning without judgement. Women such as Hazel Botone who encouraged Indigenous leaders who continue her legacy. Women such as Theresa Hoover and Billie Nowabbi who raised awareness of their white sisters and helped conscientize an organization. Because of their efforts, the women's mission boards and the subsequent Women's Division engaged in conversations, education, and activism which at its core reflected the values of deep relationships, the hospitality of listening, and attendance to identity which provide a way toward beloved speech.

⁷³² Billings, 1.

Chapter V

Beloved Women of the OIMC

“That never occurred to me that I was, probably the only woman, standing in a pulpit as a pastor. That would never have occurred to me at that time. That was where I was supposed to be.”⁷³³

“Overlooked or ignored by both church and state was the extraordinary history and role of women in the various Indian nations. Large numbers of tribal social and political organizations were controlled by women. Descent of tribal membership or citizenship in a clan was traced through the female line in such nations as the Iroquois, Sioux, Creek, Choctaw, Chickasaw, Seminole, Navajo, and various Pueblos.”⁷³⁴

Beloved speech, as I am defining it, is derived from both a christian biblical and theological understanding, as well as my experience of relationship, identity, and listening through my guides Suanne Ware-Diaz and Anne Marshall as well as the women I interviewed, both Native and Non-Native who are associated with the OIMC. Whenever I remembered those meetings, the concept of belovedness rose to the surface of my consciousness. These women were self-assured about their identity and their place in this world, which reminded me of the beautiful poetry from the Song of Songs which presents an image of a “loved one” and celebrates all that God declared good in creation.⁷³⁵ Their patient hospitality of listening, led me to reflect on the times when beloved was used as a term of endearment in the epistles. For instance in Colossians 3:12 when God’s people were referenced as “holy and beloved,” or Philemon 1:16 when the master is told to

⁷³³ Virginia (Louke) Ware, Interview with author, Nov. 26, 2014, Los Angeles, CA, (Non-Native/American/Appalachia), former Deaconess appointed to “West Oklahoma Indian Work,” Anadarko, OK, by The Women’s Division, in The Methodist Church.

⁷³⁴ Fassett, “The history and Role of Methodism and Other Missionary Churches in the Lives and Culture of Native-American Women,” 16.

⁷³⁵ For examples see Song of Solomon 1:13-1:16, 2:3, 2:8-10, 2:16,-17; as defined in Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon: With an Appendix Containing the Biblical Aramaic: Coded With the Numbering System from Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*, (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2000), 187.

embrace his former slave as “beloved” brother, and in 1 John 4:7 which says, “Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God” (NRSV).⁷³⁶ Moreover, the stories of their actions, which were full of grace and justice, reminded me of the beloved words spoken in the gospels to communities of those beloved who are “dear” and “worthy of love,” and who are at times encouraged and at other times firmly enjoined to engage in holy behaviors.⁷³⁷

As I sensed a change taking place in myself through these encounters, I began to reflect upon the sacramental aspect of belovedness, particularly the sacrament of baptism.⁷³⁸ Just as Jesus arose from the waters and was called the beloved, Christians enter into a new understanding of belovedness in God at our baptism and are so named. Likewise, I was reminded of the words of John Wesley as he described the partnership between human beings and the Divine when, “[t]he Spirit or breath of God is immediately inspired, breathed into the new-born soul; and the same breath which comes from, returns to God. As it is continually received by faith, so it is continually rendered back by love, by prayer, and praise, and thanksgiving.”⁷³⁹ This breathing infuses God’s beloved with the very breath of the Creator through the Holy Spirit. That kenotic surrender of all that blocks human beings from fully inspiring the Divine breath makes

⁷³⁶ Colossians 3:12 As God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience; Philemon 1:16 Not now as a servant, but above a servant, a brother beloved, specially to me, but how much more unto thee, both in the flesh, and in the Lord?; 1 John 4:7 Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

⁷³⁷ For examples see encouragement: 1 Corinthians 15:58, Philippians 4:1, 1 Thessalonians 1:4, James 2:5; firm advice: Romans 12:19, 2 Corinthians 7:1, Philippians 2:12, Colossians 3:12, James 1:19. As defined in Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, *Liddell and Scott’s Greek-English Lexicon*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 3.

⁷³⁸ See Mark 1:4-11 NRSV.

⁷³⁹ John Wesley, Sermon 19, “The Great Privilege of Those That are Born of God,” in *Sermons I* ed. Albert C. Outler, vol. I of *The Bicentennial Edition of the Works of John Wesley* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1984), 442.

room for the theotic infilling of God's Spirit that comingles with our spirit, bringing forth an even deeper expression of sanctified belovedness. This transformation brings with it the potential to help others discover the transforming power of God's Spirit through the expression of empathetic deep listening and beloved speech.

Beloved Speech Origins and Intersections

As I stated in chapter 1, beloved speech, as envisioned in this project, emerged not only as a christian understanding of belovedness, but also from Michelene E. Pesantubbee's, *Choctaw Women in a Chaotic World* and her search for Beloved Women. As I read more about Pesantubbee's description of Beloved Women, I realized that I had experienced similar belovedness with each of the women I met. I even discovered she interviewed one of the women I conversed with, Rev. Billie Nowabbi. Pesantubbee described her as a Beloved Woman in the traditional Choctaw sense of the term.⁷⁴⁰ In light of this, belovedness and in turn beloved speech, became an important concept for this thesis. Similarly, it is not surprising that Rev. Judy Deere and Rev. Lois V. Glory Neal embodied many of the aspects of Beloved Women that Pesantubbee names in her book, since they are members of the Cherokee and Creek (MVSKOKE) nations, which were relocated from the Southeast. Even though Rev. Julienne Judd grew up in a different cultural context in the Kiowa Nation, she was also influenced by Choctaw cultural values learned through her father. Her father was an enrolled member of the Choctaw nation.⁷⁴¹

⁷⁴⁰ Pesantubbee, *Choctaw Women in a Chaotic World: The Clash of Cultures in the Colonial Southeast*, 175-177.

⁷⁴¹ In a follow up conversation with Julienne she confirmed that she was undoubtedly influenced by her father's Choctaw cultural values. Also she added that she grew up in a multicultural context because she lived and went to school among non-Native's. Julienne E. Judd, telephone conversation with author, February 13, 2019.

This does not mean that my designation of the concept of beloved speech, as I have experienced it, is the same as the term was traditionally employed by the Choctaw, Cherokee, MVSOKOKE, and Chickasaw Nations.⁷⁴² The traditional aspects of speech employed by those who were called Beloved within Southeastern Indigenous Nations encompassed spiritual and ritual aspects particular to the cultures of these nations. An example of this is the Green Corn Ceremony of Southeastern Native peoples. This Green Corn ceremony reinforced and emphasized the socio-religious ideals of balance, restitution, reciprocity, and consensus, which are all beloved values in general but the ceremony also has particularity for each cultural context.⁷⁴³ “Because the corn plant crossed the boundaries of the three worlds it was considered powerful. It was Beloved. It was Beloved Woman. And because women had the primary responsibility for the corn, they were the mediators between the fertility and power of the corn and the Choctaw people.”⁷⁴⁴ This is one aspect of belovedness attributed to the Beloved Women of the Choctaw nation alone.

To co-opt any such ritual attribute reifies historical trauma. Out of respect for the traditional cultural designations of the term, I will refer to the women I interviewed as “beloved,” in lower case. I will not assign the term “Beloved” to them as a proper name, since that is not my tradition and I have no authority to do so.

I want to make it clear that the origin of the term, beloved speech, as I envision it comes from my experiences of the women I met, both Native and non-Native. It also comes from my experience of beloved speech in christian scripture and tradition. It is not

⁷⁴² See chapter 1 for a reference to nomenclature and case.

⁷⁴³ Pesantubbee, *Choctaw Women in a Chaotic World: The Clash of Cultures in the Colonial Southeast*, 118.

⁷⁴⁴ Pesantubbee, 120.

something that I “discovered” but rather belovedness emerged from relationships and the recognition of aspects of belovedness that came to me from both christian tradition and Choctaw, Cherokee, MVSKOKE (Creek) traditions as the women embodied them with me.

In light of this, I offer Pesantubbee’s history of the term to both delineate the differences between the traditional Southeastern Choctaw context and this dissertation, to present the ways in which some of the traditional aspects intersect with and influenced my definition of the term, and to illuminate the original context of belovedness so that it can be seen and not be obscured by the meaning I am attributing to it.

Micheline E. Pesantubbee points out that in the Choctaw culture, both men and women could be recognized as Beloved People. She also found ample evidence of the existence of Beloved Women among their close neighbors, the Cherokee, Creek, and Chickasaw nations.⁷⁴⁵ To be called “Beloved” in this cultural context is to be highly honored. A Beloved Person is not only someone dear to the community, one who is respected, revered, and venerated, but also one who is sacred.⁷⁴⁶

Contrary to the european colonial settler/immigrant cultural norms which limited women’s political and societal influence, the Beloved Women of the Cherokee, MVSKOKE/Creek, Choctaw nations were actively and publicly engaged in political life. According to Pesantubbee, much of the available documentary evidence about eighteenth century Native peoples comes from european males, who brought their notions of women's roles in society into their observations and writings.⁷⁴⁷ As a result, oftentimes

⁷⁴⁵ Pesantubbee, 2.

⁷⁴⁶ Pesantubbee, 23.

⁷⁴⁷ Pesantubbee, 3.

they either make no mention of the women or they discount the women's presence.

Unable to envision equitable and communal cooperation and leadership, the descriptions of these women by the colonizers reinforced male hegemonic dichotomous thinking and assumed the men held power over the women, but Pesantubbee says, the balance and boundaries between genders were more fluid than has often been depicted by these European men, and that Beloved Women were indeed influential and that they earned their status.⁷⁴⁸

Besides the political realm, women also could hold other important positions that involved the careful delivery of speeches or messages to Choctaw leaders. She says they were official messengers called Manlema, or someone "to go and carry or deliver something sacred or particular."⁷⁴⁹ Other titles women could hold included; Onatima, "when you get there give it (to him)" and Wakayatima, "get up and hand it or deliver it."⁷⁵⁰ The wives of mingoes, or band captains, held the titles Nompashtika or Nompatisholi, both meaning "speaker."⁷⁵¹ She explains that for an oral-based society in which the importance of speech was recognized and rewarded, only the most trusted and valued of citizens would be allowed to deliver a message from one leader to another, or to speak on behalf of the people.⁷⁵² Additionally, "Choctaw women earned respect or honor through handling medicines, bearing children, providing plant foods, distinguishing

⁷⁴⁸ Pesantubbee, 3-5.

⁷⁴⁹ John R. Swanton, *Source Material for the Social and Ceremonial Life of the Choctaw Indians Smithsonian Institution Bureau of American Ethnology Bulletin 103*, (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1931): 121, quoted in Pesantubbee, 170.

⁷⁵⁰ John R. Swanton, *Source Material for the Social and Ceremonial Life of the Choctaw Indians Smithsonian Institution Bureau of American Ethnology Bulletin 103*, (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1931): 121, quoted in Pesantubbee, 170.

⁷⁵¹ John R. Swanton, *Source Material for the Social and Ceremonial Life of the Choctaw Indians Smithsonian Institution Bureau of American Ethnology Bulletin 103*, (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1931): 121, quoted in Pesantubbee, 170.

⁷⁵² Pesantubbee, 170.

themselves during times of war, as political leaders, or caring for deceased relatives.”⁷⁵³

She goes on to say that “All of these activities earned women recognition as [B]eloved people in other Southeastern nations.”⁷⁵⁴

Fundamental to the concept of Beloved Women and the values held by the Choctaw people, is a Choctaw migration story. It explains the important intersections of Choctaw cultural values concerning place, religious experience, sustenance, and relationship.⁷⁵⁵ In this story two Choctaw hunters are driven to find food because the game and fruits and nuts are not plentiful enough. After finding one bird and preparing it, a woman appears to them and asks for their food, which they provide. She tells them to return in one year to same spot and when they do they find a corn stalk. This corn becomes their staple food from that time forward. One of the most interesting parts about this story is the value placed upon hospitality, the community, and the awareness of where they come from (their identity) and the way the story reaffirms these values.

Through this story we discover that anything valued and respected in Southeastern Native societies could be referred to as Beloved, from Beloved Land, to Beloved Food, and those Indigenous peoples who embody the ideal attributes of society are Beloved. “Beloved” encompasses all that is vital and sacred to the Choctaw – Beloved Lands, Beloved Towns, and Beloved Leaders.

Pesantubbee also provides a definition for Beloved Speech employed by Beloved Men and Women. She explains that Beloved Speech in the Chickasaw tradition encompassed “extraordinary divine power,” and that speakers could foretell the future,

⁷⁵³ Pesantubbee, 32.

⁷⁵⁴ Pesantubbee, 32.

⁷⁵⁵ Pesantubbee, 21-23.

and could control nature.⁷⁵⁶ This definition was later expanded by christian concepts which were introduced and appropriated by the Choctaws. She says, through european influence, the original Choctaw attribute of supernatural power disappears from the definition of Beloved Speech in the Choctaw dictionary. However, she also notes that a christian idea is introduced so that sacred aspects become part of the definition, such as holy, sainted, consecrated, and venerated.⁷⁵⁷

Unfortunately, “By the end of the eighteenth-century references to [B]eloved [W]omen are no longer found” in the Choctaw Nation.⁷⁵⁸ But Pesantubbee assures us that “[B]eloved women continued to exist in other Southeastern cultures that underwent similar colonial contact,” which indicates that the concept did not fully disappear.⁷⁵⁹

Similar to the Beloved Women Pesantubbee describes, the Native American women I met with in Oklahoma are leaders within the Choctaw, MVSKOKE, Cherokee, and Kiowa Nations. Moreover, as Methodist women they lead within Methodist institutions. They also carry great power in their words as they preach in churches and speak in public places giving credit in many instances to the Holy Spirit. Because they are christians, they also show evidence of the christian understanding I attribute to belovedness. Their language conveys aspects of the Judeo-Christian embodiment of the beloved of God and their actions proceed from their own calling within the church.

⁷⁵⁶ Pesantubbee, 14-15.

⁷⁵⁷ Cyrus Byington, *A Dictionary of the Choctaw Language*, *Smithsonian Institution Bureau of American Ethnology Bulletin 46*, edited by John R. Swanton and Henry S. Halbert, (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1915): 164, quoted in Pesantubbee, 15.

⁷⁵⁸ Pesantubbee, 115.

⁷⁵⁹ Pesantubbee, 115.

Methodology

Due to the history of colonization in the United States those who seek to interview Native Americans must be aware and sensitive to the numerous abuses, misinterpretations, and misappropriations by researchers over the years. Margaret Kovach, in *Indigenous Methodologies*, says, “earning trust is critical and may take time.”⁷⁶⁰ She stresses that a pre-existing relationship should be in place before endeavoring to conduct interviews.⁷⁶¹ Without my relationships with Suanne Ware-Diaz and Anne Marshall I would not have been able to meet with the women I interviewed for this dissertation.

One of the means of earning trust involves recognition of the importance of relationships and the ways in which those relationships are fostered through the honoring of protocols. These protocols indicate respect and honor. Margaret Kovach explains the importance of protocols for anyone who engages in research in Native communities. She says, “The centrality of relationship within indigenous research frameworks, and the responsibility that that evokes, manifest themselves in broad strokes throughout research in the form of protocols and ethical considerations.”⁷⁶²

Relationships were also integral to the mixed ethnographic method of Feminist theory and Indigenous Methodology I brought to the work. Relationships were primarily built through story. Sharing stories is not just a means by which people convey information but according to Kovach they also have a role to play in decolonization by

⁷⁶⁰ Kovach, *Indigenous Methodologies Characteristics, Conversations, and Contexts*, 98.

⁷⁶¹ Kovach, 51.

⁷⁶² Kovach, 98.

giving voice to those who are misinterpreted and marginalized.⁷⁶³ By asking others to share stories, it is usual protocol to share one's own story, starting with self-location.⁷⁶⁴

My meetings with Virginia, Judy, Lois, Julienne, and Billie were an honor for me. Some of these women have worked on the national stage but some have not been heard outside the OIMC. I had not met with any of them before our initial meeting which makes this project all the more remarkable and speaks all the more to their belovedness that they were willing to invite me into their personal spaces and share their personal stories with me.

Though I came with questions, the interviews became conversational at many points. We spoke about families, traditions, and our calling to ministry. The organic nature of these conversations enabled me to fulfill one of the tenets of Indigenous Methodology, namely, that “within the research relationship, the research participant must feel that the researcher is willing to listen to the story. By listening intently to one another, story as method elevates the research from an extractive exercise serving the fragmentation of knowledge to a holistic endeavor that situates research firmly within the nest of relationship.”⁷⁶⁵

Analysis

In the analysis of the text I will point to examples of beloved speech. I will also offer cultural and historical contextualization which gives further evidence of the belovedness of these voices. Through the analysis of these conversations the components

⁷⁶³ Kovach, 98.

⁷⁶⁴ Kovach, 98.

⁷⁶⁵ Kovach, 98-99

of beloved speech will emerge, and some examples of how beloved speech is conveyed will become more evident.

One of the most important aspects to consider is the intercultural nature of the work with the various nations.⁷⁶⁶ Analysis of each criteria will present differently in some cases due to cultural differences. For instance, the understanding of gender roles differs between the Kiowa and the Choctaw Nations. Yet at the same time, there are some similarities of values that will appear. Carol Lakota Eastin Lakota/Yakima, shares in *On This Spirit Walk*, “As our people moved into cities, spoke English, adopted European American customs, attended school and church, there was something that always made us “different”... “what seems to have remained in the minds and hearts of my parents, and which was passed on to us girls, was an Indian worldview... a way of seeing things... and a way of being.”⁷⁶⁷

Each beloved woman will be presented chronologically in the order of which I interviewed them. After a brief introduction, I will present the ways in which I experienced belovedness in each woman through the components of relationship in community, reflexive attendance to identity, and the hospitality of deep listening. I will begin with evidence of relationships in community. Relationships can take on many forms including family or other people in our community, the Spirit of God, and Creation.

⁷⁶⁶ Boyung Lee discusses the difference between Multicultural and Intercultural view of community in chapter 10 of Boyung Lee, *Transforming Congregations through Community* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2013), 130.

⁷⁶⁷ Carol Lakota Eastin (Lakot/Yakima), “An Indian Worldview” in *On This Spirit Walk: The Voices of Native American and Indigenous Peoples*, edited by Henrietta Mann and Anita Phillips, (Muskogee, OK: The United Methodist Publishing House, 2012),17.

After analyzing the category of relationships, I will move onto identity formation and reflexive attendance to identity. This component has the most possibility of variety due to the complexity of human beings, but, also due to the historical trauma caused by the colonization. Special attention will be paid in the interviews as I encounter both Native and non-Native women who are knowledgeable about their own identity and give evidence of their self-awareness in their speech.

Finally, I will address the hospitality of deep listening by analyzing ways in which these beloved women provided hospitality for others by listening, recognizing, and honoring the humanity of others through their presence. Dr. Henrietta Mann, Cheyenne explains that “reciprocity and mutuality are living native traditions.”⁷⁶⁸ “Native Americans know the Earth as their first and spiritual mother, who models generosity for them. They have institutionalized this generosity into giveaways which are ceremonial acts of sharing with the community.”⁷⁶⁹ She continues by saying “a unique aspect of giveaways is that a person being honored is the one who gives gifts...”⁷⁷⁰ Dr. Mann explains that giveaways “do not always involve sharing high-priced material items, nor are they all public.”⁷⁷¹ Sometimes it is as simple as giving a drink of water or sharing a well-timed word. I am suggesting that this same spirit of generosity was conveyed through the hospitality of deep listening I encountered in my interactions with Virginia, Judy, Lois, Julienne, and Billie. The mantle of honor, a sign of belovedness, was evident in their generous sharing of stories and their patient guidance in protocols as we

⁷⁶⁸ Henrietta Mann, *On This Spirit Walk: The Voices of Native American and Indigenous Peoples*, ed. Henrietta Mann and Anita Phillips, (Muskogee, OK: The United Methodist Publishing House, 2012),15.

⁷⁶⁹ Mann, *On This Spirit Walk*, 14.

⁷⁷⁰ Mann, 14.

⁷⁷¹ Mann, 15.

conversed. Since I met with Virginia (Louke) Ware first we will begin with my 2014 meeting with her.

Virginia Louke

The years preceding Virginia Louke's arrival in Oklahoma were filled with many changes to United States federal legislation concerning Native peoples, as we have seen in the previous chapters.

Into this swirling atmosphere of change, Virginia Louke arrived in Kiowa Nation in April 1946. The following comment appeared in the September 5, 1946 edition of the *Southwestern Advocate*, a Methodist publication, "Our deaconess, Miss Mary Beth Littlejohn, Home Missionary, Miss Virginia Louke, and contract worker, Mrs. Johnson (Bobb) Wesley, have been quite active in their ministries."⁷⁷² Alongside it appeared a photograph with the following caption written by D.D. Etchieson (Superintendent of the Western District), "taken 5 miles northeast of Carnegie, Oklahoma, on the Kiowa Reservation. The Indian with the pipe in his hand is named Blue Jay and is the last High Priest and Custodian of the idols of the Grandmother Gods."⁷⁷³ In this same publication, another photograph appears with the description, "Hunting Horse, a noted Kiowa Indian and a devout Christian now 101 years young. He says he was once an expert scalper, but now loves the white man."⁷⁷⁴

⁷⁷² "Recruits for the Ministry," *The Southwestern Advocate* XCIII, no. 20 (September 5, 1946): 5; Printed Matter, Magazines and Newspapers, folder 8, William Umsted Witt Collection, The United Methodist Archives and History Center, Drew University, Madison. [hereafter GCAH].

⁷⁷³ *The Southwestern Advocate* XCIII, no. 20 (September 5, 1946): 5; Printed Matter, Magazines and Newspapers, folder 8, William Umsted Witt Collection, GCAH.

⁷⁷⁴ "Recruits for the Ministry," *The Southwestern Advocate* XCIII, no. 20 (September 5, 1946): 12; Printed Matter, Magazines and Newspapers, folder 8, William Umsted Witt Collection, GCAH.

A year later page five of the August 28, 1947 edition contains a paragraph stating, “Two deaconesses, Miss Mary Beth Littlejohn and Miss Virginia Louke and Mrs. Ebenezer Wesley, Contract Worker, have done fine work and proven a blessing to the entire Mission.”⁷⁷⁵ All the while the front page depicted Hunting Horse gifting Bishop W. Angie Smith a saddle handed down from Geronimo with the comment that he has “never worn white man’s shoes.”⁷⁷⁶

Curiously the article surrounding the photograph contained a nuanced depiction of “American Indian” identity. Betty Burleigh who worked in the Editorial Department, Joint Division of Education and Cultivation, Board of Missions and Church Extension, wrote, “Far from being the ‘vanishing race’ as is popularly supposed, American Indians are actually increasing.”⁷⁷⁷ Refusing to conflate culture she explained that, “American Indians are divided into 280 tribes and speak 58 dialects.”⁷⁷⁸ Continuing she proclaimed that there was no such thing as “the religion of the American Indian” because “there were as many forms of religion as there were tribes.”⁷⁷⁹

However, her article also claimed naively that, “Indians do not suffer much from racial discrimination” and “[o]ur churches and schools are open to the Indians without

⁷⁷⁵ “Indian Mission Conference,” *The Southwestern* XCIV, no. 13 (August 28, 1947): 5; Printed Matter, Magazines and Newspapers, folder 8, William Umsted Witt Collection, GCAH.

⁷⁷⁶ Betty Burleigh, “Methodism and American Indians” *The Southwestern Advocate* XCIV, no. 13 (August 28, 1947): 1, Printed Matter, Magazines and Newspapers, folder 8, William Umsted Witt Collection, GCAH.

⁷⁷⁷ Betty Burleigh, “Methodism and American Indians” *The Southwestern Advocate* XCIV, no. 13 (August 28, 1947): 1, Printed Matter, Magazines and Newspapers, folder 8, William Umsted Witt Collection, GCAH.

⁷⁷⁸ Betty Burleigh, “Methodism and American Indians” *The Southwestern Advocate* XCIV, no. 13 (August 28, 1947): 1, Printed Matter, Magazines and Newspapers, folder 8, William Umsted Witt Collection, GCAH.

⁷⁷⁹ Betty Burleigh, “Methodism and American Indians” *The Southwestern Advocate* XCIV, no. 13 (August 28, 1947): 1-2, Printed Matter, Magazines and Newspapers, folder 8, William Umsted Witt Collection, GCAH.

prejudice.”⁷⁸⁰ Then her article began to engage in precisely the hegemonic religious language and views the Meriam report had warned against. Burleigh writes,

Many Indians still retain their tribal religious superstitions, some have discarded these and accepted nothing else, while others are devout Christians. Indians generally believed in the Great Spirit and the happy hunting ground of the future life. They prayed to gods of the sun, wind, earth and other natural phenomena, and their priests were the “medicine men” who knew the meaning of signs, cultivated the favor of the good spirits and exorcised the evil spirits which were believed to be in the bodies of sick persons. . . . the overwhelming majority of American Indians remain pagans to this day. Many retain their ancient tribal superstitions: many have mixed these with Christian elements; others have discarded the old nature faiths and accepted nothing in their stead.⁷⁸¹

Two observations emerge from these entries in the *Southwestern Advocate*. First, Burleigh’s article represented the continued disparate view of missions held by Methodist missionaries. She did not homogenize culture and yet the article with its accompanying photographs continued to denigrate Indigenous religious practice. Second, though some of images and their accompanying captions were problematic, the fact that gifting took place indicates that some protocols were being honored. This is encouraging since the United States government, in an attempt to curtail what they felt was frivolous spending and “interfered with the ‘civilization’ policy,” undermined the culture of gifting in Native communities.⁷⁸² In the Kiowa nation it had been discouraged and eventually eliminated from practice.⁷⁸³ In spite of prejudices and worldviews that continued to degrade and dehumanize Native peoples, the reintroduction of the practice of gifting into the life of

⁷⁸⁰ Betty Burleigh, “Methodism and American Indians” *The Southwestern Advocate* XCIV, no. 13 (August 28, 1947): 1-2, Printed Matter, Magazines and Newspapers, folder 8, William Umsted Witt Collection, GCAH.

⁷⁸¹ Betty Burleigh, “Methodism and American Indians” *The Southwestern Advocate* XCIV, no. 13 (August 28, 1947): 2-3, Printed Matter, Magazines and Newspapers, folder 8, William Umsted Witt Collection, GCAH.

⁷⁸² Benjamin R. Kracht, “Kiowa Powwows: Continuity in Ritual Practice,” *American Indian Quarterly* 18, No. 3 (1994): 330.

⁷⁸³ Kracht, “Kiowa Powwows: Continuity in Ritual Practice,” 330.

The Indian Mission conference is a step towards acknowledging an alternative cultural view and an official acknowledgment of this important cultural expression of community.

Burleigh finished her article commending the “Women’s Work” saying, “an extensive work is carried on in the Indian Mission under the auspices of the Women’s Division of Christian Service. Four trained women workers are engaged in social, educational, organizational and general religious work, covering a large part of the state in their ministry.”⁷⁸⁴ One of the four she named was Marybeth Littlejohn, who was sent by the Woman’s Missionary Council in 1938.⁷⁸⁵ Virginia Louke now joined her bringing a new voice to Kiowa Nation, full of faith and aspirations and more than a little spunk.

In 2014 while I was visiting with Virginia and her daughter Suanne, we had an informal conversation and she permitted me to digitally record our conversation. Virginia sat on the couch in her California home. As the sun set behind her, her voice became animated as she sat amongst papers she had not looked at for years. She had pulled out her old notes and bible studies from her years in ministry as a deaconess.

The first question I asked was: “what led you to Oklahoma?” She told me, “When I was finishing at Emory Candler, I said, ‘I want to work with people who are another race, another color, another language.’”⁷⁸⁶

Virginia’s desire coincided perfectly with the direction taken by the Women’s Division in the years just before her deployment. Thelma Stevens began her relentless work to desegregate the church in 1944 and the

⁷⁸⁴ Betty Burleigh, “Methodism and American Indians” *The Southwestern Advocate* XCIV, no. 13 (August 28, 1947): 3, Printed Matter, Magazines and Newspapers, folder 8, William Umsted Witt Collection, GCAH.

⁷⁸⁵ Norwood, “American Indian Women: The Rise of Methodist Women’s Work 1850-1939,” 187.

⁷⁸⁶ Virginia (Louke) Ware, Interview with author, Nov. 26, 2014.

Woman's Division became the first official agency within The Methodist Church to call for the General Conference to publicly oppose racial segregation. Starting in 1944 and every four years following, the Woman's Division petitioned the General Conference to merge its racially segregated jurisdictions. In 1944, at the urging of the Woman's Division, the church formed the Commission to Consider the Relations of All Races in The Methodist Church. That commission wrote a powerful statement on The Methodist Church and race, which was adopted by the 1948 General Conference. The statement created a theological base from which Methodist women and others could work to end the segregated jurisdictional system, a process that took more than twenty years.⁷⁸⁷

Apparently, Virginia's parents were not as keen on the idea but this would not deter her. Raised in Appalachia, Virginia was the first person to finish high school in her family, and she went straight through college for an advanced seminary degree. Ever the adventurer, in 1939 she opted to attend Morris Harvey college in Charleston West Virginia instead of staying close to home like her friends. She giggled in wonderment at her own story as she recounted her busy student life to me.

Top of her high school class she received scholarships and worked her way through college. In April of 1941 she was granted her Exhorter's License and provided pulpit supply. Thinking back on her life she seemed incredulous, "That never occurred to me that I was, probably the only woman, standing in a pulpit as a pastor... That would never have occurred to me at that time. That was where I was supposed to be."⁷⁸⁸

Virginia attended Emory, one of the first women to graduate from Candler Theological School, and graduated with a Bachelor of Divinity degree in 1946.

⁷⁸⁷ Rosemary S Keller, *Spirituality and Social Responsibility: Vocational Vision of Women in the United Methodist Tradition* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1993), 238.

⁷⁸⁸ Virginia (Louke) Ware, Interview with author, Nov. 26, 2014.

Starting in April 1946, she began as a contract worker and a year later was recognized as a Deaconess in the Methodist Church. Sent to Oklahoma by the Women's Society of Christian Service with a one-way ticket, Virginia eventually arrived in Anadarko with very little money, the clothes she could carry, and only a coat to keep her warm at night. She had to decide between paying student loans coming due or buying a blanket. Choosing to honor her commitment to repay her loans she chose to sleep under her coat.

If it sounds stark, it was not uncommon. According to Alice Hageman,

The popular image of the single-woman missionary as Protestant equivalent of the nun may have some truth, although in some ways the life of the missionary was even more difficult. She had made no vow of celibacy, yet faced virtual charges of betrayal if she married. She had not joined an order and therefore did not have the explicit and intentional support of her sisters.⁷⁸⁹

Virginia told me, "Our job was to develop leadership and help with the leadership. We had 16 missions in my district. In the conference, there were three districts. I was in the Western district, the smallest. But the largest one in distance."⁷⁹⁰ She worked with mission pastors who were organized by the Women's Societies and the Methodist youth groups. When she was not developing and organizing leaders, she was fulfilling speaking engagements representing the mission work wherever they needed her. "Oh, my goodness, they kept me going," she exclaimed, "I went to Kansas and Texas and east. I did not come west. I never got farther west, I don't think, than Kansas. I was the

⁷⁸⁹ Alice Hageman, "Women And Missions: The Cost of Liberation" in Alice L. Hageman, ed., *Sexist Religion and Women in the Church: No More Silence!* (New York: Association Press, 1974), 177-178.

⁷⁹⁰ Virginia (Louke) Ware, Interview with author, Nov. 26, 2014.

one they sent out to represent our work and explain our work and get support for us.”⁷⁹¹

She was much sought after as a speaker.

She told me they would just call her up and ask her to speak so she always had to be ready.

That was always fun. When you could, you know, just, you’re just dropping in, or you’re a guest, and you’re recognized. You usually have something pleasant to say. Something positive for maybe just a minute or two. I liked that about our Methodist church. I think we’re open and receptive and want to know each other. I think we want to get acquainted.⁷⁹²

In a follow up conversation with Virginia in July 10, 2018, Suanne conveyed more of her mother Virginia’s context saying that this was unique amongst the other deaconesses because the other deaconesses did not preach. Due to her seminary training and experience Virginia was asked to preach “across racial lines - White, Native American, and Black churches and groups, as well as, women’s organizations.”⁷⁹³ She also taught religious studies in the government schools at Chilocco, Fort Sill, and Anadarko.⁷⁹⁴

Building relationships takes time, and it can be doubly difficult when you have to build trust due to the history of interactions between Native Americans and missionaries. Mary-Paula Walsh writes, “while Native Americans across the board have experienced tribal and cultural decimation throughout United States history, the Plains Indians received particularized brutality as settlers and states expanded westward.”⁷⁹⁵ As we have

⁷⁹¹ Ware, Interview, 2014.

⁷⁹² Ware, Interview, 2014.

⁷⁹³ Virginia (Louke) Ware, conversation with author, July 10, 2018.

⁷⁹⁴ Virginia (Louke) Ware, Interview with author, Nov. 26, 2014.

⁷⁹⁵ Mary-Paula Walsh, *Feminism and Christian Tradition: An Annotated Bibliography and Critical Introduction to the Literature*, (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1999), 405.

seen, the history of church engagement with the Kiowa nation and the tone and language used by some members of the white male leadership in The IMC in the years Virginia served had been problematic. Nevertheless, Virginia entered into service wanting to build relationships with people who had no reason to trust her.

Virginia engaged in relationship building with pastors and District Superintendents immediately upon her arrival in Oklahoma, in order to meet the people in her mission area and spend time with them. Virginia's district covered the largest geographical area of the conference. Though she had no means of transportation she garnered what resources she could to meet people. She explains it this way,

I didn't have a car for 14 months....[so] I got rides with the ministers and with whoever, wherever we were supposed to go. I'm sure I wasted time, but there was plenty to learn, just observing and meeting the different people which I'd be working with. Our District Superintendent lived within walking distance of my apartment. ...But now, with my work, I covered all the way from ... I could go to the Kansas line and turn. I could look over into Kansas. That's how far it went. And I went as far south as, I think we were 40 miles from the Texas line. I covered all this territory.⁷⁹⁶

Compare her resilient attitude with a letter addressed by one of her male contemporaries to Superintendent Witt dated April 11, 1947 by Rev. Wallace.

We are getting along about as well as anyone can expect, taking into consideration of the total life's situations. Life for the Indian has always been rather meager because of their backwardness, indifference, uncompromising attitudes, and dispositions. For these and other reasons, we haven't made any headway toward rebuilding Pennington church nor the parsonage.⁷⁹⁷

⁷⁹⁶ Virginia (Louke) Ware, Interview with author, Nov. 26, 2014.

⁷⁹⁷ Rev. Wallace, to Rev. W.U. Witt, 11 April 1947. Correspondence folder 5, William Umsted Witt Collection. GCAH.

Wallace goes on to complain for several more paragraphs about the behavior of various church members. Instead of complaining about a car Virginia innovated by using her time wisely to form relationships with the pastors and the people.

Virginia not only sought to build relationships with members of the Methodist connection but also with the other denominational leaders. I asked her about her interactions with other churches and I assumed there might be competition based on the correspondence I had seen from her male colleagues, but she assured me, “There were just areas where it would be prominently Baptist or Presbyterian or whatever. Yet there was a closeness, too. We all knew each other.”⁷⁹⁸ Later she added,

Of course, we were meeting with groups all the time and the leaders of the groups. In the area where I lived ... I lived in an apartment owned by Presbyterians. I was a good friend to the Presbyterian minister and his wife. We got acquainted. Of all the different people in the neighborhood, I think I knew most of them. A lot of them, at least. I'd fill, for the Methodist church, if the minister had to be gone, I would fill in on Sunday morning.⁷⁹⁹

Virginia's consistently cooperative tone is in stark contrast to that found in a series of letters between Rev. Albert Horse, Superintendent Witt, Bruce Kinney, Director of Indian Missions American Home Baptist Home Mission Society, and Dr. Perry, Secretary of the Home Work for the Board of Missions MEC,S concerning an ongoing debate about membership and “violation of the comity principles.”⁸⁰⁰

Kinney begins this series of letters by reminding Dr. Perry of a previous conversation concerning a preacher, Delos Lonewolf, who had been encroaching on the Baptist mission field in Rainey Mountain, Oklahoma. He goes on to accuse the

⁷⁹⁸ Virginia (Louke) Ware, Interview with author, Nov. 26, 2014.

⁷⁹⁹ Ware, Interview, 2014.

⁸⁰⁰ Bruce Kinney, to Dr. Perry, March 7, 1931, Correspondence folder 5, William Umsted Witt Collection.

Methodists of bribing “our man Albert Horse... to work for the Methodists [even though] he expresses the wish to remain a member of the Baptist Church.”⁸⁰¹ He goes on to say that “We are also seemingly reliably informed that it is the deliberately formulated policy of your church there to hire ten Baptist members to work for them in the hope of building up the Methodist membership.”⁸⁰² Though he admits he is “reluctant to believe” this report nonetheless if it continues “we shall be obliged to adopt some rigorous defensive measures.”⁸⁰³

Perry and Witt had some conversation about this because a follow up letter from Dr. Perry to W.U. Witt he thanked him for his letter and remarked dismissively, that he had “had written the brother that I knew the story about us trying to employ ten of their men was a fake; we had neither the money nor the disposition to do anything of the kind. Some of those Yankees just like to make trouble for Southern people. They are ready to believe any kind of a story they hear about us, even though it is absolutely foolish...”⁸⁰⁴

Witt also wrote a letter to Albert Horse a few days later saying, “I am sending you some news which I am sure will make you smile...” to inform him of “what is going the rounds among [sic] the Baptists.”⁸⁰⁵ He goes on to assure Albert that he knows Albert made a public statement in August of 1930 that he was returning to the Methodist church and that he had requested an appointment which Witt could not promise due to funding

⁸⁰¹ Bruce Kinney, to Dr. Perry, March 7, 1931, Correspondence folder 5, William Umsted Witt Collection. GCAH.

⁸⁰² Bruce Kinney, to Dr. Perry, March 7, 1931, Correspondence folder 5, William Umsted Witt Collection. GCAH.

⁸⁰³ Bruce Kinney, to Dr. Perry, March 7, 1931, Correspondence folder 5, William Umsted Witt Collection. GCAH.

⁸⁰⁴ Dr. Perry to W.U. Witt, March 18, 1931, Correspondence folder 5, William Umsted Witt Collection. GCAH.

⁸⁰⁵ Rev. W.U. Witt to Albert Horse, March 1931, Correspondence folder 5, William Umsted Witt Collection. GCAH.

but that indeed he would license him if he so wished. He goes on to encourage Albert in his work, says he “loves him” and “trusts him” and knows him to be a “true Christian man.”⁸⁰⁶ He ends the letter by suggesting that Albert approach the person who is spreading rumors about him and confront the man.

By April 1, 1931 Dr. Perry is responding again to Rev. Witt Indicating that there was a misunderstanding about Albert Horse. Regardless he is now ready to begin an argument for the Methodists to continue their work saying,

Nothing is binding which they may do on anybody. I think it might be well for you to present to them the facts in regard to our Comanche work. We have been on the ground perhaps longer than anybody else and have had work there. We are not infringing on anybody's territory because we are more than twenty miles from any other Church. I do not know anything else We, of course, do not want to intrude on anybody's territory, but we have been working that field for a good while and don 't want to be run out because somebody else would like to get our place. However, if somebody can serve them better. We are always willing to yield under those conditions, but they will have to show us that they can do it better.⁸⁰⁷

Meanwhile on March 21, 1931 Kinney had written to Perry with a copy of the complaint against the Methodists from his missionary in the field, Rev. Jackson. For some reason Kinney asks that their correspondence not be revealed to anyone “especially the Indians.”⁸⁰⁸ On March 24, 1931 Perry responds back to Kinney saying that he is putting Witt on the case and reiterates, “We are not trying to make Methodists out of the

⁸⁰⁶ Rev. W.U. Witt to Albert Horse, March 1931, Correspondence folder 5, William Umsted Witt Collection. GCAH

⁸⁰⁷ Dr. Perry to W.U. Witt, April 1, 1931, Correspondence folder 5, William Umsted Witt Collection. GCAH

⁸⁰⁸ Bruce Kinney, to Dr. Perry, Mar. 21, 1931, Correspondence folder 5, William Umsted Witt Collection. GCAH

Indians but doing our best to help them into a Christian life and into a better life everywhere.”⁸⁰⁹

On March 26, 1931 Kinney replies to a letter from March 18 saying that “its implications are rather strange to me. I suppose a man has a right of his own accord to change his membership but Albert Horse has not. He has assured us he wants to retain his membership with us.”⁸¹⁰ He finishes saying, “If Mr. Witt has ‘men capable’ with his own church it seems odd he would employ one who has been an active worker and a member with us for at least 20 years and I think more Albert tells us he is receiving twenty dollars per month.”⁸¹¹

While the representative of the Baptist Church is rather perturbed representatives from the Methodist Church find his letters amusing in the beginning. As their disagreement continues their tone appears to become increasing agitated near the end of the correspondence.⁸¹² This group of letters is revealing of the degree to which the denominations distrusted each other and the level of competition between the missionaries and even the church missionary board officials. It is telling that Virginia did not engage in this kind of behavior, instead she reached across the aisle on numerous occasions. Historian Tash Smith talks about the ways in which denominational

⁸⁰⁹ Dr. Perry, to Bruce Kinney, March 24 1931, Correspondence folder 5, William Umsted Witt Collection. GCAH

⁸¹⁰ Bruce Kinney, to Dr. Perry, Mar. 26, 1931, Correspondence folder 5, William Umsted Witt Collection. GCAH

⁸¹¹ Bruce Kinney, to Dr. Perry, Mar. 26, 1931, Correspondence folder 5, William Umsted Witt Collection. GCAH

⁸¹² Tash Smith also presents this case and other similar cases with the Comanche’s and Kiowa’s citing the belief by other denominations that the Methodists were too lenient in their requirements for membership because they allowed members to retain some of the Native culture. In addition, Methodists, particularly Methvin, were known for empowering Native leaders who white missionaries from other denominations believed were not truly Christian. For more information see Tash Smith, *Capture These Indians for the Lord: Indians, Methodists, and Oklahomans, 1844-1939* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2014), 175-185 and Correspondence folder 5, William Umsted Witt Collection. GCAH.

competition did not matter to Native American members because they were more interested in worshipping together as community and this would cross denominational lines.⁸¹³ Likewise, Virginia shows sensitivity to this kind of collaborative style that comes across as beloved speech as she describes her interactions with other denominational representatives showing her appreciation for community and relationships. However, Virginia is also cognizant of injustice and she shared in a follow up through Suanne that her experience was that most missionaries from that time from other denominations worked as married couples and she thinks this prevented them from developing close bonds with their constituents. She noticed that they were not as knowledgeable or respectful of the Native American communities where they served. “They were “more insular” than the “single working women” deaconesses.⁸¹⁴

Virginia also sought out the company of those who labored in the conference before she arrived. Consider her relationship to Mrs. Ida Methvin, J. J. Methvin’s second wife. Virginia befriended her and helped her when she could. Mrs. Methvin of course had been one of the first women missionaries in Kiowa Nation and Virginia showed no trace of self-consciousness. Tash Smith has written about the mixed emotions surrounding J. J. Methvin’s ministry but by this time it appears that he had taken on almost mythical proportions so one would imagine Mrs. Methvin might be seen as an intimidating presence for a young woman.⁸¹⁵ Virginia told me,

Our Methodist missionary in the town where I lived. J.J. Methvin. He and his wife. He had passed away. As far as I know, everybody says brother, brother

⁸¹³ Smith, *Capture These Indians for the Lord: Indians, Methodists, and Oklahomans, 1844-1939*, 186.

⁸¹⁴ Virginia (Louke) Ware, conversation with author, July 10, 2018.

⁸¹⁵ “In time, Methvin's myth grew as church leaders elevated him from the "simple" and "kindly" man of Babcock's writing to "the prophet of the blanket Indians" in church literature distributed across the country.” (189) For an analysis of Methvin’s legacy see Smith, *Capture These Indians for the Lord: Indians, Methodists, and Oklahomans, 1844-1939*, 187-194.

Methvin was our first missionary. He had passed away very, very old; about, I think, two years before I came. Mrs. Methvin lived quite a few years. She taught in – Methvin started a mission school – It was Methvin Mission School. She was a teacher. And she was a good friend, and we met in her home. I took her to meetings when she was in 80s. I'd take her to meetings with me and she would remember people from way back when. So, that was nice. We had nice contacts.⁸¹⁶

Virginia's respect and care for Mrs. Methvin and her cooperative spirit would help her build trust with people in the Kiowa Nation who would also value their elders and community.

Virginia further exemplified this aspect of belovedness through her value for relationship building with her coworkers in the field. Marybeth Littlejohn had been there for almost 8 years and had paved the way for those who came after her. She was the first deaconess sent to the Kiowa Nation and apparently had petitioned to be sent there. Tash Smith says, she finally received an appointment in 1938 to Anadarko to work among the Indians after several requests.⁸¹⁷

Unfortunately, it appears Littlejohn had some difficulty interpreting her position to the white male leaders in the conference. In a letter dated April 18, 1941, Mrs. JW Downs from the Board of Missions let Superintendent Witt know that it had come to her attention that Miss Littlejohn was doing research work for brother Klingensmith, who she was staying with. The mission of the Women's Division was very precise so it was not surprising when she responded “I do not believe we send missionaries out to do research work. We send them out to do missionary work, and my advice would be that you do not

⁸¹⁶ Virginia (Louke) Ware, Interview with author, Nov. 26, 2014. For more information on Methvin's second wife the former Ida Mae Swanson, see Tash Smith, *Capture These Indians for the Lord: Indians, Methodists, and Oklahomans, 1844-1939* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2014).

⁸¹⁷ Smith, *Capture These Indians for the Lord: Indians, Methodists, and Oklahomans, 1844-1939*, 185.

spread Miss Littlejohn out too much. I would think she would not avail very much if you do so.”⁸¹⁸

Virginia’s arrival as a contract worker and a deaconess must have been a welcome sight to help shoulder the burden of such a large territory with so many added responsibilities. Virginia said she was given all sorts of odd jobs and she did them all. She further exemplified her beloved spirit in her willingness to listen and help wherever she was needed no matter the task. She told me that, “Miss Littlejohn was our light and our guide,” adding with her usual humor, “She would do [the work] or bug me to do it.”⁸¹⁹

Virginia was sent to work with the Kiowa people as well as the other Nations within her territory (i.e. Kiowa, the Comanche, the Apache, Caddo, Ponca). I asked her if it was hard to become a part of the community, or if she was accepted right away? She replied, “It was hard. You just took your time.”⁸²⁰

One story she told me a couple times and though the details sometimes change, the point is always the same: Virginia always errs on the side of justice and her attitude and responses to injustice are the essence of what a beloved woman exemplifies. She told me, when the Women’s Division finally came through with the money for a car, she had two problems she needed to solve. First, she needed to purchase a vehicle and second, she had to learn how to drive. As she rode with the pastors and Superintendents they would offer all sorts of advice but the main theme was to buy a small car because, “Those Indians are always asking for rides so you don’t wanna be getting a car that’s got the

⁸¹⁸ Mrs. JW Downs, to Rev. W.U. Witt, April 18, 1941. Correspondence folder 5, William Umsted Witt Collection. GCAH

⁸¹⁹ Virginia (Louke) Ware, Interview with author, Nov. 26, 2014.

⁸²⁰ Virginia (Louke) Ware, Interview with author, Nov. 26, 2014.

backseat in it,” to which Virginia responded, “That’s why I’m here.” When the time came she got the biggest car she could find.

The story Virginia told about her car exemplifies how her resourcefulness and cleverness was helpful in her work. A beloved woman who embraces her personality and identity such as Virginia has done can build relationships as well as engender trust.

This story also exemplifies how Virginia is not afraid to ask for help and reaches out to her community. She readily enlisted the women to teach her like “Miss Littlejohn [who] was so careful” and the other women who she said, “were glad to help me.”⁸²¹

The dénouement to the story is just as entertaining. Once Virginia got her car it was never empty. In fact, the only criticism she voiced about her ecumenical partners referred to those who had a “back seat without an Indian in it.”⁸²² She volunteered to take youth workers around. “I made that a point in my work that I wanted them to know more about the big church and what we were all about. I could take five or four. I could take three in the back seat with me.”⁸²³

She also filled her car with women like Hazel Botone and others associated with the Women's Society. The friendships that developed out of these car trips provided a means by which the voices of the women she drove with could be heard beyond the scope of their home. They became preachers and pastors. Virginia took them to meetings and empowered them to lead. If people wanted to hear about what was happening in Indian churches she encouraged them to talk to her Native American sisters directly. It only

⁸²¹ Virginia (Louke) Ware, interview with author, July 25, 2015.

⁸²² (Louke) Ware, Interview, 2015.

⁸²³ Virginia (Louke) Ware, Interview with author, Nov. 26, 2014.

makes sense that when she was traveling all those miles that she was spending long hours in the car with them listening and building relationships. She said,

I would take them to conferences and other places they had never been. Most of them had never been to conferences beyond the Indian community. I took them for all of them and we did. We went to some of the conference meetings. I would take them to as many conferences as I could, as many district meetings as I could.⁸²⁴

Virginia also had a keen understanding of gender roles. As soon as she got off the bus in Anadarko she was confronted with conflicting cultural gender expectations. Her first contact with a Kiowa man and woman she describes thus,

and here is an old, old Indian man walking with his cane, going very slowly and way way behind him was the wife, carrying a bag of groceries... Later on, when I was describing this, one of the boys said, one of our Indian boys said, “well that's the way it is at home.” He said the ... man walks out in front, carries all the dignity, and the woman walks behind and carries everything else.⁸²⁵

She laughed as she related this story but got sober again saying, “That was a new thing for me.”⁸²⁶ Perhaps we can imagine what she might have felt especially considering that she was a licensed preacher at 18 in a denomination that did not ordain women yet, only the third woman to graduate with a Divinity degree from Emory who endured teasing from the men at Emory, and more educated than the male leadership in the IMC.⁸²⁷ She may not have appreciated what she saw but she was secure enough in her identity that even as a young woman she could find humor in the situation and remember it decades later. The effective use of humor to disarm, inspire and confront is a useful form of beloved speech that fosters community and Virginia employs it readily.

⁸²⁴ (Louke) Ware, Interview, 2014.

⁸²⁵ (Louke) Ware, Interview, 2014.

⁸²⁶ (Louke) Ware, Interview, 2014..

⁸²⁷ (Louke) Ware, Interview, 2014. & (Louke) Ware, Interview, July 25, 2015.

Virginia also showed an appreciation for cultural norms different from her own.

While we were talking she offered this observation with an effusive and affectionate tone.

I was thinking this week. I remembered something. Our Indian people, Oh they loved to sing. Of course, they all had their own native language and they all had their own native songs. It was hot one day in July. It was very, very hot. It was on a Sunday morning. I decided ... I was going to go to church that Sunday, as usual. So, I drove up into the church yard all the way out in the country. Drove up into the church yard. They'd already started the meeting and the minister was leading the songs. Oh, it was hot! It was a hot July. I walked into a church where the minister was leading them, Joy To The World! (*Erupts in laughter*) In July! I thought, "Well, this was his favorite song." That was his favorite song. You heard Christmas songs no matter when or where. He didn't live long after that and I remember thinking wherever he is, he's leading that song.⁸²⁸

Virginia also reflexively attended to her own identity by placing herself in situations where she knew she would be pressed to grow in self-understanding especially when it came to race. She wanted to step outside of her own cultural norms and experience something different. Suanne, her daughter, described it as a calling which Virginia acknowledged to be true.

She not only sought out working amongst Native peoples in Oklahoma, but as a student at Candler, she participated in dialogue sessions with students at Gammon, a historically African American institution. At the time Candler was racially divided. African Americans were not allowed on the campus except to work as cooks and cleaners. Because Gammon students were not allowed on campus they would go to Gammon and speak with their black peers on their campus.⁸²⁹

It is also notable that Virginia's calling to racial justice and integration did not become a source of friction with her white peers because she intentionally tried to help

⁸²⁸ (Louke) Ware, Interview, 2014.

⁸²⁹ (Louke) Ware, Interview, 2014.

people find connections to each other. Her attention to identity and her ability to listen enabled her connect people who held different values by helping them discover commonality. For instance, when she would speak to white audiences she discovered that sometimes they would be surprised by her stories because as she put it “It never occurred to them that the [Native] women would be doing the similar things that they do for their families. They’re probably thinking they were around a campfire.”⁸³⁰ So she would tell them stories and try to help them make connections to their own life.

the amazing thing is, wasn’t that much difference...there’s ways that you could relate, you know, ... cooking, and canning, and stuff like the women did. And the beautiful needlework that the Indian people would ... Oh they’d make beautiful quilts and beautiful ... And I took some ... Beautiful things that they made. And, course, the women were very interested in that. Including my mom, cause my mom was a – quilter - Beautiful quilts, beautiful. Everything. ... And my mother was interested in the Indian women and joined right in.⁸³¹

Virginia’s attitude with her white audiences enabled them to hear her. But this does not mean she refrained from confronting racism and prejudice when she saw it. She was aware enough to see racism for what it was. An example of this is the story she told about Maude (Kiowa) and Paul McDaniels (Wichita). They were a young couple Virginia had helped to find an apartment to live in and to get a loan at the bank.

I remember going into the bank ... Paul needed \$300. He was just in from the Army and they had to have an apartment. And we found an apartment. And he needed money. And he said, “I need \$300.” And we went to the local bank in Anadarko. And there were two banks. So we went to the bank, and I said to this smart alecky guy, I knew him, I knew him, I didn't know him personally, but I knew his attitudes. I said, “We want \$300.” And he started, he said, “These Indians...” and this is a bank! I told Paul just wait - He got the \$300. But there were times you have to stand up.

⁸³⁰ (Louke) Ware, Interview, 2014.

⁸³¹ (Louke) Ware, Interview, 2014.

Virginia's ability to listen and join in the struggle for justice with Maude and Paul by confronting prejudice and racism, is just one model the power of beloved speech.

Another is the trust and the willingness to be in relationships for long periods of time. Virginia also shared a story about one of her students. Rupert Thompson had finished high school and he wanted to go to college but he had no transportation. So Virginia drove him 50 miles round-trip to the bus for four years so that he could come home on the weekends. When he finished he asked for Virginia's help to learn how to drive. Then she helped him find a job. After the interview he needed a place to live and his new employer recommended someone who might have an extra room.

the principal said, "There's no problem." He said, "There's a lady over here." And gave us the address. And said she rents rooms, and she may have an extra room. So we went over there and parked out here. And he went to the door and knocked and the lady came to the door. And he told her he had a job at the school and he would be teaching out there but he needed a room. And she was talking. She looked down and said, "Is that Miss. Louke?" And he said, "Yes." "Well I know her!" "I heard her speak". And he got the room.⁸³²

Virginia very proudly told us that he taught for many years, was an athletic coach and went on to become Chairman of the Kiowa tribe. Virginia and Rupert had a relationship built on trust and compassion. In addition, this story shows Virginia's influence outside of the Nation as well.

Another compelling story gives evidence of the trust given to Virginia. Virginia explained,

I'd take Indian Jewelry all across the country with me. They'd make dresses and that sort of thing, earrings and ... [for] some of them ... it was about the only spending money some of our women had because they weren't working anywhere. I'd come back and sometimes I sold it for what they priced it. More often, I'd try to add a little bit to bring back more than what they were expecting.

⁸³² (Louke) Ware, Interview, 2014.

They used that to buy their beads and that sort of thing because they could sell their jewelry. Yeah, I could help them that way. Also, it was an introduction for me with the groups that I was meeting because they were interested.⁸³³

Not only did the women entrust her with their handcraft but she took her actions a step farther. She explained that they would often underprice their art and since she had access to people who could afford to pay Virginia made sure that these women got the proper amount of money for their work. Considering she shared that “it was about the only spending money some of our women had” I would imagine it may have engendered even more trust.⁸³⁴ It also becomes a justice issue providing important income for these families and a means of self-determination for the women.

There is another aspect to her actions which makes this beloved work culturally significant. The 1867 Treaty of Medicine Creek created a social system dependent on United States Government Ration distributions and annuity payments which were insufficient to support families. The United States government criminalized any attempt to go off reservation lands in order to seek out alternative forms of food through hunting or raiding (two highly valued endeavors by the Kiowa). At the same time to preserve their culture, young Kiowa women began using their traditional life-ways to produce commercial beadwork and tourist goods, such as jewelry, sashes, moccasins, and cradleboards that were desirable by the financial markets created by the colonizers.⁸³⁵ Virginia’s actions provided a source of revenue for the women to continue their self-determination efforts through a cottage industry.

⁸³³ (Louke) Ware, 2014.

⁸³⁴ (Louke) Ware, 2014.

⁸³⁵ C. Joseph Genetin-Pilawa, *Crooked Paths to Allotment: The Fight over Federal Indian Policy after the Civil War*, (Chapel Hill: University North Carolina Press Books, 2012), 58.

Virginia was also a gifted teacher. Her relationship with the women and men of the Kiowa Nation began in living rooms and Sunday school rooms. The day I interviewed her she shared some of her Bible study curriculum with me she had used and I came to understand why she was asked to speak so often. Her words were still inspiring more than 50 years after she had first spoken them.

In one case she spoke of what it means to be a human being and to be beloved by God,

Each human being is called to places to stand upon the world. Each one is saying something to the world and what we are saying to the world is being heard by others... You belong to the great company of those who believed in life. You belong to Him who unites the past, the present, and the future.⁸³⁶

In another case she spoke of multiple ways of approaching God,

Each person thinks his own spiritual temperament is in the deep realm of the spirit [but] we cannot be regimented or put in to a rigid mold. There are as many accounts of how God works in the souls of man as there are human beings. Emerson said, "God enters every life by a private door."⁸³⁷

Another example of belovedness comes through Virginia's written reports for the annual conference. Her report from Sept 7, 1946 reads,

Since I came to the Indian mission in April of this year my main task has been one of adjustment to new surroundings and getting an insight into the program of the church in this conference particularly the Western district. Among the more important of my activities was my participation in the coaching school for children's workers ... In the six vacation schools held there were 212 children reached including the 53 enrolled in the children's classes at the training school. Among my most joyous experiences was my contact with the youth caravan the members of which represented the central and eastern districts. Their work among us was of utmost significance. ... Our work in the schools is a source of great inspiration not only from the joy of mingling with young life but also for the

⁸³⁶ (Louke) Ware, Interview, 2014.

⁸³⁷ (Louke) Ware, Interview, 2014.

realization that we have a part in developing the Christly character. ... I have worshiped in most of the churches in the district and appreciate the opportunities for participation in the services. I am glad for the place of service that is mine with a most gracious people and in the promotion of a cause that truly demands "my strength, my life, my all!" Virginia Louke contract worker⁸³⁸

This exuberant report is made all the more remarkable when it is compared with excerpts of another report written by the Central District Superintendent John H. Lowe at the same time,

there are multitudes of pagan worshipers in our midst who have had for years a form of religion with ritual and alluring dance. This is one of the great hindrances to Christian work which keeps the Indian people away from home. Many lose sight of the church and the moral effect upon them is appalling. The only remedy is to give them something better. The light for they are sitting in darkness and the shadow of death.⁸³⁹

Virginia also had influence nationally. Her report appears in the national publication of the annual report of the Women's Division for 1947-48,

All of our workers with Indians are very eager to use every opportunity of interpreting Indian and white groups to each other, and to build better attitudes among members of each group toward the other. Efforts are being made, too, to break down prejudices among the various Indian tribes. The greatest progress along these lines has been made among youth groups, Indian and white. Virginia Louke writes: "I am leading a group of our Indian young people in an exchange of programs with white youth groups in the western part of the state. This will be of utmost significance, both in strengthening our work and in cultivating a more pleasant relationship between the two races."⁸⁴⁰

Furthermore, Virginia's speech comes through her personality and temperament. She followed her heart out to Oklahoma quite literally when she married into the Ware

⁸³⁸ Virginia Louke, "Indian Mission Report," 49; *The 8th Annual Indian Mission Conference of The Methodist Church*, (Ware's Chapel, OK, September 7, 1946), GCAH.

⁸³⁹ The Minutes of 8th Annual Session, "Reports of the Central District," 41; *The 8th Annual Indian Mission Conference of The Methodist Church*, (Ware's Chapel, near Lawton OK, September 8, 1946), GCAH.

⁸⁴⁰ Woman's Division of Christian Service, *Thy Way Be Known*, Eighth Annual Report 1947-1948 (New York: Woman's Division of Christian Service, 1948), 33.

family. Her integration work became very personal when she married. In general, white euro-christian settler/immigrants are not tied to the land the same as Indigenous peoples. Yet, Virginia spoke forcefully about The United Methodist Church's claim to a portion of the Ware family allotment. Her passion reflected the importance of the land to the Ware family (Kiowa) which she had married into and the historical trauma it reenacted. This was not a matter of money but rather honoring the family who had history and relationship with the land and the Ware ancestors who are buried there. In regards to the concept of land the Kiowa were very different from the nations that I had visited in the Northeast. They were also different from the Cherokee Nation where I had done mission work. They were violently "corralled" and forced to inhabit a minuscule portion of their lands.

Virginia may have come with an appreciation of the land when she arrived in Kiowa Nation but it is obvious she also listened and learned a lot about what happened because she would not allow this issue to be brushed aside even though it happened over 50 years ago. Her voice rose steeply as she spoke about the way the church continues to hold on to the allotment land given to the Ware family, "They had the church and the parsonage donated. That's their homeland! I mean that's their home!"⁸⁴¹ She married into a family that has deep ties to the land and the values she brought to that union are expressed passionately in her voice and evident in her daughter, Suanne, as both continue to speak out about the land.

Virginia remained in the Indian Mission until she married Pressley Ware, a member of the Kiowa Nation and a member of the Ware family who had worked closely

⁸⁴¹ (Louke) Ware, Interview, 2014.

with J. J. Methvin.⁸⁴² The story of how they met is a rather funny joke. Apparently, he was painting the church and quite a “mess.” She assured me it was not love at first sight. But Virginia and Pressley went on to work together, supervising the religious activities in the Government Indian Schools and providing religious education in the Western District of the Indian Mission.⁸⁴³ Pressley Ware was commended by D.D. Etchieson in his General Superintendent report of 1949.⁸⁴⁴

After their marriage the Wares relocated to California for a few reasons. First due to the lack of employment opportunities in the environs of Anadarko, OK, Pressley chose to look outside of Oklahoma. A World War II Veteran, he took a job with the Veterans Administration in Los Angeles in 1953. Second, they recognized the racism they would face from the white population in Oklahoma. Even though marriage between Native American men and white women was legal in Oklahoma at this time, they wanted to minimize the impact of racism against their mixed- raced marriage and especially their biracial children.⁸⁴⁵

The stories she told accentuated her value upon relationship and showed how cognizant she was of her identity. She recognized that as a white woman she had some power and she could use that power to undermine the narrative the white hierarchy was telling. At the same time, she shows her wit and her humor that comes naturally to her.

⁸⁴² Pressley Ware became Kiowa Tribal Chairman in 1976; additionally, when Methvin died on January 17, 1941 the funeral in “Anadarko brought together various church officials and members, though ‘Indian men and women constituted a considerable part of the congregation that filled the church.’ His pallbearers were Native ministers from the old KCA Agency, including Cecil Horse, Ted Ware, Henry Ware, Matthew Botone, Oliver Woodard, and Charley Aphkone.” Smith, *Capture These Indians for the Lord: Indians, Methodists, and Oklahomans, 1844-1939*, 188.

⁸⁴³ The Minutes of 11th Annual Session, “Reports of the Central District,” 29; *The Indian Mission of Oklahoma The Methodist Church*, (Mt. Scott-Comanche, near Lawton OK, September 9-11, 1949), GCAH.

⁸⁴⁴ The Minutes of 11th Annual Session, “Report of the General Superintendent,” 25; *The Indian Mission of Oklahoma The Methodist Church*, (Mt. Scott-Comanche, near Lawton OK, September 9-11, 1949), GCAH.

⁸⁴⁵ Peter Cumminos, “Race, Marriage, and Law,” *The Harvard Crimson*, December 17, 1963.

Her humor is most evident and opens up opportunities to connect. Humor is not unique to Native Communities but it is evidently valued. Sometimes humor points to deeper truths and sometimes it warns against foolishness and sometimes it is just funny.

Anita Phillips says even though “each tribe is a distinct cultural entity with its own values customs and language... There are broad categories of values to which most tribes relate... One example of a shared value which I have happily come across in my travels is the shared value of humor. There is a unique take on all of the troubles and barriers we face in our lives – and it is reflected in our humor.... I have been in a new setting with people from different tribes, and after sharing a few laughs, doors will open on new relationships.”⁸⁴⁶

Another example that included her value for relationships, identity, and listening, was her willingness as a young woman to move out of her comfort zone. She not only challenged her family but the dominant cultural narrative. Virginia stepped into a geographical location where she was the minority as a white woman, took the time to build relationships and listen so that when the time came she could speak forcefully from a place that was steeped in a history of violence due to settler/immigrants like herself and yet present an alternative worldview from the one she had been raised. These aspects of her personality, her ethics, and her way of being in the world, alongside her sense of humor, show signs of her capacity for beloved speech.

⁸⁴⁶ Anita Phillips, *On This Spirit Walk*, 13.

Judy Aaron Deere⁸⁴⁷

Once I arrived in Oklahoma Anne and I traveled to worship and meet with Rev. Judy Aaron Deere, MVSKOKE, pastor of Tulsa Indian United Methodist Church, ordained elder in the OIMC. When I walked into the church in Tulsa it was quiet and empty but it did not remain that way for very long. After an inspirational and challenging sermon followed by an altar call, the congregation quickly moved into the fellowship hall where food was prepared for lunch.

The value of relationships and community were evident immediately when I met with Judy. As we moved through the food line, Judy greeted her parishioners and encouraged the cooks. While she was doing this, she also asked me questions about myself. She found a place for all of us to sit so we could talk. Judy, Anne, Judy's husband, and I talked and shared a lunch of "Indian tacos." Because it was my first interview in Oklahoma I was nervously trying to get through my questions and she had just preached an inspiring sermon about race, so the interview was full of questions pertaining to preaching.

Judy told me that she had not been raised in a church and had not attended church regularly until she was an adult. She said that when she was "32, she moved back to Northeast Oklahoma and went with her grandmother and in 2004 when she went into ministry."⁸⁴⁸

Judy provided an example of an expression of beloved speech that differed from Virginia. Beloved speech is not always comfortable and not gentle but it is honest and

⁸⁴⁷ Rev. Judy Aaron Deere, (MVSKOKE/Creek) ordained elder in The Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference, Interview with author, July 19, 2015, Tulsa Indian United Methodist Church, Tulsa, OK.

⁸⁴⁸ Deere, Interview with author, July 19, 2015.

accountable. It encourages relationships that go deeper than acquaintances. At one point when she described her understanding of the task of preaching, she said,

That is why I say when people come in for a sermon, I do not want them to go out feeling bad. But I want them to go out questioning. I want them to get a little uncomfortable. Because I don't think I am here to preach to give you the seal of approval for the last week that you've just lived of your life. I am here to ask you to question whether you did. And that determination is between you and God. And it's not for the pastor to decide or anybody. And if you have spiritual care that you need to get there, then I can help to do that. But so can a whole room of people that's in the church too if they would choose to.⁸⁴⁹

Judy's voice expressed the power of beloved speech that can be found in community when she shared her experience of spiritual care that comes from the whole community. Judy's spoke to the power of relationships when she mentioned her grandmother and a lay leader who first asked her to lead. When I asked her about this she described the sink or swim situation she was placed in.

I remember when I became a lay speaker, I showed up at an event and she said, 'you're going to do devotion.' and I said, 'what is devotion?' and she said, 'you read a scripture and give a short message of what you think about it.' I just looked at her and she said, 'You better be ready every time you come up.' And I thought, 'What? That isn't what I signed up for!' I didn't know what I got into, but I was ready after that.⁸⁵⁰

We both laughed as she told this story but you could tell it was a formative moment for her. It was a time when she was asked to step out on faith, and she entered into it entirely making herself fully present to the people in that room and the Spirit of God, thus bringing the full force of what it means to be the beloved into the moment.

⁸⁴⁹ Deere, Interview, July 19, 2015.

⁸⁵⁰ Deere, Interview, 2015.

Judy's voice exhibited another expression of beloved speech when she preached her sermon. Judy comes across as a prophet in the sense that she is a truth teller both in her preaching and her conversation. She shared a time when she spoke up against a transgression of the community which was particularly poignant. She spoke to power courageously confronting injustice at the Annual Conference when she shared her frustration with the hypocrisy of an empty Act of Repentance.⁸⁵¹ She said she went to the microphone and spoke from her heart,

Why doesn't [The United Methodist Church] help with a plan on how [the OIMC] is going to be saved. 'Cause money isn't going to save us. Money isn't going to fight prejudice. Money is not going to fight racism. 'Cause that's the problem.

Her frustration about the threats to dissolve the OIMC was palpable.

They're talking about doing away with our conference because we aren't meeting our financial goals. I said, "You know what? That's a sorry Act of Repentance to say you're sorry and then to obliterate us as a conference again."

Reminiscent of Jesus' parable of the unjust judge and the persistent widow her courage to speak the truth to power came alive even in the retelling. Talk of mergers and dissolution brings back memories of land grabs and loss of sovereignty. A merger of the Indian conference with the predominantly white Oklahoma conference would render Native churches and congregations invisible once again. Her words offer an opportunity for others to become conscientized to their role in historical realities playing out once again in the community.

Through beloved speech she also named the reality of invisibility. Judy's ability to unmask the truth and name the injustice underneath that threatened dissolution is another

⁸⁵¹ "The United Methodist Church Act of Repentance toward Healing Relationships with Indigenous Peoples," April 27, 2012.

sign of beloved speech. Judy said, “[Oklahoma Conference Churches] do not even know I exist. The only time they call us is when they want us to come to sing an Indian song for them.”⁸⁵² Her words revealed the dehumanization process that replaces people with caricatures.

Judy’s attendance to identity and her value for relationships, comes forth in her recognition of several intersections, like race and economics, and the urban living conditions of her people which are always at the forefront of her mind.

Being here for six years it's just showing me more of the disparity. And the way that people are able to live their lives. And even me – it opened my eyes – I took for granted I had internet in the home. I always had to have it for work or whatever. My church members they have to go to the library and they get kicked off after an hour. And so even just that economic privilege I have and I didn’t recognize it as such.⁸⁵³

She admitted that she had an awakening about the disparities between herself and some members in her parish. Because of her humility and willingness to listen she began a gradual process of conscientization. She said she asks herself daily, “what does it mean to live a life in compassion and mercy?”⁸⁵⁴

That desire to develop deep relationships with her people was evident from the beginning of our time together. Judy made it known that she was wanted to honor the identity of her people. From the first, she expressed concern about what would be instilled into the children and church members through the curriculum they planned to use for Vacation Bible School because “it’s not even Native.”⁸⁵⁵ As Judy rightly observed, “That’s what I think we are missing – are we really attending to the spiritual

⁸⁵² Deere, Interview, 2015.

⁸⁵³ Deere, Interview, 2015.

⁸⁵⁴ Deere, Interview, 2015.

⁸⁵⁵ Deere, Interview, 2015.

needs of the people in our churches? Or are we doing what we have always done or what we think they need?”⁸⁵⁶

Part of Judy’s particular manifestation of belovedness lies in her refusal to be silenced or erased. Her attendance to identity is at the forefront of her life. She resists labels and points to the ways words can colonize.⁸⁵⁷ As she says so eloquently, “once you slap a label on somebody you put them into a category of assumptions that is probably 90% wrong because you are not them. They can’t understand what it means for me to be Indian.”⁸⁵⁸

Constructions and labels can erase identity. The attention that Judy pays to song and language and other cultural aspects of identity empowers her voice and embodies her identity so that her humanity is evident and rejects erasure. Her firm refusal to allow others to define her and rob her of her sovereignty and her willingness to speak out about it through her sermons and her political witness is a mark of beloved speech.

She is secure in her identity and she explained exactly how she wanted to be identified. She told me, “I am not a woman, and I am not an Indian. I am a human being. I am human. You are the one who is putting those categories on me. Whether I am male or female. Whether I am an Indian or I am not an Indian or what kind of Indian – all those things and slapping that on me – I am a human being first.”⁸⁵⁹ Later in the interview she repeated again how much it means to her to identify as a human being when she shared, “I think it’s kind of where you come around the corner and you realize we are all human

⁸⁵⁶ Deere, Interview, 2015.

⁸⁵⁷ Deere, Interview, 2015.

⁸⁵⁸ Deere, Interview, 2015.

⁸⁵⁹ Deere, Interview, 2015.

beings. When you start to break apart the constructs of society that have been put in place. That's what helped me with a lot of things."⁸⁶⁰

When Judy claimed the name "human" and denied other labels put upon her by others and dominant society she denied the attempts to racialize her, maintained her power, and performed an act of decolonization. For Judy to claim the term "Human Being" is legally significant. It was not official until May 12, 1879 when Judge Elmer Dundy ruled in the case of *Standing Bear v. Crook* that all persons, even noncitizens who may be considered "hostile" to the United States, are entitled to the benefits of habeas corpus.⁸⁶¹ The judge turned to Webster's dictionary and found the definition of "person" as 'a living soul; a self-conscious being; a moral agent; especially a living human being; a man, woman, or child; an individual of the human race' and concluded, "This is comprehensive enough, it would seem, to include even an Indian."⁸⁶² The significance of this naming act comes to the fore when we realize that for Native Americans humanity continues to be defined legally and so being able to name oneself is not an assumed right. Judy's beloved speech provides a platform for those who are listening to enter into a more profound understanding not only of relationship but identity - both hers and theirs

When I asked about her congregation, she said the church is composed of people from five different language groups, Kiowa, Choctaw, Cherokee, Creek, Sac and Fox, and the use of the settler's English. She had a keen awareness of who was represented any given Sunday and the songs needed to provide them music in each one's heart

⁸⁶⁰ Deere, Interview, 2015.

⁸⁶¹ Jace Weaver, *Notes from a Miner's Canary: Essays on the State of Native America*, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2010), 109.

⁸⁶² Jace Weaver, *Notes from a Miner's Canary: Essays on the State of Native America*, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2010), 109.

language. Her awareness of her own identity and beloved desire to deepen the relationship with her people through the language of song is a sign of her beloved speech.

The underlying framework that allows this to be beloved speech comes from the fact that, at one time, to speak her Native language or use drums or traditional instruments and ritual elements was not only discouraged but punished. For Judy to step out of that history of trauma and reclaim her cultural values is another act of courageous truth-telling and beloved speech.

Judy's attendance to her identity shows forth when she speaks about the importance of language to her. She sings in Muskogee and other languages and she regularly uses the hand copied songbooks in the pews with the indigenous languages. She is committed to learning the old songs and she is committed to her nation and to her language. She also shows her sensitive reflexive attention to her own identity and privilege when she was not afraid to humbly admit that she did not realize the degree to which something seemingly simple as internet access is far from simple. One of the most compelling expressions of her attention to identify came when she described herself as a human being before all else. She will not allow someone else to label her and she is secure in who she is.

Another example of attention to identity came in her call story, when she shared how several people approached her to test her call to ministry. She said she could not accept it until she heard Thomas Roughface speak. It was a rushed experience of a seemingly unlikely messenger who made it possible for her to finally hear the words being spoken by others and ultimately the Spirit. Roughface, a former Superintendent of the OIMC got through to her and he was not even speaking in person, it was pre-

recorded. She observed his body language and yet as much as it was distracting to her, she kept listening to him, and she persevered and remained steadfast. His frank talk combined with his expression of shared values, brought her to a new way of seeing the world.

I missed communion. But they were showing a video of Tom Roughface. And he was talking about how he had to go back to the General church to get the conference back. There was a group of them that worked trying to get the Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference back. And on the video – to me – he was kinda cocky - he had his hand in his shirt and he'd get wound up and make his shirt flap and his eyes – he just lit up – and he was talking about how his work had been to work for Native Americans, for Indian people. And all this time I had done Indian healthcare and I said, 'This is where I really fit.' I think right then I thought, 'I am called. This is what it feels like. It feels right. This is where I am supposed to be. So, I decided then that I would enter in the ministry.'⁸⁶³

In this case, Judy slowed down and took the time to reflexively consider what she was feeling and hearing and opened her mind to hear the message Roughface was sharing. Sometimes beloved speech involves the cessation of speech. In another example she shared a time when she needed to go inside and listen with a parishioner,

I think I was kind of half way mad at the [church members] ... And so we were having a meeting afterwards. And one lady said, 'It sounds like you are chewing us out and the ones who need to hear it aren't even here.' And I said, 'Well last time I checked whoever needs to hear the message that morning, God gets them here and you're here this morning so God must be talking to you too.' And she just looked at me. So I thought I might need to take a break.'⁸⁶⁴

She also talked about listening and the importance of it when she shared the times she confronted an injustice that threatened community and she also shared what she believes is one way to protect community. I asked if she believed people could change their worldview? and she said,

⁸⁶³ Deere, Interview, 2015.

⁸⁶⁴ Deere, Interview, 2015.

Yeah. That's when you begin to learn where they have walked and where they have been. You have to build a relationship with them. But to me it has to be one of mutual respect. Where you are willing to listen. And I believe that sometimes involves arguing or disagreement. But disagreement isn't a bad thing. It gets you to the point where you need to be. If you are willing to listen even in the disagreement.⁸⁶⁵

Her desire to grow and to listen to the other side is a sign of beloved speech. She also has the ability to read between the lines and call people to account.

I've told them that at the Seminary, there is a white world and an Indian world and I was told I could be comfortable in this world vs. this world and there is different sets of rules. But what I found out was that in God there is only one world and it doesn't belong to the white people. ...So how can you say I am less than you? You can't. And how can I say that you own the world? I can't. Cause your place is the same as mine. So when people say, "I have to learn how to operate in a white world" – well you are giving them credit for it being their world. Who says it's their world?⁸⁶⁶

She was able to read between the lines of conversation about race as she described her situation at the University and the antiracism/diversity work they were doing: "At one point I said, 'I am so tired of talking about racism. I have never felt my Indian-ness more in any other workplace than what I felt here.' I don't think that was met with the most positive response – I thought at the time I had the freedom to say those types of things."⁸⁶⁷ When I asked Judy what she meant by "Indian-ness"? She replied, "Being reminded I am brown."⁸⁶⁸

Her beloved speech is found in the fact that she named her own experience and feelings. She merely expressed her experience of someone else's behavior and thereby attempted to raise their awareness. Judy introduced me to aspects of relationship which

⁸⁶⁵ Deere, Interview, 2015.

⁸⁶⁶ Deere, Interview, 2015.

⁸⁶⁷ Deere, Interview, 2015.

⁸⁶⁸ Deere, Interview, 2015..

were vulnerable enough to confront, and unmask deception either intentional or unintentional. She does not run away after she confronts someone on something. She stays and speaks the truth of what she is seeing such as with her boss or from the floor of the conference. This is a sign of her ability to listen deeply and read between the lines.

Judy expressed the components of relationship, attention to identity, and listening slightly different from Virginia. She has the same sense of justice but she expresses it differently. She expressed her value for relationships when she engaged with protocols immediately when she fed us and began by asking about me and my work. I discovered later this is an important protocol and a genuine way of beginning a relationship. The belovedness of this is not only the act but the fact that she did not expect me to know all the protocol, she prompted me and engaged in the hospitality of listening. Her value of relationships came across in her genuine welcome of anyone to the table of grace which she fills with good things to eat and rich conversation modeling what it means to engage in beloved speech.

Lois Neal ⁸⁶⁹

After spending the day with Judy, Anne and I traveled the next day to the Texas border to visit with retired clergywoman Rev. Lois V. Glory-Neal, Cherokee Nation. Rev. Neal, who amongst her many titles, was the first Native American woman to be named a District Superintendent in 1992. We spent the day talking about her ministry. Her husband, now deceased, had also been an ordained Methodist pastor. She knew Virginia and had become ordained after her husband's death. She welcomed me into her living room and introduced me to her daughter-in-law. After brief greetings I began to set up for the interview. We spent the day talking, enjoying a meal, and looking through her photographs of many prestigious women leaders from the OIMC.

Community and relationship were built immediately upon meeting Lois. It was not only in the word she spoke, although I will touch on those later, it was in her welcoming demeanor. She had water waiting for me and provided a table, pens, pencils, and a whole sofa to spread out on. On the opposite side of the room was another table covered with photographs of her ministry. Anne Marshall, who had provided hospitality by traveling with me and introducing me to Lois, sat opposite us as we talked

Rev. Anita Phillips, Keetoowah Cherokee, says that among the stories from her tribe one of her favorites is the story of Grandmother Spider's "resourcefulness and

⁸⁶⁹ Rev. Dr. Lois V. Glory Neal, (Cherokee) ordained elder in The Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference of The United Methodist Church, First Native American Woman to be appointed a District Superintendent, Dean of the Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference Cabinet, Director on the General Board of Global Ministries of the United Methodist Church, Director on the General Board of Discipleship, member of the UMC General Worship Committee that revised the denomination's Book of Worship, Interview with author, July 20, 2015, Shawnee, OK.

courage to carry fire from the sun in a pottery basket.”⁸⁷⁰ She celebrates that “females and elders are honored [as] a part of the story of her people.”⁸⁷¹

I spent a whole day with Rev. Lois V Glory Neal. I have heard her described as an elder amongst elders. A member of the Cherokee Nation, she was born in Tahlequah, Okla., the capital of the Cherokee Nation. She has served in numerous capacities of leadership in the United Methodist Church. She was a leader within the Women’s Society of Christian Service during the 1970’s while also contributing as a partner to her husband’s ministry.

After her husband’s death, she attended the Methodist Oklahoma City University followed by seminary at St. Paul School of Theology, Kansas City. During this time, she also served as a Director on the General Board of Global Ministries. After she was ordained, she served as a director on the General Board of Discipleship. In 1992 she was the first Native American woman to serve as a District Superintendent, appointed in the OIMC. She also served as a member of the U.M.C.’s Worship Committee that revised the Book of Worship.

Her leadership in The Methodist Church began when she was a teenager. She was active in youth work for the Oklahoma Missionary Conference as a secretary and a treasurer. Her work as a Methodist youth brought her into contact with Oliver Neal, who eventually became her husband. She shared how events in her life prepared her for the next step in her journey. One example came when she moved to California.

⁸⁷⁰ Rev. Anita Phillips, member of the Cherokee Nation, Executive Director of Native American comprehensive plan UMC, *On This Spirit Walk*, 29.

⁸⁷¹ Anita Phillips, *On This Spirit Walk*, 29.

Oliver Neal, along with Woodrow Haney, and Harry Long conducted a series of revival services in Los Angeles California. Eventually a church would form and Oliver Neal would lead the development of the new congregation and establish it as a permanent ministry.⁸⁷² In California, Oliver reconnected with Virginia Louke, now Virginia Ware. Virginia's tenure as a Deaconess coincided with Oliver's seminary training and youth work in the Oklahoma Mission Conference. During his time in California he would meet with Virginia and pour out his struggles with her. She was someone who understood ministry and the context of Indian churches. It sounded like it was difficult time for Oliver but Lois said her move to California started her on the road of higher education, which she would finish in Oklahoma.

The importance of the first criteria of community and relationship became evident when Lois described her worship experience in California. She said, "It doesn't matter about denominations – Methodist, Baptist, just the fact that we were Indians." The strongest ties are her ties to her Native Community; denominational boundaries do not matter as much.

Her value of community comes to the fore in the story of her calling to return home to Oklahoma. Lois' firmly acknowledged her call from God to go "...back home to settle and serve my people."⁸⁷³ God's call and her ties to the Oklahoma community spiritually strengthened her even in the face of her pastor's doubts. She knew her mind and stood firm in her calling from God. In the end, her community, including the pastor at the church in California embraced her to the point that they could let her go and affirm her call too.

⁸⁷² Noley, *First White Frost*, 229.

⁸⁷³ Neal, Interview with author, July 20, 2015.

Later in the interview, she revealed that she had been a member of the Oklahoma Missionary Conference since she was 19 years old. She told me that preaching was in her family, “I come from a background of preachers... one grandpa was named Joe KingFisher and another one was named Joe Glory. They both were Indian Baptist preachers.”⁸⁷⁴

Once she returned to Oklahoma, she gathered a community around her at the University and within the Methodist Conference. She described mentors she had at various times in her life. Some assigned to her as her advisor in school and others were sent to her such as Harry Long, Ethel Williams, Teola Durant, and Oliver. She described their compassion, encouragement, and kindness. Most of all she described her relationship with God and her community that came together through faith. These communities came together when she most needed them, in the most unlikely of places. Foremost she described an intimate relationship with God. She heard God's voice through the scriptures, and through circumstances. Her husband's voice continued to speak to her as well.

Her depth of faith speaks to her identity too. Jack Forbes (Powhatan / Lenape / Saponi), once said, “Faith ‘Religion’ is, in reality, ‘living’. Our ‘religion’ is not what we profess, or what we say, or what we proclaim; our ‘religion’ is what we do, what we desire, what we seek, what we dream about, what we fantasize, what we think – all of these things – twenty-four hours a day. One's religion, then, is one's life, not merely the ideal life but life as it is actually lived.”⁸⁷⁵ “Religion” is not prayer, it is not a church, it is

⁸⁷⁴ Neal, Interview, 2015.

⁸⁷⁵ Jack D. Forbes, *Columbus, and Other Cannibals: The Wetiko Disease of Exploitation, Imperialism, and Terrorism* (Brooklyn: Autonomedia, 1979), 26-27, quoted in Weaver, *Native American Religious Identity: Unforgotten Gods*, ix.

not “theistic,” it is not “atheistic,” it has little to do with what white people call “religion.” It is our every act.”⁸⁷⁶

Lois also witnessed to the ways in which cultural awareness and identity intersect with relationships. Her ability to develop relationships is based on her acceptance of different cultural norms. For instance, in regards to preaching both she and Anne offered, that sometimes in Creek Churches the laity will begin to sing to let you know that it is time to stop preaching. Not all of them will do this, so even within the MVSOKOKE tradition there are differences, but the value of feedback from the community seems to be somewhat universal. Furthermore, she added that in some situations it is the role of the women in the church to keep track of time.⁸⁷⁷ She was keenly sensitive to honor time. I found it reminiscent of the role of the Beloved Woman who would be given the ability to speak in circles of leadership and power.

In response to my questions about societal transformation, she related a story about how she saw a change in a whole group of people after she preached. Based on the comments she received afterward she said it appeared that people had been already thinking along the lines of what she had said, which indicates she was listening. However, even more, important was that during this story she also revealed another sign of the relationship between beloved speech and storytelling namely, the value of relationships. She said

I think anywhere you go, your relationship with people can tell a story too. It's how you relate to them and, for instance, I got up at the pastor retreat last year, and before we left, I said, “Before I give the benediction to close this retreat, I want to take this opportunity to thank you pastors that have stayed until the last minute because I believe when we are sent forth to witness and however, whether

⁸⁷⁶ Weaver, *Native American Religious Identity: Unforgotten Gods*, 26-27.

⁸⁷⁷ Neal, Interview with author, July 20, 2015.

it's our creed or fellowship or whatever,” I said, “it's only etiquette that we stay for the full meeting.” I said, “On behalf of the committee that has worked so hard, and I know it's impossible to please everybody, but they have worked so hard to set up a good program, so let's recognize them and show them our thanks and appreciation.” Then I went down the line and thanked everyone for their gifts and graces that they contributed during that day. And you know what? After that meeting, after we said goodbye and gave that Creek handshake, some of the pastors came up and said, I said what they wanted to say but they couldn't say it. You know what I mean? How you say something or do something...⁸⁷⁸

For Lois, above all else beyond rhetorical skill, the relationship came first. This brings up another point to this story. Part of this etiquette was the Creek handshake. This is a cultural piece that is done across different nations in different ways. Anne explained to me that when it is a Creek handshake everyone makes a circle and the men go first and then women follow then you come in together and close the circle and do the Creek dismissal song and say a prayer and everybody goes home. This ritual is reserved for the end of communion or at the end of a meeting that is historical or on special occasions such as New Years. It is a way of exchanging words of encouragement, and in this ritual relationship is being built.⁸⁷⁹

Another critical aspect of cultural awareness for Lois is communicated through what a preacher/leader wears. At one point in Lois' interview, both she and Anne Marshall became animated describing some of the missteps pastors in the conference had made by over dressing in clerical collars and robes and over doing their makeup and jewelry, in the case of female clergy, particularly “white” women. She was very gracious to me considering that I had red lipstick at the time. Lois and Anne agreed that what we

⁸⁷⁸ Neal, Interview, 2015.

⁸⁷⁹ Suanne shared that another aspect of the Creek Handshake can involve a moving circle doubling back on itself so that every person will shake hands and greet each person face-to-face. It is an inclusive way to end a meeting or event and is a gift from the MVSKEKE people which has been adopted by other nations and is used at intertribal gatherings. Suanne Ware-Diaz, conversation with author, October 15, 2018.

wear speaks strongly about who we are and what we are trying to say and can either build a bridge or a wall to communication. Here again is the example of how reflexively attending to identity intersects with the hospitality of listening. If we as white or non-native clergy are listening to the culture in which we are interacting, we will adjust ourselves following our own identity as well as honoring those with whom we are speaking. This does not mean to say that we should erase our own identity because even Lois admitted she wears make up on occasion. However, it does mean that we are listening well enough to honor others by being sensitive to what we wear and willing to accept correction.

From the beginning, Lois' belovedness was evident in her reflexive attendance to her own identity as well as her attendance to the identity of others. She not only expressed her Cherokee nationality but also further identified her status as a matriarch and the "end of her line" telling me that, "the name Glory in the Native American culture, we are full bloods. We are the last. So I am the matriarch of this clan here. When I go that's it..."⁸⁸⁰

As she signed the IRB paperwork she exclaimed, "Lois V. Glory Neal, I like that name Glory, a lot of people still know me by Glory. In other words, I am just happy with what I am and who I am. It's not so much as who, you know but, Whose I am." She also informed me of her age which of course combined with the meaning of her name just further confirmed her status as an elder, "And July, I shall not forget this day, July 20, 2015, two days before I turn 84."⁸⁸¹ She further evidenced her elder status by praying for

⁸⁸⁰ Neal, Interview, 2015.

⁸⁸¹ Neal, Interview, 2015.

us before we began to speak. She prayed a blessing over both Anne and I and gave thanks for our time together. She then proceeded to speak in a voice that sounded like she was exhorting. Her voice evidenced not only her faith but also her theological understanding of our meeting as a sign of God's grace and joy within us. The power of her prayer combined with an urgency of the forcefulness of her message, replaced the focus from an interview, to refocus our conversation through a theological lens reinterpreting our voices as an event whereby God's grace might be manifested.

Further on in the interview, she elaborated, "Grandma Kingfisher, Nancy, she's descended way down there from John Ross. She's on the roll as Minerva Ross. Minerva Nancy Ross is her name."⁸⁸² Lois was very proud of her heritage, and her voice changed when she indicated that over her lifetime people had miss-identified her which she was quick to correct.

For years, people thought I was Choctaw all this time. Until about two years ago, and somebody called me up somewhere and said she's a full-blood Cherokee. Oh, this is ... I thought you were Choctaw. I said, no, we served our Choctaw people. All these years, Choctaws and Chickasaws, we served them back here.⁸⁸³

Apparently, this designation was applied to her husband as well because, later in the interview, she pointed out with a firm voice that her husband Oliver was full blood Chickasaw, "Not Choctaw, now!".⁸⁸⁴ Her reaction is understandable since the United States Government had forced the Chickasaw and Choctaw to merge around the time they were relocated even though they were utterly separate peoples.

⁸⁸² Neal, Interview, 2015.

⁸⁸³ Neal, Interview, 2015.

⁸⁸⁴ Neal, Interview, 2015.

Lois' security in her identity became more evident as she shared her personal story. Like many Native American preachers, she served churches in other nations with different languages and cultural norms. Cross-cultural appointments are expected when serving in the OIMC. Lois explained that some of the challenges predominantly related to language barriers. She recalled that growing up she heard preaching in Cherokee and she said, "I could sing in Cherokee. I could sing in Choctaw. I can sing in Kiowa and Creek, but I can't speak [Cherokee] fluently."⁸⁸⁵

This part of her story provided a platform for her particular voice to emerge. Just as there is no homogenous Native American culture, likewise experiences of colonization and racial supremacy are not uniformly interpreted by individuals. Lois's story about her education provides an example of the variety of opinions concerning different colonizing efforts of the dominant culture. Lois appreciated the Indian school, particularly Chilocco. She firmly states, "We went to Chilocco, graduate of an Indian school, Chilocco Indian Agricultural School. That's where I got my high school years training. I loved the Indian schools. I don't care what anybody says about Indian schools, boarding schools. They were heaven sent for many of us."⁸⁸⁶ And yet at the same time her voice sounded conflicted because she also said quite passionately, "when we went to boarding schools, you were punished for speaking your native language. I lost a lot of it."⁸⁸⁷ She also related a story about some Navajo students who arrived thankful for three meals and a warm bed but who later paid the price by relinquishing their jewelry as they entered school. And the question arises, "why were they hungry and without shelter?" The

⁸⁸⁵ Neal, Interview, 2015.

⁸⁸⁶ Neal, Interview, 2015.

⁸⁸⁷ Neal, Interview, 2015.

boarding school era is a complicated time in Native American history and there were definite differences between federally run schools and church run schools. Depending on who you talk to the schools might be a source of pride for parents and for others apparently a means of survival. Suanne Ware-Diaz offers additional clarification sharing that, “Churches ran [boarding] schools as “partners” at the behest of the United States government. Christianizing Native people was equated with “civilizing” them.⁸⁸⁸

Because my original questions were based on antiracist preaching race came up during discussions of identity. When it comes to race, she explained, “...in those days, people were ashamed to be called Indian. They didn’t dare want anybody to know they’re Indian. ... [but] ...Our neighbors were Indians, white families, black families. We didn’t know anything about discrimination. I went swimming with these black girls. I went to her house and I ate at her table. I slept with her in her bed. I didn’t know the difference between white and black. We were friends...”⁸⁸⁹ And yet she insisted to those who would say she was “half white” that she was “full-blood Indian.”⁸⁹⁰ Throughout the interview Lois shows pronounced attention to racial categories. She does not always identify those of the dominant culture namely “white” but she regularly identifies those who are “black” or “Indian.” Near the end of the interview she quotes the song, “Jesus Loves the Little Children.” We discuss the stereotyped use of color and how it might be used in certain contexts. She gently suggested that in some cases this song brought comfort.

Additionally, at one point, she told me about her “Creek brother” and how they “adopted each other” in the “Indian way.”⁸⁹¹ I noticed that Lois usually uses the word

⁸⁸⁸ Suanne Ware-Diaz, conversation with author, October 15, 2018.

⁸⁸⁹ Neal, Interview with author, July 20, 2015.

⁸⁹⁰ Neal, Interview, 2015.

⁸⁹¹ Neal, Interview, 2015.

“Indian” to describe general cultural similarities but she often identifies the nationality of the person she is speaking about if they are “Indian.” This sign of beloved speech is important to notice because this kind of specification undermines homogeneity and clarifies the relationship. In many instances I found that both extended familial relationships and friendships can be described by indigenous peoples as intimate almost as if the person was a sister or brother. A cousin may be described as “a sister” or a family friend as an “Auntie.” These are not just honorary titles but a sign of a more intimate honor and connection. Because the dominant culture does not generally recognize such relationships Natives will sometimes clarify the relationship for non-Natives like myself such as Lois gave in this conversation. Suanne further clarifies the importance of these relationships and honorific titles. She provides Lois as an example saying,

Lois is referred to as “Grandmother” by me (I call her Grandma Lois) and by other Native American leaders and church members. This is a title of honor, endearment and reverence/recognition of her work, dedication, contribution to the community (community in this sense being those of us touched by her ministry and/or the fruits of her labors inside and outside of the church). This title is meaningful and not given to just everyone - it is another way of binding us together as family not just peers, friends, or pastor to laity.⁸⁹²

Additionally, the intersections of economics and identity are unique in Native American communities and are not universal but change according to the tribal membership and status because of the various treaties and laws enacted over the centuries by the United States government.⁸⁹³ On a personal level however, these policies affect identity in various ways as well. We discussed some of the myths about Native people

⁸⁹² Suanne Ware-Diaz, conversation with author, October 15, 2018.

⁸⁹³ See discussion of Sovereignty in Chapter 1.

such as that “all Indians get per cap payments every month.”⁸⁹⁴ She shared how this misapprehension affected her understanding of poverty. Some individuals do receive money that is dependent on negotiated treaty rights, lease payments for mineral and oil rights, as well as Casinos today. In some cases, these payments are very small and have not been renegotiated for inflation or cost of living increases. Like many stories hers begins with the statement that she did not know she was poor until it was pointed out to her. But unlike other stories hers gives voice to the shame of having to wear “government shoes.”⁸⁹⁵ Furthermore, there is a tinge of regret that comes into her voice as she describes her Kiowa friend who received money for land rights, “While I was in high school, I had a friend, a dear Kiowa friend, and the Western Indians had leases. They'd get money from leases. I didn't know that. Us poor Cherokees had nothing.”⁸⁹⁶ She then described how the girls dealt with disparities. Because they valued relationship they helped each other when one was in need. If one had resources another did not have then they shared. Lois quickly explained that, “when [my Kiowa friend] got lease money one winter I didn't have shoes and she saw that and she said, get ready, we're going to Girls Town. Girls Town Day. She said, we're going to town tomorrow. We went to town to Kansas City, Kansas.” She added, “A lot of students were like that. Indian students. I knew that.”⁸⁹⁷ This was just one instance of several she named when someone evidenced belovedness towards her as a child.

When it came to gender, Lois initially seemed to discount any effect gender may have had on her career or life experience until I asked her specifically about her

⁸⁹⁴ Neal, Interview with author, July 20, 2015.

⁸⁹⁵ Neal, Interview, 2015.

⁸⁹⁶ Neal, Interview, 2015.

⁸⁹⁷ Neal, Interview, 2015.

preaching and leadership. She said several times during the interview “who is going to listen to this old Cherokee woman?” and at every turn told stories about church leaders, and academics who affirmed her voice. She said her role as a District Superintendent marked her saying, “to me it's a sacred leadership – as a woman.”⁸⁹⁸ From her stories it became increasingly obvious that her unique status in the community carried elements of belovedness. The stories spoke of the respect she was given not necessarily because of her age but rather her identity and how she shared herself with others.

The hospitality of listening came to the fore immediately as I explained the IRB and sought to prepare her for the interview. Task oriented I set up my notebooks and recorders before I barely said hello. Alternatively, it was not me who began the questioning but she asked me questions about who I was, and what I was interviewing her for, with follow-up questions about who was underwriting my project. As I answered I quickly began to stumble over my words and she patiently listened and offered words of

Lois only extended belovedness through her ability to listen patiently but she also told stories about how she was a recipient of beloved listening. One of the primary examples came in the stories about her husband, Oliver. She says early on in the interview that when she looks back she attributes her ability to hear her call to ministry because of her husband’s teaching. I was curious about what her husband said to inspire her. She did not tell me the content of his speech but rather described the character of his voice. She said, “Oh! (exclamation) He impressed, I guess I would say, his relationship with people. That was such a nice, I hadn't seen many people like that before. Kind and generous and compassionate. He was patient with people, with us.”⁸⁹⁹

⁸⁹⁸ Neal, Interview, 2015.

⁸⁹⁹ Neal, Interview, 2015.

In another story about Oliver she related how identity and listening affect each other. I asked if she believed his compassion was born out of his personality, or his culture, or perhaps his heritage? She wholeheartedly said, “Yes... he always said, be proud of who you are.”

One of the most moving stories about Oliver’s ability to listen came when she started to investigate going back to school after they had moved to California. After looking at the enrollment paperwork and without a word from her, he addressed the gathered family and heard the desire of her heart to go to school and saw a way for her to attend. You could hear the love she still felt for him in her voice throughout the interview. Even when she made the decision to return home to Oklahoma to family and community she expresses wistfully that it also meant “leaving all that history, his history. It’s where my journey began, too.”⁹⁰⁰

Further examples of her demonstration of the hospitality of listening came in her personal experience with the General Board of Discipleship. As a seminary trained member of the board and Director, she entered into the position humbly and appreciate of what she could learn, her words to me were, “...I learned a lot through the General Board of Global Ministries about missions. The good news!”⁹⁰¹

One other remarkable example of her belovedness happened during her appointment to the Kickapoo-Potawatomi Reservation. There is a long history of women’s missionary work with the Potawatomi. In a letter dated February 20, 1941 Mrs. J.W. Downs wrote to Superintendent Witt regarding Marybeth Littlejohn being sent to

⁹⁰⁰ Neal, Interview, 2015.

⁹⁰¹ Neal, Interview, 2015.

minister there. Some Methodist Episcopal women had founded a chapel and hired their own minister from Board of Missions and Church Extension of the Methodist Church, Women's Division of Christian Service.⁹⁰² Soon it was included in the Deaconess circuit for the Southwestern District.

Lois was one in a long line of women sent to this reservation. She said it took four years before she knew the full degree to which she had been accepted. She said she was even treated as one of their elders. "I learned that when I didn't make that ceremony and the next time [came], they were asking about me. You know those Elders, you don't speak, you don't say anything and you just respect and earn that trust by your appearance. Once they've learned to respect you in that position, then you are trusted to participate in everything, in all the activities there, that they had going for the community. Most of all of them, they Kickapoo-Potawatomis they accepted me and I learned that from then on I was treated as one of their elders."⁹⁰³ She continued, "something I learned see. Love and respect and it doesn't matter who you are or what you are, or what color you are, they just left that feeling of God's love with you. The Great Spirit's love with you. The Keannekeuk love and respect that their prophet brought to them, take care of your people"⁹⁰⁴

Gratefulness exuded from her voice "That's what I learned from the Traditional people. To learn to respect and to understand why they dance, why they pray the way they do. In the sweat lodges, I learned a little bit about that. I learned to love them as they were and accept them and before I left that reservation, one of the greatest joys that I can

⁹⁰² Mrs. JW Downs, to Rev. W.U. Witt, Feb. 20, 1941, Correspondence folder 5, William Umsted Witt Collection, GCAH.

⁹⁰³ Neal, Interview with author, July 20, 2015.

⁹⁰⁴ Neal, Interview, 2015.

say, the tribal chief himself came to me and brought his grandchildren. He said, he saw something going on in that little chapel that he wanted his grandchildren to take with them as they grew. That was the love of Jesus Christ and God's love. Wasn't that something?⁹⁰⁵”

“But to Christ, to God our Creator, it could be just a day, but to me it was 4 years before I got that close to [the tribal chief]. He knew and he respected me as a woman. That told me that I was accepted in that circle. That's another story. Any story I can tell about that reservation about what I learned out there.”⁹⁰⁶

Lois gave evidence of the components of beloved speech from our first moment together. Our relationship began right away when she prayed for me. Whenever she had questions she humbly explained why she was asking and was very supportive of my calling to the Ph.D. work. She also introduced me to the MVSKOKE tradition of the women to give feedback for sermons which helped me later as I was reading Pesantubbee and I began to better understand what belovedness looked like.

In addition, she showed the value she places on the component of relationship in community when she described her ecumenical ties and fact that denominations did not matter when “Indians” gathered. She also conveyed the way beloved speech may be seen in preaching through our demeanor when she explained how she always told stories as if she was living them with the congregation by showing grace and appreciation for those gathered.

Furthermore, when she shared about her “Creek Brother” I learned more about the extent of the community which can be quite large in a Native context. This led to further

⁹⁰⁵ Neal, Interview, 2015.

⁹⁰⁶ Neal, Interview, 2015.

conversations with Suanne which became a point of conscientization for me. It has been a challenge at times with this paper to represent relationships because they are so much more complicated than simple bloodlines. This speaks to the value of community and invites non-Natives to consider our family ties and perhaps question the dominant norms that do not always honor close relationships beyond the immediate family. It is also evident through her humble praise to God throughout our time together that the community encompasses the Creator who is very near at all times.

The ways she bore witness to the importance of identity in her speech came across through her naming of herself as well as the words she used. Her reflexive attention to identity was made plain when she explained her name and its significance. Also, though she used “Indian” often she also was clear about naming tribal affiliations which prevents homogenization of identity. She also presented her stomp dance traditions with great pride showing that even though she spent significant time at a boarding school and lost her language she was aware of her Cherokee traditions and continued to cherish her spiritual legacy.

When it came to listening, she exemplified belovedness with me in the room when we discussed the song “Jesus Loves the Little Children.” We did not agree on the song but she was very gracious and gentle as she suggested I might want to reconsider that for some it is still a meaningful song. This of course reminded me that part of listening is allowing for others to have a different view even if it disagrees with a personal ethic. Her ability to listen was most poignant when she related her experience with the Traditional people on the Kickapoo-Potawatomi reservation. Her willingness to remain steadfast with others and just listen and learn from the traditional peoples was part

of a legacy begun by the Women's Division which began in the 1940's. In addition, she was also carrying on a tradition from the OIMC. Tash Smith explains that since the 1920's Native pastors had been making allowances for traditional religious practices to coexist with Christian practices in Indian Methodist churches.⁹⁰⁷

Lois' voice of prayerful patience and humility and her joyful wishes for my work infused both the space between us and the stories she spoke into being all around us. This experience of her particular voice, her stories of acceptance by those living on the Kickapoo-Potawatomi reservation and her demeanor as she described her time with them bespoke of her as a beloved woman. Despite the many accolades and scholarships she was awarded over the years her voice was firm and at the same time quick to give recognition to those who mentored her and the Creator who guided her.

⁹⁰⁷ Smith, *Capture These Indians for the Lord: Indians, Methodists, and Oklahomans, 1844-1939*, 162-163.

Julienne Judd⁹⁰⁸

As my Oklahoma trip was drawing to a close Anne and I traveled to the Choctaw Nation Community Center to visit with Rev. Julienne E. Judd, Choctaw/Kiowa and Rev. Billie Nowabbi, Choctaw. I met with Julienne first. She is an ordained Elder in OIMC and a former board member of the General Commission on Religion and Race in The United Methodist Church. We sat on a comfortable couch and she shared her life, songs, and sermons with passion.

Rev. Julienne E. Judd was given the name Tape-pah-tah gohn mah, which means “She speaks of Him woman.”⁹⁰⁹ She is the first Kiowa clergywoman ordained in the OIMC and she comes from long line of preachers and teachers.⁹¹⁰ Her mother Caroline Botone Willis, Kiowa, taught Native language at the University of Oklahoma and her father Henry Joseph Willis, Mississippi and Oklahoma Choctaws, taught his native tongue at the university for five years before becoming a consultant to the Choctaw tribe in its language department. Her grandmother on her mother's side was Rev. Hazel L. Lonewolf Botone who had continued her husband’s ministry when he died in 1961. She was ordained deacon by Bishop W. Angie Smith in 1966 and elder in 1968 in the Indian

⁹⁰⁸ Rev. Julienne E. Judd, (Choctaw/Kiowa) ordained elder in The Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference of The United Methodist Church, first Kiowa clergywoman elder, former member GCORR Board of Directors, interview with author, July 21, 2015, Choctaw Nation Community Center, Durant, OK.

⁹⁰⁹ Julienne E. Judd, interview with author, July 21, 2015.

⁹¹⁰ Julienne clarified the ordination process in a conversation with author, February 13, 2019. The OIMC was created in 1972 at the General Conference in Atlanta, Georgia. However, delegates received voice but no vote. Also elders and deacons ordained in the conference were still constrained by the same rules as the predecessor Indian Mission Conference. This meant that they could only serve within the bounds of that conference except for very few who had pursued seminary education such as Robert Pinzaddleby, Homer Noley, and Pat Freeman. It was not until the 1976 General Conference, that OIMC delegates were granted voting rights and the limited ordination for OIMC clergy was lifted. For more information see Noley, *First White Frost*, 220ff and Kyle Wallace, “Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference Celebrates 40 years of Voting Rights,” *UMNews*, May 17, 2016 <http://www.umc.org/who-we-are/oklahoma-indian-missionary-conference-celebrates-40-years-of-voting-rights>

Mission Conference.⁹¹¹ Hazel's husband and Julienne's grandfather was Mathew Botone who was a Superintendent of the Southwest District.⁹¹² Virginia Louke had worked closely with Julienne's grandparents and described Hazel L. Lonewolf Botone as quiet and gentle – and by all accounts beloved of her own right.⁹¹³

Julienne is married to a white clergyman and she said that when they were first married she was a nursing student and “only lacked three hours to graduate from nursing school. However, it was in a time when, the age that I am, women - families did not split up like that. So when they moved my husband, I moved with him and never did finish school.... I do not regret that, because everything I learned I use now.”

Julienne and Anne greeted each other while I set up for the interview and Julienne and Anne both welcomed me into their conversation through humor. Julienne exuberantly related a story about her visit to her new church and the back and forth joking and teasing set me at ease at once and became a running joke throughout the beginning of the interview. As we began to discuss the paperwork and my project I introduced myself. I was becoming much more cognizant of this protocol to introduce myself by explaining my connection and who had led me to contact her. An immediate connection was made once I mentioned Suanne Ware-Diaz by name. Julienne replied, “Did Suanne tell you she's my aunt?” After my initial surprise we all erupted in laughter once again.⁹¹⁴

⁹¹¹ Though Hazel was ordained it was a limited ordination that was only valid within the confines of the Indian Mission Conference see previous footnote. Jean Miller Schmidt, *Grace Sufficient: A History of Women in American Methodism 1760-1968*, (Abingdon Press, 1999), 246.

⁹¹² “American Indian Women: The Rise of Methodist Women's Work 1850-1939,” in *Women in New Worlds II: Historical Perspectives on the Wesleyan Tradition*, ed. Rosemary Skinner Keller, Louise L. Queen, Hilah F. Thomas, (Nashville: Abingdon, 1982), 194.

⁹¹³ (Louke) Ware, Interview by author, Nov. 26, 2014.

⁹¹⁴ Suanne explained she and Julienne are related in a similar sense to the relationship between Lois and her “Creek” brother. Suanne Ware-Diaz, conversation with author, October 215, 018. Julienne concurred. She explained the relationship between cousins is usually expressed as “sister” or “brother” or “aunt” “uncle” depending on the circumstances. Julienne E. Judd, conversation with author, February 13, 2019.

After connecting through laughter, we continued into the interview and I felt as if we had been friends for years. Julienne evinced belovedness not only through her demeanor and welcome of me but also in her story of the Kickapoo Nation. Just as Lois and many women before her she also was appointed to the Kickapoo Nation and she made sure that she was respectful of the traditions.

She traveled to the reservation twice a week and would go extra times if they had a funeral. She described a particular kind of funeral called “Drum Way funerals,” which she said was “basically all men. Women sit all at the back. So I just sat there and would go with them.”⁹¹⁵ By taking her time, sitting with the people, and appreciating their practices, she gave evidence of a beloved woman who would not try and judge or control but would instead seek to create community and be fully present.

In regards to her reflexive attentiveness to her identity, she was acutely aware of her own identity and the importance of recognizing identity. As we were beginning and Julienne was signing her paperwork we talked about Suanne and their relationship. I asked for clarification that she is Kiowa. She clarified, “I am Kiowa and Choctaw.”⁹¹⁶ I asked if she identified more with one or the other? She told me, “Well I was pretty much raised Kiowa culturally and was Kiowa 50 years and realized my dad didn’t have anyone on the Choctaw side so I changed my membership. You can do that one time in your life – change to another tribe.”⁹¹⁷

I then asked, “I would imagine there are some differences?” to which she replied “Tremendous differences. ...Kiowa were plains people from Canada to Mexico and South

⁹¹⁵ Julienne E. Judd, interview with author, July 21, 2015.

⁹¹⁶ Judd, Interview, 2015.

⁹¹⁷ Judd, Interview, 2015.

America and back and forth. And Choctaw people are from the east coast and they slowly migrated here with the removals. Farther and farther and closer and closer to here until they put them here in this area.... But their cultures are completely different from one another.”⁹¹⁸

Julienne’s description reminded me of N. Scott Momaday who compares the tick-infested woods and the wetlands of the East to the vast expanse of the West. While the eastern tribes struggled to till the soil, the Kiowa were home albeit on a much smaller piece of territory. Through Momaday’s writing one can better understand the vast differences between the eastern tribes and those of the plains such as the Kiowa. He writes about the loneliness of the land. “All things in the plain are isolated; there is no confusion of objects in the eye, but one hill or one tree or one man. To look upon that landscape in the early morning, with the sun at your back, is to lose the sense of proportion. Your imagination comes to life, and this, you think, is where Creation was begun.”⁹¹⁹ Such a vision carries more than a love of place, it is a sense of identity.

I heard this same poetic cadence in Julienne’s voice as she explained the differences saying, the Choctaw being from the East had been Christian for so long that when someone asks her if she is traditional, she asks them, “How far back do you mean for Traditional religion? Because we’ve been Christianized for over 300 years.”⁹²⁰ However, she also explained that alongside Christianity they also practice the Choctaw cultural religion which is the Stomp Dance.⁹²¹

⁹¹⁸ Judd, Interview, 2015.

⁹¹⁹ N. Scott Momaday, *The Way to Rainy Mountain*, (University of New Mexico Press), Kindle.

⁹²⁰ For more information refer to Chapter 2 and 3 of this dissertation for the Methodist history with the Choctaw Nation. Julienne E. Judd, interview with author, July 21, 2015.

⁹²¹ Judd, Interview, 2015.

Furthermore, Julienne exhibited beloved speech through liturgy. She described how she accommodated cultural differences for Ash Wednesday by replacing the ashes of burned palms with ashes from sacred plants typically used by the various Nations in their traditional rituals. For instance, she used cedar for Kiowa congregations she served, and sweetgrass for the Lakota churches. She intimated that she learned these things from her mother and from spending time with the people making it clear that, “I went there and learned their ways. I did not try to convert them. I did not try to do anything like that. I just sat and listened.”⁹²²

Similarly, she said that when she attended services on the Kickapoo reservation that they “basically blended Kickapoo traditional religion and Catholicism,” so when Julienne was presiding at Christian services she would adjust her liturgical practice accordingly.⁹²³ In the case of Ash Wednesday she used Indian tobacco, the plant most meaningful for them, to burn into ashes for the Kickapoo congregation.⁹²⁴

More than once she attributed her sensitivity to listening and honoring others to her mother. She said, “[t]he way that my mom taught me was the answer to the way that I did things.”⁹²⁵ Which brings me to another aspect of belovedness that Julienne conveys through her gender. I knew from my relationship with Suanne that there were differences in general between the Plains culture and the Eastern Nations pertaining to gender roles. When I mentioned that I encountered differences between some of the men and the women preachers Julienne remarked, “I have always known that. Because I am the very

⁹²² Judd, interview, 2015.

⁹²³ Judd, interview, 2015.

⁹²⁴ Judd, interview, 2015.

⁹²⁵ Judd, interview, 2015.

first woman. The very first woman to preach in this area – in the southeast area. The very first.⁹²⁶

I was also curious about gender differences in Kiowa culture because of the story Virginia had shared about the women following behind the men, so I asked Julienne about her understanding of gender roles. She talked about her view on gender differences and at first said she thought that regardless of culture women were biologically determined.⁹²⁷ She then told me that the Kiowa are a matriarchal society which surprised me.⁹²⁸ She explained,

It is a matriarchal society, but there is this sense that the men will always be out. (Pressing hands in front of her) We will put the men out, because they will go and give their life for us in a war, but it's the women who make decisions... the men would discuss with their [male] counterparts... [but] If you were chosen to be a chief, it was by the women ... because it was their children who were going to be affected.⁹²⁹

Nancy P. Hickerson in the *Encyclopedia of World Cultures* indicates how the complexity of Kiowa culture allows some fluidity within gender roles. For instance, inheritance of privileged positions within Kiowa society preferred patrilineal succession but, in practice, women could also fulfill some of those responsibilities.⁹³⁰ In addition, she says that there was a shift from patrilineal to the bilateral descent since the nineteenth

⁹²⁶ Judd, interview, 2015.

⁹²⁷ Judd, interview, 2015.

⁹²⁸ I spoke with Julienne to clarify her understanding of gender roles in Kiowa culture. She explained that they were patrilineal but matriarchal. Julienne Judd, conversation with author, February 13, 2019. Suanne also provided clarity saying “Kiwos are patrilineal” and that “Family status and allocations goes through the men’s line and men are served/recognized first.” Suanne Ware-Diaz, conversation with author, January 17, 2019.

⁹²⁹ Judd, interview with author, July 21, 2015.

⁹³⁰ Nancy P. Hickerson, “Kiowa,” *Encyclopedia of World Cultures*, <https://www.encyclopedia.com/humanities/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/kiowa>.

century and “[i]n reality, male and female roles probably overlapped.”⁹³¹ Suanne also pointed out that Kiowa men “traditionally have been very involved with their children’s learning and care” and Hickerson says that children both male and female were treated with affection and indulgence. Furthermore, the values of “bravery, restraint, wisdom, and generosity” were admired in both men and women.⁹³²

Julienne shared two personal stories as examples of how this fluidity plays out in the Kiowa culture. The first story is about a Gourd Dance she attended.⁹³³ She began by relating the cultural expectations,

if your husband, son, brother is going to dance, you better make sure their clothes are pressed and cleaned. You better make sure they are dressed. You make sure that they look nice. You make sure that they have a towel if they need it, or water, or ice, or whatever they need, because the compliment – if I was to look at a guy and say, “Boy, his pants are all creased”, “They’re just creased sharp as a knife,” – I would not be complimenting him – I would be complimenting his family – the women of his family – because somebody ironed his pants so that they had that crease in it.⁹³⁴

Then she told me about the time her son and uncle decided to attend a dance at the last minute and showed up with their regalia and shirts all wrinkled. She said it was traumatic for her when she saw them.

I said, “You are not wearing that! ...Don’t you ever do this to me again! If you didn’t have a shirt, you could have called me....You go out there, and they’ll say, “Oh, gosh, it looks like he fell out of bed.” [And] they’re not saying that about you. They’re saying it about me! That I didn’t care enough about you to make sure you looked nice going out there.”⁹³⁵

⁹³¹ Nancy P. Hickerson, “Kiowa,” *Encyclopedia of World Cultures*, <https://www.encyclopedia.com/humanities/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/kiowa>.

⁹³² Nancy P. Hickerson, “Kiowa,” *Encyclopedia of World Cultures*, <https://www.encyclopedia.com/humanities/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/kiowa>.

⁹³³ For more on the Gourd Dance see Kracht, “Kiowa Powwows: Continuity in Ritual Practice,” 321-348.

⁹³⁴ Judd, interview with author, July 21, 2015.

⁹³⁵ Judd, interview, 2015.

She said her daughter came and helped get them into shape and she said, “I’m just jerking him around, putting all the stuff on him, tying him up. Because that’s one thing – men are never supposed to put on their own regalia. The only reason they would do that is if they don’t have anyone.”⁹³⁶

This story points to an important difference in Kiowa culture and the dominant culture. Earlier in our conversation she explained that a woman’s role in Kiowa culture involved “accountability of who you are to the people – that you do your job right.”⁹³⁷ In a follow-up conversation she further clarified that the roles of men and women were less important than the roles of father, mother, aunt, uncle, sister, or brother.⁹³⁸ Julienne explained that these relationships delineate arenas of responsibility as opposed to rigid gender roles. This worldview difference became a source of belovedness in our conversation.

Women of prominent families, women within the male line, as well as women of valor all receive different degrees of status within the community. “Traditionally, men were hunters, horsemen, warriors, and traders; women collected plants, processed foodstuffs and hides, made clothing, and erected and maintained the skin lodges.”⁹³⁹ Julienne in a follow up conversation explained that the women were not only responsible for the skin lodges or tepee’s but also owned them.⁹⁴⁰

As Julienne shared her story about son and her uncle, she became emotional and it made me emotional too. I was so surprised by my reaction that I asked if she was

⁹³⁶ Judd, Interview, 2015.

⁹³⁷ Judd, Interview, 2015..

⁹³⁸ Judd, conversation with author, February 13, 2019.

⁹³⁹ Nancy P. Hickerson, “Kiowa,” *Encyclopedia of World Cultures*, <https://www.encyclopedia.com/humanities/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/kiowa>.

⁹⁴⁰ Judd, conversation with author, February 13, 2019.

surprised by her emotions and she replied that she was. I actually felt sad about it which speaks to me of her beloved speech. This is not my cultural value and I do not usually worry about what my husband wears to the point that I feel sad if he has to dress himself. But this was a story about ritual. Kracht talks about how the US government tried to take away the dances from the Kiowa and how the Kiowa saved their dances.⁹⁴¹

There was a look on Julienne's face and a tone to her voice that drew me into her worldview and touched my heart. Kovach talks about this when she says that Indigenous Methodology seeks to expose more than a cognitive component to the ethnographic interview but rather engage all of our being so that the work shows a "holistic, personal journey... and how it resonated with all the parts of my being."⁹⁴² The second story came up as we were talking about the dances and she said,

I don't dance any other dances unless a family asks me to dance a specific dance with them. I don't go into the arena, because women do not speak - Kiowa women - do not speak in the arena, but I've been given permission by my elders, 'You hold a place that is different.' My name is Tape-pah-tah gohn mah, which means 'she speaks of Him woman.' They named me ...because they knew that I was going to become the first Kiowa elder woman.⁹⁴³

She explained how this came about,

This women had asked me to speak for her daughter, and I know women don't speak for somebody else. My mom really knows women don't speak for somebody else. I said, 'I don't know what to do, Mom.' I said, 'cause she wants me to speak for her daughter.' She was divorced, so she didn't have a son that would speak or a husband that would speak. She goes, 'Okay. Let's go see Grandpa.' So, we went to see my grandpa. He said, 'Okay.' He goes, 'When we go out there,' he goes, 'I'll talk to somebody.' He talked to one of my other relatives.

When it was my turn to go speak for this woman, he came out there, and he spoke in Kiowa. He said, 'All of you who understand me know that this is not our way, that women do not speak in the arena. But my granddaughter here holds a position

⁹⁴¹ Kracht, "Kiowa Powwows: Continuity in Ritual Practice," 321-438.

⁹⁴² Kovach, *Indigenous Methodologies Characteristics, Conversations, and Contexts*, 15-16.

⁹⁴³ Judd, interview with author, July 21, 2015.

that is important. Holds the position where she has to take care of her congregation. Part of that being a part of her congregation is she has been asked to speak for this young lady.' He says, 'So all of you who are in my hearing and understand me know that this is because she is a United Methodist clergy.' That was all that was needed.⁹⁴⁴

Thom White Wolf Fassett touches on experiences of cultural dissonance when he says, "When persons travel from one culture to observe the patterns of another culture, they often find it difficult to reconcile what they feel and experience with what their culture has taught them to see."⁹⁴⁵ In the telling of this story, Julienne helped break down barriers so I could see.

Julienne also exhibited beloved speech through her desire to honor the differences in languages even though she did not speak other languages fluently. She would phonetically sing songs, and she learned about 35 different tribal songs saying, "That's one gift that God gave both of us, (her and her daughter) that we can pick up a song really easy if we listen to it - we listen - to say the word ... more mimic the words because we don't speak any language."⁹⁴⁶

Another sign of her belovedness was her sensitivity concerning the ethics of singing phonetically without knowing the meaning of the songs. This points to the complication of not only identity but the relocation and allotment policies, alongside the education policies of the United States Government that placed many different tribes in a very small area and separated families. Scholars like Richard Grounds make it clear that language carries culture.⁹⁴⁷ Kovach says, "One of the first approaches to erasing a culture

⁹⁴⁴ Judd, Interview, 2015.

⁹⁴⁵ Fassett, "The History and Role of Methodism and Other Missionary Churches in the Lives and Culture of Native American Women," 2.

⁹⁴⁶ Judd, Interview, July 21, 2015.

⁹⁴⁷ There is an interesting section on the Amer-european english language as a language of extinction beginning on 302, Grounds, "Yuchi Travels," 290-317.

is to attack its language because language holds such insight into the social organization of the people. Without language to affirm knowledge daily, it is easy to lose cultural memory.”⁹⁴⁸ If the loss of these songs is a loss of culture then singing the songs again brings back memories, but what if those words do not mean anything to the singer? It is an interesting dilemma and a sign that Julienne is engaging in beloved speech. She is listening to her heart and her conscience, and she is listening to the people that she is singing to and with.

After reflecting on the music, Julienne began to talk about the history of music with the Choctaws. She said,

Some of those songs that we sing in our language are archaic tunes. Some of them are Methodist archaic tunes. Some of them are tunes that were taught as we went across, as Christianity came west and went to the Appalachian people in the mountains, and they were carried by the Native people that were coming that way. We are the only ones who sing those tunes anymore. The Appalachians have English words to them, but we have our Choctaw words to them, and Creek words, and Cherokee words. But, they're tunes that actually now are archaic Christian tunes. You know, nobody sings those songs ...”

Her knowledge of her own identity and the different cultural identities of the tribes was impressive. One could see how her ministry would be appreciated. Julienne’s belovedness shone thru not only her humor but also her compassion and historical knowledge both of which she shared freely.

Moreover, then she relayed a story which was a perfect example of the way a beloved woman would be with people. After spending three years of abiding with people on the Kickapoo reservation and listening, a man came up to her and started talking to her

⁹⁴⁸ She also quotes Milan Kundera, the well-known Czech novelist, and philosopher on cultural evolution who wrote: “the first step in liquidating people is to erase their memory. Before long a nation will begin to forget what it is and what it was.” In Kovach, *Indigenous Methodologies Characteristics, Conversations, and Contexts*, 60.

about Christianity and religion. He mused, “I wish you knew some Creek songs.” She said, “I do know some Creek songs.” He was surprised, and she sang six songs. He started crying. Afterward, he shared, “I was so hungry to hear my language again... you just made my day.”

The next week when she came back, he came to sit with her again, and they sang some more songs. They drew a crowd. They started studying the Bible together, and she ended up staying there for nine years. Julienne’s sitting and waiting with people for three years until they were ready to come and talk to her, led to that encounter with that man. Her willingness to wait eventually led to nine years total of ministry there. I would say that this is a good example of beloved speech similar to Lois' experience. Julienne confirms that it takes time to create a space where listening can happen, and relationships and trust can be built.

She told me, “one of the things that I learned is that ... my mother, who was a sociologist and psychologist, said, “Don't go assuming you know anybody. Don't assume you know who they are. Don't assume that you know what their family is like. Don't ever assume.” She just taught us stuff like that as I was growing up. She said the best way to be a part of someone's life is to listen to them.” Julienne also shared her thoughts about the importance of listening

So, I have this theory that anybody, anybody, no matter what color, no matter what race, can minister to Native people, but they got to be willing, to be. Just be. Not tell people what to do, not say, "This is what we're going to do, and when we're going to do it," because everywhere I've been sent, and I've been sent to a lot of different tribes, I've learned a lot of different traditions simply by the way that I did that.

She exhibited humility

When I would go, I would ask the elders of the church. I said, "You know, I don't know anything about your ways. I don't know your language." I said, "I don't know what's right or what's wrong in doing funerals or anything like that. So, you're going have to show me." And every elder that I know ever since I've grown up will do that. When you ask, "I need you to show me," "I need you to help me," they will do that for you. They'll tell you, "You know, so-and-so's going to have a funeral, and we want you to come so you can just look and see what they're doing."

She modeled what it means to remain steadfast.

I amassed this enormous amount of knowledge and wisdom by merely going and being a part of the community, not trying to convert anybody because I don't believe any individual can convert anyone. If God doesn't convert them, and not by your actions and life rather than your words and hitting them over the head with a Bible. I think that you have to live Christ, and that's how people learn about Christ.

Julienne evinced belovedness not only through her demeanor and welcome of me but also in her story of the Kickapoo Nations. Just as Lois and many women before her she also was appointed to the Kickapoo Nation and she made sure that she was respectful of the traditions. What is unique about her experience was her ability to sing. The seriousness with which she takes the relationship component of beloved speech is evident in her concern about whether it is ethical to sing a song when you do not know the meaning. The reaction of the man she sang to is telling she obviously did it correctly because it touched him and brought back memories. The degree to which she values relationships also comes out in her determination to remain steadfast. She spent 9 years at the Kickapoo Nation and sat and listened and observed the proper protocols and her efforts built trust and deepening relationships as a result.

Julienne also showed her attention to identity by her expansive knowledge of history, both her own and that of the people she served. She was knowledgeable about the traditional practices of the stomp dance and the gourd dances and the traditions and

gender roles associated with them. Her identity shines through in her personal stories about her gender as well. She has a deep understanding of her culture and the responsibility she carries as a woman. She presents her worldview with passion and sincerity that is emotionally impactful. She also has this ability when she relates her history also. The passion that she has for her people and presenting the stories of her people accurately create empathy.

Furthermore, she expresses the listening component of beloved speech when she develops liturgies and engages in liturgical praxis that is culturally sensitive. This includes incorporating sacred plants such as sweetgrass or tobacco in her ritual as well as honoring the music of her congregants. Her ministry is powerful and prophetic as she reclaims Indigenous traditions within her Christian context. She is following in the footsteps of her ancestors who have served the Methodist church for generations.⁹⁴⁹ She has served in cross-cultural appointments all her career and her skill is evident. The signifying markers of Julienne's beloved speech were at once distinctive and familiar. Her musicality and knowledge of history and culture sprung forth with inspiring and effusive expression. Boundless passion filled every word signifying a beloved woman who knew her place in this world and at the same time the cadence of her speech spread over my heart like a healing balm that intimated a deep listening presence.

⁹⁴⁹ For more information Tash Smith presents the historical loss and reclamation of the songs within the Methodist tradition, particularly the Kiowa songs through Witt's influence see Tash Smith, *Capture These Indians for the Lord: Indians, Methodists, and Oklahomans, 1844-1939*, 162-165. Concerning Kiowa tradition and song see, Luke E. Lassiter, *The Power of Kiowa Song: A Collaborative Ethnography* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1998) and Luke E. Lassiter, Clyde Ellis, and Ralph Kotay, *The Jesus Road: Kiowas, Christianity, and Indian Hymns* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2002).

Billie Nowabbi⁹⁵⁰

Immediately after I interviewed Julienne I met with Rev. Billie Nowabbi, Choctaw, ordained elder in OIMC, who had worked at the Women's Division of the United Methodist Church, at the Board of Global Ministries, and closely with Rev. Dr. Thom White Wolf Fassett. Her quiet demeanor that put me at ease at once, belied her fierce dedication to justice and advocacy for women and children. She insisted that she was not a preacher so my questions dealt less with preaching than any other interviews.

Billie worked at the General church level and led focus groups that brought new awareness to the denomination and conscientized the non-Native women working for the Women's Division.⁹⁵¹ Her work coincided with a change in the denomination. The United Methodist Church was still reorganizing in the 1970's when the OIMC was formed from the IMC and began to experience new energy emerging out of the movement for self-determination. Native Americans were calling for more representation in leadership and for an end to paternalism.⁹⁵²

During this chaotic and creative time Rev. Billie Nowabbi, Choctaw and an Ordained Elder in the OIMC, found herself right in the middle of it all. Billie's degree in Family Relations and Child Development prepared her for the work of the Women's Division with women and children. Her relationships with Homer Noley (Choctaw) and Tom Roughface brought her into spheres of influence which, in turn, affected the whole denomination. Homer Noley who was on National staff at the time, recommended her to

⁹⁵⁰ Rev. Billie Nowabbi, (Choctaw) ordained elder in The Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference of The United Methodist Church, the first Native American staff person Women's Division of The United Methodist Church. Interview with author, July 21, 2015, Choctaw Nation Community Center, Durant, OK.

⁹⁵¹ See chapter 4 of this dissertation.

⁹⁵² Arthur J. Moore, Jr. ed., "New Issues Faced By General Conference," *New World Outlook Board of Missions of the United Methodist Church* LX, No. 6 (June 1970): 55.

work in the Women's Division organizing the Native American Women Seminar. Billie wrote numerous articles for the denomination calling The United Methodist Church to account for itself. Her beloved speech calls out for justice from the pages of her 1981 article recommending that the narrative be rewritten asking,

How can a nation do what it did to Indian people? Why are such injustices allowed to continue? ...Injustice may be forgotten but it can never be excused. The church can never wash its hands of a role that continues the injustice. The church has a chance to rewrite the script for the remaining chapters of history by living according to its proclamation and teachings.⁹⁵³

Her bold expression of beloved speech had not been quieted over the years in fact she called me to task a couple times during our interview encouraging me to delve deeper into the archives. Billie began our interview by building a relationship. I had been meeting with Julienne as Billie and Anne engaged in conversation. As I wrapped up with Julienne, Anne and Billie caught up briefly on tribal affairs and personal challenges. As I approached them, they included me in the conversation as she shared about her new dog and her kids, some of her hardships with flooding in her house and the air conditioning problems, and the fact that her car broke down. As we sat down to sign the paperwork, she asked about my school, and she mentioned a clergywomen's retreat that had been held there. As the interview began in earnest, Billie asked me if I had any biases about her background? I told her what little I knew. She shared how she was on the cutting edge of relationship building at the Women's Division and attempted to live into their goals from 1964.

She worked collaboratively with Church and Society, the National Council of Churches and the World Council of Churches. But the primary goal for her was to work

⁹⁵³ Billie Nowabbi, "They Walked by Faith," *Engage/Social Action*, 9, no. 10 (November 1981), 40.

with Traditional people. Since the beginning she had a call to her own people. She was raised in a white Baptist church but when she went to work for the IMC and then the Women's Division she said she wanted to work with her people.

Similar to Judy, Billie fostered relationships by advocating for those who were being harmed. Billie said one of her mottos is to “Not to do harm.”⁹⁵⁴ So when she saw harm being done she needed to speak out against it “calling the church to task... [a]nd remind the church and the Conferences to do better.”⁹⁵⁵

The emphasis of her ministry was advocating for women and children, and working alongside Traditional Indigenous peoples. She spoke about how she fostered relationships with Traditional Indigenous peoples when she and Thom White Wolf Fassett did advocacy work in Washington D.C. She noticed, “that for some reason whenever we had to go to D.C. for meetings, conferences whatever... the Traditional people came because there was an issue that they represented... But the thing is, is whenever we went – the Traditionals always sit with us.”⁹⁵⁶

She said “The thing is we had a relationship, we could laugh, we could tease. You know, we didn't hold back.” She also said that they were working together on issues and making a difference and that the United Methodist Church was willing to step out on the edge with them and support them with resources”⁹⁵⁷

⁹⁵⁴ This is taken from a sermon by John Wesley, “[T]o do no harm, to do good, to attend the ordinances of God (the righteousness of a Pharisee) are all external; whereas, on the contrary, poverty of spirit, mourning, meekness, hunger and thirst after righteousness, the love of our neighbor, and purity of heart (the righteousness of a Christian) are all internal.” John Wesley, Sermon 89, “The More Excellent Way,” in *Sermons III*, ed. Albert C. Outler, vol. 3 of *The Bicentennial Edition of the Works of John Wesley* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1976–), 262-277.

⁹⁵⁵ Nowabbi, Interview with author, July 21, 2015.

⁹⁵⁶ Nowabbi, Interview, 2015.

⁹⁵⁷ Nowabbi, Interview, 2015.

Billie's sensitivity to relationships caused her to speak out when she saw issues with the structure as well. She explained the consequences of the restructuring of the boards and the Women's Division in the 1960's and the effect it had on the work of the Women's Division and United Methodist Women. Furthermore, when I asked her about the values of the Women's Division, she made it clear that the historical work of the deaconesses and missionaries sent by the women had a ministry of presence. As a result, they had property and schools which they maintained but did not own because the property belonged to the particular Nation they were ministering to. Later when they were merged with the General Board of Global Ministries some of their work moved to other boards, and the differences between the content and values of the various approaches to missions became evident.

She said,

There were two different structures... Sometimes they almost work against each other. ... 1964 when the structure changed, what was the Women's Division responsibility of children and youth went to the Board of Discipleship and since that time – to me – the program has not been as strong as it had been under the Women's Division. It became more of a structure, and I guess resources. It was not the relationship that was created through the Women's Division. To me there's a relationship between the Women's Division who cared for the students and deaconesses who organized, looking after individuals. When it went to the Board of Discipleship, it became a process similar to education – formalized education – using your curriculum. Having someone to teach. But, there were not deaconesses that were on the spot so to speak. They did not have that contact, that extra touch.”

Her desire to foster relationships was so intense that she becomes frustrated when she sees people and organizations not honoring relationships. Billie named the financial systems and control of resources as one of the areas that can degrade relationships. Billie

struck upon one of the main differences with colonizing euro-christian settler/immigrant culture regarding wealth when she said,

"That's one of the criticisms. I would see in our Indian church, they're not willing to step out. They're not willing to take that risk. [I] Always like to think, 'who told you that you were poor?' Indians were never poor, they're rich. Because they know how to take care of each other".⁹⁵⁸

Throughout our interview, Billie stressed the values the "Traditional" people held, which she learned as she came in contact with them. She saw some similar values across indigenous cultures including the importance of relationship and community.

This means that white euro-christian settler/immigrant culture has imposed different values of caring for one and other. For example, she said in the Indigenous church "We have of no daycares or nursing homes, we take care of our own so to speak. If a child is in need, you take them in." but in the white church "we have been taught to protect yourself, take care of yourself, not taking care always of others."⁹⁵⁹ That has hurt Indian churches within Methodism.

However, Billie did not only lift her beloved voice up to speak out against injustice she also lifted her voice in praise of those areas where the church and mainly Native American churches were fighting for justice. She touched on how the programs themselves built community and thereby conscientized the women to develop justice-oriented studies as well as enact programs that address the issues that arise. When I remarked that a study I used from the U.M.W. in my church was "justice-oriented" she nodded knowingly. Saying,

⁹⁵⁸ Nowabbi, Interview, 2015.

⁹⁵⁹ Nowabbi, Interview, 2015.

the thing is when you deal with the Mission Study, the Women's Division somehow has that foresight to identify the mission study years before it becomes an issue in the general community. I mean in the general world in the global concept. Those locations are already identified before it becomes a hot spot. ...Because they're issue conscious and they know the issues that prevent women from fully serving in the church and in the society. What blocks the women – those barriers are already identified. And they have women coming from other countries in that will tell them. Or they will have conferences among women. They're doing their homework and they're creating women's groups to do that kind of a study. Whenever they send out staff or field persons. There is that eye upon meeting the needs of the women and children or creating projects. I've visited 14 different countries.

I was surprised and excited to discover Billie traveled the world building relationships with women and organizers on behalf of the church utilizing her beloved speech for decades in service for justice. It made me proud to be Methodist and to be associated with her.

Billie's concern for what I will call financial stinginess is not only due to a worry about the bottom line but it is tied deeply to core values and identity for many indigenous peoples. It goes beyond just the amount of money that is going into the plate to the motivation and the understanding of gifting that is part of Native identity that is being undermined with this attitude.

Ray Buckley explained this concept of giving in an article he wrote for the United Methodist News Service,

For a time in the United States and Canada, the tradition of “giving-away” was against the law. Churches had condemned it as “squandering resources” and “impoverishing oneself.” To Native people, the give-away was a means to redistribute wealth among the community. It was a way to honor the life or memory of a loved one, and share with those around them.⁹⁶⁰

⁹⁶⁰ Ray Buckley, “Give Till It Heals,” *UMNews Service*, October 2, 2015
<https://www.umnews.org/en/news/giving-til-it-heals>

Kracht discusses the significance of this for the Kiowa but gift-giving and giveaways exist in many cultures.⁹⁶¹ The loss of that cultural value, taken by governmental agencies has created a culture of fear and want. Billie expressed her regret, and she states the consequences of the loss of this value.

We do share our food at special times. But when there is some work that needs to be done and if they have the skills, they know how to use a saw, hammer, things like that. And they used to be the first ones to step up to repair – or to do things in the church. [But] that's something else that we have moved away from. We no longer work together on the roof or in the garden. We don't do things together like we used to.⁹⁶²

Concerning her personal identity, Billie told me that she grew up with her "aunt who was not Indian. She got married to a great uncle that is. We started going to the white Baptist church. I was raised up in the white Baptist church, you know I integrated that church. In a way that's where I first came in contact with the word mission."⁹⁶³ Already a young age she was coming to an understanding of racialization and difference.

An article from 1985 she reflected on identity,

As a child, I would go with my grandmother to visit her cousins who lived out in the woods...As the night fell, the husband would build a fire. He would gather wood, break branches of cedar and begin the fire. As the flames flickered and fell, the fire would soon come to a constant burning point, and then die down to a simmering point. He would add a branch of cedar to the fire, then another, until the fragrance of the cedar would be smelled. The evening winds would sweep the fresh cedar fragrance and smoke over the yards and into the house. When the fire burned out, it was time to go to bed - at least for us children⁹⁶⁴

Once she asked her grandmother why they lit the fire and was told to keep the mosquitoes away. But years later she learned, "cedar was considered as "good medicine."

⁹⁶¹ Kracht, "Kiowa Powwows: Continuity in Ritual Practice," 321-348

⁹⁶² Nowabbi, Interview, July 21, 2015.

⁹⁶³ Nowabbi, Interview, 2015.

⁹⁶⁴ Billie Nowabbi, "Roots of Identity," *Doing Theology in the United States* 1 (spring/summer 1985): 59-60.

Its original purpose was to provide a spiritual sense of "a good, a healthy well-being," a special climate for renewal and anticipation .⁹⁶⁵ At the end she says,

I asked my grandmother again about the burning of the cedar. She remembered. To her, it was of the past. The Church saw it as a practice that was unnecessary. Anyway, we were living in town and there was no need for the fire. Yet she missed the fire and the fragrance of the cedar. My grandmother felt that I would forget my "being Indian." Over the past years, I have worked at proving my grandmother wrong⁹⁶⁶

Billie's willingness to reflexively attend to identity and humbly seek to grow is a sign of beloved speech. Because of her experiences in childhood, she had a lot of catching up to do and she wasted no time. Later at the Women's Division, she said she learned a lot about herself from her work there,

At that time they had just completed the study on a ten-year review of the Women's Division. One of their revelations I guess, is that they had set a resolution calling for the elimination of racial discrimination in 10 years. And so that was something to work with. So, for me, a lot of my background came from working with Women's Division who had different relationships. I worked with women's membership and I learned a lot of things from that. And learned some things about me.

Billie recounted her experiences. At the same time that she was discovering her identity, the church and the dominant culture were also getting lessons. She says,

In that kind of a process, we did a lot of work with sovereignty and I went to AIM conferences on education and sovereignty. And, they would invite us to come into their conferences. And that's how I learned about what the churches had done to Native Americans – you know through the church – what they did. And even the United Methodist – or at that time – what the Methodist Church did through their schools or through the presence of the church.

Also, she began to become clearer about her faith:

And I guess part of my understanding is that Traditional's and Christians – Indians – Traditional Indians and Indian Christians had in common their concept of justice, the concept of fellowship and then there's always that spiritualness.

⁹⁶⁵ Nowabbi, "Roots of Identity," 60.

⁹⁶⁶ Nowabbi, "Roots of Identity," 60.

However, we believe in Jesus Christ. The concept of Christianity, we believe in Jesus Christ who died to take away our sins and Christ has been resurrected and will come again. We believe in the Apostle Creed so to speak. But, with the Traditionals, theirs is not in Jesus Christ.

As Billie worked with the Women's Division, she experienced the differences between the groups of women that engaged in dialogue. As we saw in chapter four, the groups of women were set up according to ethnic, cultural, and in some cases language groupings. In that process, she realized "We were the least organized and visible."⁹⁶⁷ This is an example of how she was able to draw out strands of similarity between people with disparate beliefs through her sensitivity and belovedness.

Billie's sensitivity to gender differences led her to see the way men and women perform a mission. She said, there is

a difference between the United Methodist Women and the United Methodist Men. When you take a look at the budget" regarding United Methodist Women's money, "part of it goes back into the Board of Global Ministries. I think it still does. Part of that money goes back in the support of missions, both for the United States and for overseas. And that's one of the strengths of the Women's Division is that they have always maintained overseas or a global concept and have sent many people over there too. But when you look at the men, "they do projects. But, they do not have that kind of contact. I guess in a way they do not have that vision or the foresight to look ahead to the developing of children..."⁹⁶⁸

Billie evidenced a nuanced and sophisticated understanding of identity and sovereignty. She presented struggles affecting the ability of Native Americans within the United Methodist church to determine their ministries. Native Americans and Native American ministry are invisible, and there are reasons.

For instance, she saw the consequences of centuries of economic injustice. "Most of the time [missionaries] have to be people of means to have that support in order to be a

⁹⁶⁷ Nowabbi, Interview, July 21, 2015.

⁹⁶⁸ Nowabbi, Interview, 2015.

part of it... That's a part of the expectation. That's why they're not getting Indians or too many ethnics into it. Because, the thinking that they have the money – or they're not making any allowances for them not having it.”

Furthermore, the structure of the church itself led to invisibility because they no longer send missionaries. “What became the Oklahoma Missionary Conference? Billie asked, "Prior to that term when we were Indian Mission, we would send pastors to Mississippi, and the last one was to Washington State.” Additionally, she explained that how disputes over the sending and receiving conferences could lead pastors “fall[ing] through the cracks.”

Billie further explained the differences between the OIMC and the segregated Central Jurisdiction created for African American members in 1939 and dissolved in 1968. “You also have to understand too, that ... when the Black Central Jurisdiction was eliminated, it was eliminated on the ground of race. The OIMC, Puerto Rico, Rio Grande remained because of the word ‘language,’ and that's the difference. ... We exist because we are a language conference. That's why language is important to us because it keeps us and protects us in having our structure.” This desire for “protection” offers the possibility for self-determination such as Judy expressed in her interview. However, similar to Judy's concern about their instability Billie shared about the concept of the word Missionary Conference. Explaining the precarious nature, she said, "When you go back to the paragraph that protects a Missionary Conference, because of limited resources – that's another word that protects the conference because the Missionary Conferences only exist because of enabling legislation. Which means the conferences can be wiped out anytime.

If General Conference votes it out, then that's it. We just exist because of enabling legislation.”

One of the reasons Billie was able to garner the respect of the peoples she worked with came from her willingness to listen and not judge. Billie provided essential and wise advice concerning interactions with Natives and those of different faiths.

She emphasized "there is not the concept of evangelism, where you go to another tribe and tell them their practice is wrong. You respect that practice. You respect them, you don't tell them that their teaching is wrong.” I asked if that was a universal value and she said, “Yeah. You don't tell another tribe whatever their practicing is wrong. You may not agree with it, it may not be according to your tribal teaching but it goes against your respect for that tribe not to tell them that they're wrong.”⁹⁶⁹

Her work with AIM was most indicative to me of what the hospitality of listening looks like. She kept saying that she learned from others which is another sign of the humility that is a part of this process.

“Later I worked more with ... I worked with grants... kind of like the liaison between the traditional communities and the United Methodist Church and the indigenous communities from Upper New York – You know, the Six Nations. But always there's two persons – Thom Fassett and myself. We were the two that was always sent out to represent the United Methodist Church.”

She tells of a time that became very dangerous during the early 70's “We were on the cutting edge of everything that happened. If they couldn't get hold of Thom then they got hold of me. So, we were always the two that went into the community regarding

⁹⁶⁹ Nowabbi, Interview, 2015.

situations. And I had to come in – I had to go take care of family business in New York, I mean in Oklahoma. I came back and the State Board of Education in Oklahoma met with the school and the county. After they got that cleared of getting a nephew to go to school because it was against the handicapping legislation that had just come out. I had to deal with that and then fly back to upper New York to work with the Traditionals where the state New York police entered in on the Reservation in an armed situation. So we went into an armed situation being shuttled from... between Canada and New York... in the Akwesasne community.”⁹⁷⁰

Billie also said that "For practical purposes, probably we who were United Methodists were the only ones that could stretch out our neck, or willing to. Because the other denominations were not yet at that point." I asked why she thought it was due to money and the Methodist willingness to invest in the work and the relationships they had already built. Her analysis of the situation points to the particularity of Billie's voice. Her pragmatism cuts through any attempt to obviate the truth by concealing it in structures or bureaucracy. Similar to the Beloved Women who were invited into the centers of power, Billie also knows what it means to speak to power from the margins and from the center. Her voice enunciates her concerns for women and children firmly and unabashedly.

Similar to Lois - Billie experienced beloved speech and the hospitality of listening and it changed her life. "At the time I was told what the church did against the Traditional people, one of the Head Men came to me and put his hand on my shoulder and told me that, "This is something for you to know and understand, but don't take it upon yourself that you did it." She said as a result of that conversation, "It was more or less the system

⁹⁷⁰ Nowabbi, Interview, 2015.

that did it to them. My goal is to change it. That helped me to better understand what my role is to change the system, to better educate, to see ways of better understanding the situation.” Her career, of which we have only seen a small portion in this dissertation, has been a testimony to that goal.

Billie’s value on relationships is strong and is a powerful force behind her beloved speech. Her speech, similar to the previous women we met, speaks out against injustice that threatens the community. In this case it came to the fore when she shared with me the economic forces that have degraded Indigenous cultures and the church. Her belovedness comes forth in her tone as well because she is not only addressing the multivalent forces that are assailing Native American communities but she speaks with a firm matter-of-factness that causes one to take notice. Her community with the women of The United Methodist Church also stands out she is quick to encourage those that are making a difference. She is not a cynic but more of a pragmatist.

Billie’s understanding of identity is evident in her discussions of Native American cultural traditions that she wants to recover. She mentioned give-aways, and medicinal rituals that promote wellbeing, and the importance of language and how it makes the OIMC unique within the church and within the dominant society. She spoke out of concern for her Native community that Native people have forgotten these important lifeways which strengthen relationship and community. She also lifted up these important cultural practices for the larger community as models for those aligned with the dominant culture to reconsider the dominant narrative and embrace an alternative worldview.

Additionally, she shows how the component of deep listening has inspired her speech and made it beloved. It come through when she talks about how she brought the

women together for the seminars in the 70's or visited the women around the world and listened to their needs to help them devise plans of action particular to their context. On these occasions she showed her ability to listen and bring people together from dissimilar backgrounds to work towards a more just future. In addition, her ability to listen without judgment helped her to build trust with Traditional Indigenous peoples that led to alliances for justice. Especially consider when she said that she would never tell another tribe that their teaching is wrong – this is how her great respect and honor for sovereignty and difference drew people into even deeper relationship with her. Her ability to work across difference was best shown in her work with AIM and the trust she was given by Traditional peoples and elders. Her description of the Head man who took her aside and gave her a word of grace shows how she also could receive the hospitality of listening. Her ability to listen and learn, her openness to other ways of seeing the world and being in the world, and her unwavering self-knowledge of her calling to “do no harm” makes her a beloved woman of grace and power.

My conversations with Virginia, Judy, Lois, Julianne, and Billie were all filled with generosity. They valued my presence and were fully present themselves. They invited me into their world. In this way, these conversations were both instructive and an example of beloved speech as defined by the aspects presented in the opening chapter of this dissertation. Beloved speech begins in a conversation and continues into many more sustained over months and years. It deconstructs preconceived ideas and invites people to envision an alternative worldview. As we move into the final chapter we will discover ways in which the conversations offer strategies for speaking from a place of belovedness.

Chapter VI - Arise fair one[s] know that you too are beloved⁹⁷¹

“My Father taught me to care of others before myself, just like our Indian communities. There is no word for ‘I’, only the word for ‘we’, for we never walk alone.”⁹⁷²

In the previous chapters, I presented some of the damaging narratives of white supremacy and euro-christian colonization based in the Doctrine of Discovery and Manifest Destiny. I also revealed some of the colonizing narratives that exist within the historical record of The United Methodist Church’s engagement with Native Americans. In addition, I introduced some new narratives told by women, both Native and non-Native, from the OIMC.

These new narratives display a concept I experienced in this work, called beloved speech. They also present the methodological praxis inherent within it. As I sat, listened, and experienced beloved speech for myself, and later as I reflected upon my experiences, both the concept and method conjoined in my awareness. As the women shared their stories, they also introduced me to an Indigenous methodological approach. As their stories interwove with my own, they helped me reflect more fully on what was happening to me personally. Therefore, the concept of beloved speech came out of my experience of Indigenous Methodology, while my awareness of an Indigenous Methodological approach came from experiencing beloved speech.

The concept of beloved speech that emerged from my time with the women I interviewed, represents a way of speaking as well as a way of being. It is a mindful way to engage with people and to address people in everyday speech and in preaching. There

⁹⁷¹ based on Song of Songs 2:13.

⁹⁷² RagghiRain, “Storytelling,” 34.

are spiritual and ethical aspects to beloved speech. When preachers who belong to the dominant white euro-christian settler/immigrant culture in the United States kenotically surrender their colonized voice and theologically embrace an antiracist, decolonizing, and humanizing voice, they can experience transformation that will bring them into closer alignment with the Divine and as a consequence experience deeper relationships with their fellow human beings and the created world.⁹⁷³ Likewise non-Native preachers who embrace this form of speaking will begin to challenge the damaging narratives that reinscribe colonizing white supremacist norms prevalent in United States society. Consequently, they will engage in an antiracist decolonizing homiletic that will elicit antiracist, decolonizing, and humanizing speech

The essence of beloved speech is found in relationships. It is experienced, nurtured, and taught within those relationships. Through my encounters with the women from the OIMC, components of beloved speech emerged, including the importance of non-Natives forming deep and long-lasting relationships with Native peoples. These relationships are marked by a reflexive attention to identity through the hospitality of listening.

This dissertation proposes that encountering beloved speech and practicing its concomitant components can set a preacher onto a process of reflexive critique expanding a euro-christian settler/immigrant worldview that will transform the stories they tell

⁹⁷³ The spiritual aspects of beloved speech are an important component of listening. Dominant culture often discounts supernatural experiences such as those described in the conversation between the Chickasaw men and John Wesley (see chapter 2). Whereas Indigenous cultures incorporate spiritual experiences as a natural way of being in the world. It is said that when the spiritual aspects are separated from the temporal aspects of practices such as healing rituals and even National polity, sickness and discord can set in. For a more comprehensive look at the impact of the spiritual aspects on practices such as beloved speech see Chapter 2 balance and reciprocity (40-44) and Chapter 5 the nature of power (89-91) in Clara Sue Kidwell, Homer Noley, and George E. Tinker, *A Native American Theology* (Maryknoll, N.Y: Orbis Books, 2001).

themselves. This experience also has the capacity to affect the words, stories, and illustrations non-Native preachers use from the pulpit.

The resulting decolonized antiracist speech can expose and undermine the violence and conquest perpetuated by the dominant narrative based on the Doctrine of Discovery, and disrupt the ideology of Manifest Destiny that continues to colonize the minds and actions of non-Natives living in the United States. It provides an opportunity for women and men to experience an alternative worldview through the preacher's voice, embodied presence, and commitment to deep listening.

As the preacher attends to the practical components of beloved speech, their voice will speak an increasingly beloved word from the pulpit. In a personal conversation, historian Vincent Harding stressed that preaching will not lead to the understanding necessary to disrupt and dismantle racist systems apart from the relationships that are built amongst the people of a particular congregation.⁹⁷⁴ He offered that intentional communities which nurture relationships and build trust can inspire a common vision between the preacher and the congregation, that can transform a neighborhood.⁹⁷⁵ This thesis suggests that congregations can envision together the kind of transformation Dr. Harding spoke about, through the practice of the components of beloved speech.

In this chapter, I will elaborate on a few of the insights I obtained from my interviews with Virginia, Judy, Lois, Julienne, and Billie. Through the components of relationship, identity, and listening, I will reflect on ways in which the interviews began a

⁹⁷⁴ Vincent Harding, conversation with the author, Wildgoose Festival, Shakori Hills, NC, June 2012.

⁹⁷⁵ Looking back, I also realize that Dr. Harding practiced beloved speech with me the night we met. After a long day of lecturing and leading worship he stayed up with me past midnight to speak with me. From that night forward whenever we met he always took the time to pause, ask about my ideas, and share his experiences of beloved community. Vincent Harding, conversation with the author, June 2012.

process of conscientization that transformed my worldview. I will also propose some approaches and strategies by which non-Native, and particularly white euro-christian settler/immigrant, preachers may engage with the components of beloved speech and begin to implement practices for a homiletic that will elicit antiracist, decolonizing, and humanizing speech from the pulpit. I will end with a sermon which exemplifies some of the ways in which I, as a white euro-christian settler/immigrant woman, have begun to implement beloved speech in my preaching.

My insights about the components of beloved speech came about as I reflected on the interviews. The values of relationship, identity, and listening were all elements that both constituted the methodology and became quantitative measurements of beloved speech. The method I used from the time of my first interview with Virginia (Louke) Ware through to Billie Nowabbi was based in storytelling and listening. Ethnologist Shawn Wilson affirms this method saying,

Storytelling and methods like personal narrative are appropriate because they honor the value of relationships and also fit the epistemology because when you are relating a personal narrative, you are getting into a relationship with someone. You are telling your (and their) side of the story and you are analyzing it. When you look at the relationship that develops between the person telling the story and the person listening to the story, it becomes a strong relationship.⁹⁷⁶

I experienced a deepening of relationships both in the initial interviews and subsequent meetings. For instance, I visited a second time with Virginia in 2015 which led to some elaboration on the stories she shared previously as well as some clarification. She shared written works and photographs interspersed with fond stories about her daughter Suanne and her son-in-law. In addition, Suanne also offered further clarification as I revised the transcript and the analysis of my interview with her mother. These

⁹⁷⁶ Wilson, "What Is an Indigenous Research Methodology?" 178.

conversations led to further reflection on the role of the deaconesses, identity, and her mother's experiences as a white woman married to a Kiowa Man in the 1950s.

These continued meetings brought me closer to Virginia and created opportunities for Suanne and I to deepen our relationship. Suanne challenged me to consider intersectional realities such as gender, race, and the value of family in Kiowa culture as I reflected on my experiences with the interviews, began to conduct research, and analyzed the history of the OIMC. Campbell and Lassiter touch on this when they share one of the tenets of collaborative ethnography:

The processes of writing itself also generate, interpret, and transform thoughts and ideas; those thoughts and ideas, in turn, have the potential to change the way we think about things, and thus how we navigate the world in which we live. Scholars of literacy have known, for a very long time, that reading and writing, on their own, have this extraordinary potential. But when we view collaborative ethnographic writing through the lens of creative and constitutive action, we see that the activity of inscription takes on another layer of possibility that engages us in collective thinking, reflection, action, and transformation.⁹⁷⁷

This reflexive process is also a tenet of Indigenous Methodology as well as Feminist ethnographic methods.⁹⁷⁸ As I read the transcripts of the conversations I noticed some of the interactions began to challenge my interpretive lens. Roxanne Mountford's description of ethnographic research reflects my own experience. Drawing from Edouard Glissant, she talks about the reflexivity of the interview process saying it "opens up a 'consciousness of consciousness' ... and turns each of us into a disconcerted actor in the poetics of Relation."⁹⁷⁹ The resulting transcripts represent an "approximate truth," as

⁹⁷⁷ Campbell and Lassiter, *Doing Ethnography Today*, 7.

⁹⁷⁸ On page 33 Kovach also describes similarities with autoethnographic methods which provide reflexive consideration of the ethnographer's self and culture. Kovach, *Indigenous Methodologies Characteristics, Conversations, and Contexts*, 99-100.

⁹⁷⁹ Edouard Glissant, *Poetics of Relation*, Trans. Betsy Wing, (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997), 27, quoted in Roxanne Mountford, *The Gendered Pulpit: Preaching in American Protestant Spaces*, (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2003), 153.

Glissant writes, “‘given in a narrative’ that attempts to render something of the relation between the ethnographer and ‘the Other.’”⁹⁸⁰ She does not want to reduce this insight into an autobiographical exercise nor does she want to minimize it as a “mere footnote” to the researcher’s life story.⁹⁸¹ What she suggests instead, is that the interactions between the interviewer and the person being interviewed that cannot help but influence the evolution of the interviewer.⁹⁸²

Even though the main purpose of this study was to investigate the ways racist tropes and white supremacist narratives can be reinscribed in sermons, it turned out that my reflexive attention to identity awakened me to the impact of the colonial christian narrative on my worldview and the intersections of gender, race, and colonization in the Indigenous context. A deeper understanding dawned upon me about the extent to which white voices colonize and what it will take to transform our euro-christian settler/immigrant speech to beloved speech. Primarily this understanding dawned on me over time through my experience of the interviews with Virginia, Judy, Lois, Julienne, and Billie. Similar to Mountford’s “poetics of relation,” the interviews came about due to relationships that developed outside of agendas. They unfolded into a process of mutuality that had a sense of mystery to it, and spoke to my experience of a deeper connection, which grew out of being present with each other.⁹⁸³ As I further reflected on my experiences, I realized that this was due to the component of deep listening which had emerged within this methodology. Similar to Campbell and Lassiter’s view, I discovered

⁹⁸⁰ Glissant, *Poetics of Relation*, 27, quoted in Roxanne Mountford, *The Gendered Pulpit: Preaching in American Protestant Spaces*, 153.

⁹⁸¹ Mountford, *The Gendered Pulpit: Preaching in American Protestant Spaces*, 153.

⁹⁸² Mountford, 153.

⁹⁸³ Mountford, 153.

that a big part of ethnography is “learning to be with – listen to and take seriously - others.”⁹⁸⁴

My time with Virginia and my reflections afterward taught me about the importance of Allies, not just as a form of service someone can give to another, but as a source of transformation for everyone including ourselves. Her stories offered examples of beloved speech from the perspective of a white euro-christian settler/immigrant who modeled antiracist advocacy, collaborative justice, and the importance of honoring each other’s unique identity, including our own. By contrast, the conversations with Judy, Lois, Julienne, and Billie, whose cultures were so different from my own experience, most conscientized me to a different worldview and way of being by modeling the components of beloved speech with me. In all cases my worldview expanded due to these relationships. Accordingly, my practice of preaching changed as I read the scriptures, crafted my sermons, and preached. To illuminate the ways in which they expanded my horizons of worldview I will touch upon three sets of examples from my interviews with Judy, Lois, Julienne, and Billie. First the guidance they provided in the proper protocols to begin our relationships, second their vulnerability while revealing their identities with me, and third their patient listening.

As previously mentioned, Anne Marshall escorted me to the interviews. She would not have been my guide had I not met her through Suanne Ware-Diaz. Anne helped set up the interviews and her presence in the room at the time of the interviews provided an initial level of trust I would not have enjoyed otherwise. This trust is not easily given and it began years earlier.

⁹⁸⁴ Campbell and Lassiter refer to Douglas E. Foley, *The Heartland Chronicles* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995), 220. in Campbell and Lassiter, *Doing Ethnography Today*, 3.

When I attended the General Conference in 2012 I met a number of United Methodist Church (UMC) Leaders who had worked on the Act of Repentance and I heard more details of the historical trauma caused by the United Methodist Church and how that trauma continued to be perpetuated by the church.

At almost the same time, in 2011, Drew Theological School received a grant from The United Methodist Church General Commission on Religion and Race (GCORR) for work on Antiracism Curriculum. GCORR's grant was part of the Repentance/Reconciliation work that began prior to the 2012 General Conference. My advisor, Heather Murray Elkins, submitted a proposal for a 2012 consultation of Native American educators to help create an on-going program for cross-cultural courses on Native America: People and Place. The first class was team-taught by Suanne Ware-Diaz and Dr. Elkins in California, followed by a course to Oklahoma with which I was privileged to be the Teaching Assistant. Various speakers were engaged to present the history and present realities of the relationship between Native peoples and the church through several classroom lectures. The participants included several prominent United Methodist Native American Studies and religious scholars and activists including Suanne Ware-Diaz (Kiowa), Cynthia Kent (Southern Ute), Dr. Robin Minthorn (Kiowa), Rev. Homer Noley (Choctaw), Rev. Dr. Thom White Wolf Fassett (Seneca) and Dr. Richard Grounds (Yuchi) as well as non-Methodist Suzan Shown Harjo (Southern Cheyenne and Hodulgee Muskogee). I was surprised to learn in Richard Grounds lecture that that John Wesley was not as open to Native Americans as I had been led to believe. My curiosity sent me to the Drew archives to search out more history and delve in deeper.

When I returned from Oklahoma in 2013 with the class, I was asked to join my Annual Conference Committee on Native American Ministries and become involved with our Conference's recognition of the Act of Repentance. At the same time, I began to research the women's engagement in Native American missions in the Drew Archives. I discovered that just as some Methodist men were engaging with Native peoples in the 19th century Methodist women were being offered more opportunities outside the home. The legacy of the interactions between the deaconesses and Methodist Native American women who emerged as leaders within the OIMC and its predecessors came to fruition in the interviews. Every step of this journey was spent building new and deeper relationships that ultimately led me to this circle of women. Even with all these introductions and guidance, once I entered into the room with Judy, Lois, Julienne, and Billie, I needed to continue building trust.

Besides introductions, such as Suanne and Anne provided, guidance in protocols are important for building trust. Protocols are cultural expectations tied to important cultural values, that help the interviewer show honor to the person they are interviewing.⁹⁸⁵ Even after years of friendship with Suanne, I did not fully understand all that was expected of me as I explained in chapter 5. As I mentioned previously Anne helped waken me to my need to be more sensitive to protocol. However, reflecting on the interviews I discovered ways in which Judy, Lois, Julienne and Billie were also guiding me.

⁹⁸⁵ Sacred ceremonies and protocols affirm Indigenous values and as such their conveyance carries a heavy responsibility for protection of the power found within them. Kovach, *Indigenous Methodologies Characteristics, Conversations, and Contexts*, 73.

When Judy and I met it was not as evident what was expected of me. Perhaps it was because we were closer in age, or maybe it was due to the casual way we met. We met over a meal at a church. Looking back, I can see that Judy began to interview with me over lunch, not only to understand the project, but to get to know me. Through the hospitality of food and her energetic personality, I found myself caught up in her passion. Our meeting set the tone for the next interviews. Our conversation wove back and forth in surprising and energizing ways. As we were packing up at the end of our time together, she expressed to Anne that she could now understand why Anne wanted us to meet. I did not realize it at the time but this was my first introduction to an Indigenous Methodology.

When I met with Lois, an Elder, it became more apparent to me that I was not as prepared as I thought. Lois asked me about my background and where my funding came from before she began to talk to me. Unfortunately, I took a great deal of time explaining my project, because I had not rehearsed an answer. Her hospitality was evident as the conversation unfolded and she introduced herself more fully. She not only found out about me, but I understood the honor was being bestowed, to meet with this woman who was a descendant of Chief John Ross.

Julienne handled our encounter a little differently. She introduced herself by explaining how she was related to Suanne and joking with me. Her camaraderie and laughter put me at ease and allowed for a deeper sharing as the conversation progressed. During the repartee, I not only learned about Julienne's background, which was descended from the prestigious Botone and Lonewolf families, with a long legacy in Methodism, but also experienced her joyful personality.

On the other hand, Billie began our conversation very directly. She asked me what I knew of her and what research I had done to determine her background before we met. It was evident from the very beginning of our conversation that I had not done my homework. I had not read about Billie's groundbreaking work with the Women's Division and the seminars she developed. This lack of knowledge was more than just a misstep on my part; it was a sign of disrespect.

Yet, Billie remained gracious throughout, patiently guiding me. Because of my lack of knowledge, much of our conversation was spent talking about her history within The United Methodist Church and less on her personal life. However, her gift of teaching showed through as she instructed me about the church and the Women's Division, providing details that would help with my research once I returned to the archives. Her recommendations encouraged me delve deeply into the Women's Division records. She provided contextualization that was necessary to my understanding of what I was observing in the archival material. In a short time, she not only presented fifty years of history, but also managed to share some poignant stories about her own journey. Because of Billie's perseverance, I came to understand her status in the community, the denomination, and internationally. I also experienced why Pesantubbee named her as a "Beloved Woman."⁹⁸⁶

One protocol I adhered to was gifting. I brought prayer shawls for each of the women, which conveyed prayers from United Methodist Women groups in Delaware. I wanted to present them with gifts that not only held meaning for Methodism but also conveyed a spiritual connection from myself and the women who knitted them. Because

⁹⁸⁶ Pesantubbee, *Choctaw Women in a Chaotic World: The Clash of Cultures in the Colonial Southeast*, 2005.

of Suanne's guidance, I was cognizant of the importance of gifting. As the Native women guided me through the other protocols they raised my awareness to my own understanding of the importance of protocol and relationships. Through their tutelage I became aware of the ways in which respect and honor can be conveyed by making our motivations clear and communicating our connections to each other. I also learned that beloved speakers honor relationships and listening. The concept of protocol demonstrates the ways in which relationship is valued. Certain honors are given and respect is paid not only to the individual, but to the family and their ancestors. Likewise, when a person is honored their humanity is mutually acknowledged. To show this respect is imperative for white settler/immigrants in light of the history of dehumanization of Indigenous peoples.

Part of the gift I received from the Native women was their willingness to share their stories about their lives. The vulnerability they showed when they shared with me was remarkable and indeed an honor. In some cases, they shared stories that proudly proclaimed their heritage. In other cases, they shared some vulnerable moments. My connection with Judy began right away. As the conversation progressed she revealed some experiences she had of racism and sexism within the academy and the church. We both had been active in justice work, so the conversation became serious at times and we quickly became vulnerable with each other. The trust she gave me was remarkable and spoke to the power of relationships and guides to engender safe spaces. As my guide, Anne not only set up the meeting but only introduced us and then sat with us as we talked.

When I met with Lois, she joyfully began with a prayer for our time together and called me friend. Even though our conversation had many twists and turns and I made a

few foibles, Lois was willing to open up and share stories about her call, her family, and even her spiritual traditions from her “stomp dance people.”⁹⁸⁷ Throughout the interview she shared her experiences as a Christian and a Methodist. Toward the end of the interview I revealed some of my own experiences, with Nancy and Boss Cummings, at a Cherokee Stomp Dance in Cherokee Nation. It was then that her voice became more animated and she told me how much her traditional practices meant to her and her identity. Kovach talks about this when she says, “self-location anchors knowledge within experiences, these experiences greatly influence interpretations. Sharing stories and finding commonalities assist in making sense of particular phenomenon.”⁹⁸⁸

Through this interaction, I learned about the interconnectedness of our spiritual life and our identity and how it creates community between people with seemingly disparate experiences. Lois is a powerful leader, in a hierarchical and colonizing denomination, but she has brought her unique personality and history to her religious practice and willingly shares all aspects of her faith to create deepening relationships.

Judy and I also had an additional phone conversation which not only answered some further questions but also led to some collaboration on education funding. As the final edits were being made to this dissertation, Lois and Julienne spoke with me at length via telephone about their participation and made some adjustments to the final manuscript. Billie and I spoke through social media.

These conversations not only help adjust the material and answer questions, but also provided a time for deepening our connection and support for each other as human beings. More than a few tears have been shed as well as some inspiring preaching that

⁹⁸⁷ Rev. Dr. Lois V. Glory Neal, Interview with author, July 20, 2015.

⁹⁸⁸ Kovach, *Indigenous Methodologies Characteristics, Conversations, and Contexts*, 111.

spontaneously poured forth as we shared stories of God's intervening presence in our lives as we spoke and caught up with one another. There is a spiritual aspect to these conversations that is always present, along with fervent prayers being lifted up for me as I finish my work and we make plans to see each other again.

In all cases, I learned the risks associated with this kind of deep work which I alluded to in chapter 1. The ethics of working together meant that our relationship mattered more than a manuscript and a dissertation, regardless of IRB paperwork. In most cases, our initial conversations became so vulnerable that there are portions not shared in this paper. The agreement was that these women had the final say on what part of their words were included in this final document. As they conveyed their wishes to me the place upon which I stood with them felt like sacred ground. In one case, one interviewee wanted 24 hours to consider if she would continue to participate. These conversations about our personal lives reflected the vulnerability that is evident in beloved speech and often found in the best preaching.

They also reflected the power that we hold as preachers. Suanne reminded me recently of the power pastors hold when they step into a pulpit. What we share, and how much we share is a sacred trust between ourselves, our congregations, and those we choose to present as illustrations. A sign of a preacher's respect of relationships reflects in their words and the care with which they secure permission before they portray another person's story. This is particularly important for white euro-christian settler/immigrant preachers who speak about Indigenous peoples in general and women specifically.

Co-opting someone's story or using them in sermons without permission is an abusive act. Considering the history of violence against Native women, non-Native

preachers would do well to pause before they present an Indigenous woman's story without permission. The National Congress of the American Indians (NCAI) reports that there have been “staggering rates of violence against Native women on reservations — rates that far exceeded those of any other group in the United States.”⁹⁸⁹ According to the latest report by the Department of Justice (DOJ) “more than half (55 percent) of American Indian and Alaska Native women have experienced physical violence by an intimate partner in their lifetimes — and 90 percent of these victims report being victimized by a non-Indian perpetrator.”⁹⁹⁰ These rates are alarmingly high and the number of Native women continues to remain the highest compared to their peers with the Department of Justice and U.S. Department of Health and Human Service reporting, “61 percent of American Indian and Alaska Native women (or 3 out of 5) have been assaulted in their lifetimes, compared to 52 percent of African American women, 51 percent of White women, and 50 percent of Asian American women.”⁹⁹¹ These statistics give concrete numbers to the effects of colonization.

Andrea Smith in *Conquest: Sexual Conquest and American Indian Genocide*, points to the lingering notion that Indigenous women are not only dirty and inherently impure, but invisible and disposable with no right to speak out, which harkens back to the Doctrine of Discovery.⁹⁹² Smith's argument in *Conquest* exposes the Discovery subtext

⁹⁸⁹ NCAI, “VAWA's 2013 Special Domestic Violence Criminal Jurisdiction 5 Year Report, March 2018,” *National Congress of American Indians*, W.K. Kellogg Foundation, http://www.ncai.org/resources/ncai-publications/SDVCJ_5_Year_Report.pdf

⁹⁹⁰ NCAI, “VAWA's 2013 Special Domestic Violence Criminal Jurisdiction 5 Year Report, March 2018,” *National Congress of American Indians*, W.K. Kellogg Foundation, http://www.ncai.org/resources/ncai-publications/SDVCJ_5_Year_Report.pdf

⁹⁹¹ NCAI Policy Research Center, “Policy Insights Brief Statistics on Violence Against Native Women,” *National Congress of American Indians*, W.K. Kellogg Foundation, http://www.ncai.org/attachments/PolicyPaper_tWAjznFslemhAffZgNGzHUqIWMRPkCDjpFtxeKEUVKjubxfgYK_Policy%20Insights%20Brief_VAWA_020613.pdf

⁹⁹² Smith, *Conquest: Sexual Violence and American Indian Genocide*, 10.

that enters into the colonial discourse and manifests itself in the enormous numbers of Indigenous women who experience physical and sexual violence as well as other abuses. She connects these conceptions of Native Women to the treatment of Indigenous lands and ecological abuse. Indigenous women's cultural and physical connection to the land are rendered unimportant in light of discovery narratives that seek to commodify the land. It is significant that the Sacred Stone Camp protest of the pipeline at Standing Rock was begun by a woman.⁹⁹³ Smith contends that the colonial lens subjugates Indigenous women lives, bodies, and voices into "voiceless objects of consumption" in order to fulfill the needs of non-Natives.⁹⁹⁴

I would extend this to these women's stories which must be respected. As I learned from Richard Grounds, the colonial project has proven its disrespect for Indigenous culture by taking languages out of the mouths of the people and placing it in books that sit on library shelves. Likewise, I would argue that any time Indigenous women's voices are used without permission or in disrespectful ways, we non-Natives recolonize and abuse them. A sign of decolonizing speech is the respect non-Natives give to the Native stories they share. One of the ways non-Natives can verify they are showing respect is through the relationships they form.

Another practical aspect for preachers to consider is the nature of their relationships. Relationships are the main component for experiencing and engaging in beloved speech. However, the relationships I am describing require commitment to the

⁹⁹³ LaDonna Brave Bull Allard founded Sacred Stone Camp, a "prayer camp," to resist the building of the Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL) by Energy Transfer Partners. See "How Powerful Could We Be If We Agree to Stand Our Ground on Our Treaty Land." *YES! Magazine*, February 4, 2017. <http://www.yesmagazine.org/to-save-the-water-we-must-break-the-cycle-of-colonial-trauma-20170204>.

⁹⁹⁴ Smith, *Conquest: Sexual Violence and American Indian Genocide*, 124-125.

other person. As I said in chapter one, the interviews I conducted were not only an exercise for a thesis paper, but they began a commitment to the women I interviewed and to their Nations. How I behave reflects not only on me but my friends, such as Suanne and Anne, as well as my colleagues on my conference Committee on Native American Ministries. What we as white euro-christian settler/immigrants need to realize is that we are being watched. Native peoples have no reason to be considered non-natives trustworthy. If we stumble then we must begin again, otherwise the legacy we live into is one of betrayal and distrust. Therefore, to experience and engage in beloved speech, preachers who identify as white euro-christian settler/immigrants need to avoid superficiality and form lasting alliances to dismantle the colonial project. Alliances between Indigenous activists and non-Natives will require a deep commitment to relationships with Indigenous peoples that are based in concrete communities through deep listening and honoring of values and protocols.⁹⁹⁵ Again, building trust will take time, so white settler allies will have to be willing to enter into relationships for the long term.

Let me make it clear that when I use the term allies I am talking about someone who will remain steadfast and work with people in situations that may carry risk. I am envisioning situations such as The United Methodist Women that carried messages and supplies during the AIM standoff at Wounded Knee. As actions are taken, the pedagogical relationships between settler allies and Indigenous guides deepens, and the more likely beloved speech will be experienced and trust will be built. In order to truly decolonize our speech, we must experience what it means to struggle and allow ourselves to be

⁹⁹⁵ an alternative to alliances would be an accomplice model, which “seeks ways to leverage resources and material support...to further liberation” For more information see Jessica Powell & Amber Kelly “Accomplices in the Academy in the Age of Black Lives Matter,” *Journal of Critical Thought and Praxis* 2017, Vol. 6, No. 2, 42-65.

conscientized as we stand with those whom we have committed to work with in solidarity. Hansen says, “Instead of simply advocating for others, we must learn what it means to stand in deep solidarity with others. It is the only way to divest ourselves of our false assumptions.”⁹⁹⁶ According to Freire, this kind of “active engagement with real structures... brings us as humans back to our birthright right of “love of humanity” and an “oceanic feeling” of connection, with ourselves, with one another, and with the animate world.”⁹⁹⁷ This is the epitome of beloved speech. Encountering the beloved makes us more human.

Ultimately recognizing our common humanity is the most basic acknowledgment of Identity we can foster for ourselves and others. What I heard most often, when meeting with the women who have served in the OIMC, is a simple desire to be seen as a human being. Even Virginia accentuated this in the bible studies she conducted. This was a new idea to me. I needed time to understand the significance of claiming an identity that seemed obvious to me.

I had never thought that any person would be considered to be less than human. I understood that historically enslaved Africans and African Americans had been designated as 3/5th human and that it had been codified into the United States constitution, but that had been seemingly eradicated by the fourteenth amendment. I also understood that people have been treated inhumanly, but to struggle for the right to be called human was outside of my worldview.

⁹⁹⁶ Hansen, *Native Americans, the Mainline Church, and the Quest for Interracial Justice*, 23.

⁹⁹⁷ Mab Segrest, “The Souls of White Folks,” in Birgit Brander Rasmussen et al., *The Making and Unmaking of Whiteness* (Duke University Press, 2001), Kindle Location 937.

When Judy told me, “I am a human being first,” it seemed simplistic.⁹⁹⁸ It challenged my antiracism training. I had been taught that white people say they are part of the ‘human race’ or identify as ‘human’ in order to avoid appearing racist. It is easier for a white person to say they are a human being than to admit to their complicity in the privileged position of whiteness. Furthermore, in order to assimilate and become American some whites repressed the complexities of their racial identity, in some cases for generations. As an antiracism trainer, I reiterated over the years that all people, but particularly people of color, had the right to name themselves, so now I was stuck. Judy’s words reminded me that, “to name one’s self is one of the most powerful acts any person can do.”⁹⁹⁹

What I did not realize at first, was that Judy’s right to name herself was an act of personal agency and resistance with social and legal ramifications. It signaled her personal sovereignty over her body and over her identity. Judy’s claim to her humanity called me into my own belovedness. I refrained from dismissing her voice and instead chose to hear her, but it took time and I needed to learn more about the history in order to understand the depth of her declaration. I also needed to see her. Because this realization did not come through reason and historical research alone. It also came more firmly into my worldview as a result of meeting her in person, in her context, with her husband and her people in that particular historic church in Tulsa, Oklahoma, where we sang old songs in the different languages just a few hours previous.¹⁰⁰⁰ These experiences brought me

⁹⁹⁸ Deere, July 19, 2015.

⁹⁹⁹ Isasi- Diaz, *En la Lucha*, 22.

¹⁰⁰⁰ The church has a hymnal in their pews with the songs from all different languages. including, Kiowa Choctaw and Muskogee/Creek, Cherokee, Sac and Fox. Deere, July 19, 2015.

deeper into her world and they also spoke to the impact of place on our perception of identity.

The degree to which Judy valued her own humanity was evident in the sermon she preached that day. Her scripture was from Ephesians 2:11-22 and it was a sermon on race. She opened up by siding with her congregation. She interpreted the scripture from a deconstruction of a euro-christian colonial reading. She said, these verses called for segregation and “As Native Americans, I think at one time this gospel was used [to tell us] we weren’t pure enough, that we weren’t prepared enough, that we weren’t ... I think the term was synonymous with Christianity ... [we weren’t] ‘civilized.’” Once she explained all the ways the passage had been used against the Native Americans, she moved to an illustration in order to confront them with their own prejudice.

Just a week before I met with her, a young girl had been shot and killed in a neighborhood near the church. Judy chose her words carefully when she used this as an illustration for her sermon. She explained to me afterwards, that she wanted to make sure that her parishioners could see the little girl who was shot as “human.”

It’s like that 16-year-old girl getting shot over here on Martin Luther King Jr. [Blvd]. I could have said that was an African American girl and she was hanging out with the wrong people but all I could do was think, ‘what would I do if that was my daughter?’ And she could’ve been with any of her friends and I wouldn’t know their background and it could have happened to her. So what happened to her daughter could’ve happened to my daughter. It makes no difference because we are a different race. To be able to put yourself in their shoes or to be able to recognize they are like you. ...¹⁰⁰¹

¹⁰⁰¹Deere, July 19, 2015.

I clarified, “so you took a story which has been in the news obviously, and they would know that she's African American...and you didn't mention that at all.” “Yeah,” she said, “it brought the humanness into it — her humanity.”¹⁰⁰²

As we talked about this I was faced with my own whiteness. My training had taught me that I needed to parse out the differences in sermon illustrations. As Cornel West says the modern West created what he calls a “normative gaze” which is “an ideal from which to order and compare observations.”¹⁰⁰³ As I presented in chapter 1, in order to determine what is normative western europeans created categories and descriptions that began to impose order on the natural world. Thus, to deconstruct normativity and engage in an antiracist and decolonized homiletic, I suggest that preachers — particularly white preachers — bring attention to the perceived norms of their congregations and disrupt those perceptions, thereby making difference normative.¹⁰⁰⁴

Instead of stressing difference, Judy considered the colonizing history of discord between the “black” and “Indian” communities living side by side which needed to be undermined by holding out a reframe of this little girl’s identity for her congregation.¹⁰⁰⁵ By refraining from labeling her at all, Judy was identifying the girl as a human being first

¹⁰⁰² Deere, July 19, 2015.

¹⁰⁰³ Cornel West, *Prophesy Deliverance!: An Afro-American Revolutionary Christianity* (Louisville: John Knox Press, 2002), 53.

¹⁰⁰⁴ This is an idea presented by Traci C. West in *Disruptive Christian Ethics*, Chapter 4 where she suggests naming liturgical origins in order to expose and begin conversations about supposed liturgical norms by comparing music and liturgy within its sociohistorical context of white supremacist systems. Traci West, *Disruptive Christian Ethics* (Louisville: Westminster, 2006), 139.

¹⁰⁰⁵ For more information on this complicated legacy see Vernon Bellecourt, “The glorification of Buffalo Soldiers raises racial divisions between blacks, Indians,” *Indian Country Today*, May 4, 1994. As well as Bruce A. Glasrud and Michael N. Searles, *Buffalo Soldiers in the West: A Black Soldiers Anthology* (Texas A&M University Press, 2007). and Steve Heinrichs, *Buffalo Shout, Salmon Cry: Conversations on Creation, Land Justice, and Life Together* (Harrisonburg, VA: Herald Press, 2013), 37.

who could be one their own children. Her choice presents a model for preachers to strategically name identity in sermon illustrations.

Declaring oneself human is a complicated negotiation of cultural identity. Even though Judy felt so strongly that she be identified as a human being first, this does not mean that all Native Americans will feel the same way. Part of recognizing each other's humanity comes through the uniqueness of each human being. The colonial project would draw white euro-christian settler/immigrant perceptions towards an Othering through homogenization. Thus, cultural differences are constructed, assigned to people, and then people are placed into groups. By extension then all members of a group become associated with particular characteristics associated with that group.

Alternatively, sometimes a person belonging to the dominant culture will extrapolate their experience with one person who becomes a representative for a whole group.

In the book *Dressing in Feathers*, S. Elizabeth Bird discusses media portrayals pertaining to image and says to “expect one single ‘Indian view’ [of identity] is to slip into the familiar stereotype of viewing ‘Indians’ as some monolithic, undifferentiated class.”¹⁰⁰⁶ She says, there are disagreements “on how American Indians should be portrayed in movies and on television” and “Some argue that progress comes when Indian actors are cast in generic roles, without any reference to their ethnicity” and others “say that doing this erases the real cultural identity of Indians — certainly they are individuals who are not solely defined by their ethnicity, but at the same time, their cultural identity is a crucial element of who they are.”¹⁰⁰⁷

¹⁰⁰⁶ S. Elizabeth Bird, ed., *Dressing in Feathers: The Construction of the Indian in American Popular Culture*, (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1996), 7.

¹⁰⁰⁷ Bird, *Dressing in Feathers: The Construction of the Indian in American Popular Culture*, 7.

The preacher who engages with beloved speech will be sensitive to their identity and to their context. They will seek to understand the contextual differences and adapt accordingly. Eric Law, in *The Wolf Shall Dwell with the Lamb*, recommends critically analyzing each preaching context in order to refrain from re-enacting racist power dynamics. Law says, in order to live out the fullness of the gospel, preachers must analyze the social, economic, and political context to determine where the power lies.¹⁰⁰⁸ He accentuates that in a multicultural world there is oftentimes a shifting back and forth between being powerful and powerless, therefore these kinds of analysis need take into consideration who is present each week.¹⁰⁰⁹

In this case, Judy was speaking to a multicultural congregation where I was the only white settler/immigrant person present. Her read of the situation and her address of the prejudices within the neighborhood were appropriate for her congregation. The same illustration would have been far different in my multicultural congregation in Philadelphia, PA composed of white, African American, and African members. Because of these differences, the same illustration in Judy's setting will perhaps differ from mine and yet still carry elements of beloved speech.

Additionally, the way Judy tells the story and the details she presents may be far different from my white settler/immigrant perspective, because of her own identity and how she expresses herself. In my case as a white preacher with white congregants my words will perhaps confront the prevailing narrative that assumes the colonial settler/immigrant perspective as normative. Because of my African American members and African members, I will also need to make it clear who I am talking to at different

¹⁰⁰⁸ H.F. Law, *The Wolf Shall Dwell with the Lamb* (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 1993), 57.

¹⁰⁰⁹ Law, *The Wolf Shall Dwell with the Lamb*, 59-60.

times. I may perhaps say, “I am speaking to those of us who identify as white settlers at this moment.” I may also choose to begin by naming the racism my African American and African members have experienced and invite them to testify as a part of the preaching moment.

In order to undermine white normativity a white settler/immigrant preacher will want to differentiate and identify persons in their illustrations with a sensitivity to the person’s wishes as touched upon previously. If an illustration is second hand or imagined, then the preacher will endeavor to either deconstruct identity within the sermon, or be cognizant of stereotypes and tell stories and use illustrations that honor different worldviews and undermine the dominant colonial white supremacist narrative.

Preachers will also want to be cognizant of any homogenizing that is considered normative by the colonial supremacist narrative. When we identify people, we will want to consider the earlier conversation about terminology and the homogenization of identity that accompanies terms such as Native American. For instance, if a non-Native preacher presents an illustration using Jim Thorpe, they would not identify him as a Native American, but rather as a member of the Sac and Fox Nation.

Unfortunately, there is also a tendency, particularly by non-Natives, to romanticize and exoticize Indigenous peoples which can lead to co-optation and misappropriation of Indigenous culture causing more harm. Clara Sue Kidwell et al, in *A Native American Theology*, objects to the “continuing fascination with Indians” which has attracted many to Native “spirituality” and led to non-Native practice of Indian religious traditions.¹⁰¹⁰ Considering traditional Indigenous religious practices were

¹⁰¹⁰ Kidwell, Noley, and Tinker, *A Native American Theology* 173.,

banned until the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934, this is offensive. The same attitudes that colonize ritual spaces may also lead to misrepresentations and stereotyping of people from the pulpit. While ongoing committed relationships with Native peoples can conscientize white settler/immigrant preachers about stereotypes, they still need to understand the various stereotypes and the history behind them. Sometimes it appears to an uninformed person that an image is honoring someone when indeed it is doing more harm.

Bird says, the ability to define images applied to people is a consequence of power.¹⁰¹¹ “As a system, white supremacy involves concrete material practices and elaborate systems of symbolism and signification which privilege whiteness. Material practices and symbolic representation act simultaneously and in mutually reinforcing ways to produce and maintain white power, white normativity, and white dominance.”¹⁰¹²

Many portrayals of Native Americans in film and other print media have perpetuated stereotypes. Vaughan says, “Because the Indians appeared to be a ‘vanishing race,’ they were romanticized in history, art, and literature. Because the Indians were America's most truly native inhabitants, they personified the nation in statues, cartoons, and cartouches.”¹⁰¹³ Romantic noble savage stereotypes range from the stoic Indian and the wise sage or grandmother, to the mysterious Shaman or the young lone hunter fading into the sunset. On the other end of the spectrum are the violent warriors, drunken fools, and erotic young maidens. In the middle are those who inhabit the servant space as the

¹⁰¹¹ Bird, *Dressing in Feathers: The Construction of the Indian in American Popular Culture*, 6.

¹⁰¹² Jennifer Harvey, Karen A. Case and Robin Hawley Gorsline, ed. *Disrupting White Supremacy from Within*. Cleveland: The Pilgrim Press, 2004, 22, 112.

¹⁰¹³ Vaughan, “From White Man to Redskin: Changing Anglo-American Perceptions of the American,” 950.

trusted sidekick or the gifted trackers who only seek to help the white characters succeed. Jennifer Harvey writes that these, "Exoticized, trivialized, objectified, ridiculed, vanished, and/or caricatured (white mediated images of) "blacks" and "indians" have been central in white cultural productions, "which shape racial consciousness."¹⁰¹⁴

This is an important consideration for white settler/immigrant preachers who want to undermine the colonial narrative and embrace beloved speech. Stereotypes do more than demean an individual, they perpetuate settler/immigrant colonial policies. The images preachers use impact people. If complexity and humanity of Indigenous people become erased through unexamined colonial and racist narratives it encourages further "white" aggression and violence. Manifest Destiny continues to undergird white supremacy and justify the destruction of Native cultures, Native sacred sites, and degrade Native sovereignty supported and empowered by the legacy of Johnson's Supreme Court decisions.

We non-Natives have our work cut out for us. Stereotypes are still rampant. In her interview, Billie related a story about a pastor who "implied that a part of the ignorance [of Native peoples] came out of the inbreeding of the families on the Reservation."¹⁰¹⁵ Sometimes stereotypes are imagined to be complimentary. For instance, an Indigenous speaker may come to preach and the congregation will expect them to be dressed in deerskin or wearing a feather headdress. This kind of unexamined homogenization of image not only conflates Native cultures and identities but it relegates Indigenous people to the past, perpetuating the myth that Native peoples are becoming extinct. On a larger

¹⁰¹⁴ Harvey, *Whiteness and Morality: Pursuing Racial Justice through Reparations and Sovereignty*, 110.

¹⁰¹⁵ Nowabbi, interview, July 21, 2015.

scale, according to Taiaiake Alfred, it “allows the state to maintain its own legitimacy by disallowing the fact of indigenous peoples' nationhood to intrude upon its own mythology.”¹⁰¹⁶

Sometimes stereotypes about Native artists are seen as sources of education or diversity training but only result in putting people on display for entertainment. Native dancers, flute players, and drum groups are invited with no understanding of the spiritual aspects of the dances or music. I am not deprecating the importance of Indigenous art forms. Celebrations such as these are introductions to Indigenous culture. However, when this is what non-Native people think of when they envision Indigenous peoples then these stereotypes are doing their work. All of these stereotypes allow non-Natives to maintain a comfortable distance and can erect barriers to deep relationships.¹⁰¹⁷ It is in the deeper conversations that conscientize non-Natives, particularly white settler/immigrants, to the present-day realities Native People's existence.

Keeping these stereotypes in mind, preachers seeking to engage in beloved speech from the pulpit will want to interrogate the images they use. As Judy said to me, “words matter.”¹⁰¹⁸ Therefore, it is important for preachers to know the history of their words, the constructions they support, and the people they harm. One of the most harmful holidays settler/immigrants celebrate is Columbus Day only to be followed closely by Thanksgiving. The harm perpetuated by the former is slowly entering the public

¹⁰¹⁶ Taiaiake Alfred, in Harvey, *Whiteness and Morality: Pursuing Racial Justice through Reparations and Sovereignty*, 51.

¹⁰¹⁷ Regarding Native Americans as “entertainment” Suanne Ware-Diaz pointed out that this does not only happen to Native Americans but for the purpose of this dissertation I am limiting the list to Indigenous examples. One could certainly find similar examples from other cultures. Ware-Diaz, Conversation with Author, January 17, 2019.

¹⁰¹⁸ Deere, Interview with Author, July 19, 2015.

consciousness in the United States since several cities have renamed the holiday Indigenous People's Day. This is one way to begin to deconstruct the myth of discovery and Columbus. However, the Thanksgiving narrative is a little more difficult. These stories are regularly portrayed on television and in print media. For the Thanksgiving holiday, preachers and congregations have been known to gather together to give thanks and pay homage to the kindly Natives who welcomed the settlers.

Unless the preacher stops telling the inaccurate and harmful myth, reimagines the narrative, and presents an alternative worldview, the story will continue to colonize the minds of their congregation. These stories, at a mythic level, encourage the belief that settler/immigrants belong on the land at the invitation of the Native inhabitants so displacement and assimilation was inevitable and white conquest a natural outcome.¹⁰¹⁹ They also concretize an Anglo-Saxon/white Supremacist identity of the "American" pioneer spirit with its "ideas of manliness, land use, sexuality, and individualism and violence."¹⁰²⁰ Presentation of the facts through preaching, teaching, bulletin inserts, or inviting an Indigenous speaker talk about present events can expose the myth. These kinds of events need not preclude prayers of thanksgiving but any such services can be clearly separated from the colonial story that continues to do harm.

These diverse views of identity point to an important lesson I learned in Oklahoma. The normative gaze not only separates white settler/immigrants from other people it also separates white settlers from their own self understanding of identity. One of the issues with the white supremacist colonial narrative is that many white

¹⁰¹⁹ Bird, *Dressing in Feathers: The Construction of the Indian in American Popular Culture*, 2.

¹⁰²⁰ Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness Race and The Making of The American Working Class*, 22.

settler/immigrants feel comfortable creating racialized categories but fail to acknowledge their own status as white racialized persons.

Charles L. Campbell urges preachers to be truthful about the powers at work in systems as well as truthful about themselves. He says that when we do this, genuine truthfulness

cannot create a simplistic us-against-them spirit but involves the preacher's own honesty about the ways in which he or she lives in captivity to the powers' spirit of domination and violence. . . . When we define evil as simply external to us and we ignore its reality in our own lives, we can unwittingly end up cooperating with that evil, allowing it to harden its presence within us. . . . Truthfulness about our own cooperation with the powers of death is a critical virtue for resistance to the principalities and powers. [This] practice of dislocation can move privileged preachers to deeper truthfulness about themselves, particularly about their own complicity with the powers.¹⁰²¹

One of the most important considerations for this dissertation is the ways in which white racial construction and the dominant narrative of Manifest Destiny converge and cause white settlers to take pride in their white racialized identity. The pressure to maintain white supremacy is strong. The message so distorts reality that white people will go against their own best interests in order to maintain it.¹⁰²² This fear keeps white settler/immigrants from living into belovedness which cannot flourish in fear.

One antidote to fear is education. Understanding the complexity of race and the development of race has been given comprehensive attention by Homiletician Carolyn Helsel. She examines the development of critical theory over the last 30 years in *Preaching about Racism: A Guide for Faith Leaders*.¹⁰²³

¹⁰²¹ Campbell, *The Word Before the Powers: An Ethic of Preaching*, 173.

¹⁰²² For more on distortion and white fragility see DiAngelo, *White Fragility: Why It's So Hard for White People to Talk About Racism*.

¹⁰²³ For preachers interested in beginning conversations that conscientize see her book Helsel, Carolyn B. *Anxious to Talk About It: Helping White Christians Talk Faithfully about Racism*. St. Louis: Chalice Press,

Another answer is for preachers to attend to their own identity. For many white euro-christian settler/immigrants “becom[ing] truthful about who you are and what you are” may be more difficult than first imagined. One of the losses for Amer-europeans under colonialism is the forgotten origin stories. In order to become white many immigrants discarded their culture and language and put on the cloak of American citizen. “The new immigrants essentially sublimated their European ethnic identities in order to become white,” according to Kelly Brown Douglas.¹⁰²⁴ Once immigrants became white they and their children could assimilate into the dominant culture and become “American.”¹⁰²⁵

For those who want to begin the process of decolonizing a reclamation of their origin story will be an important first step to understand their own complex identity and the ways in which the colonial project has affected them. Researching origins can involve exploring family narratives, searching out ancestry through genealogy, or DNA analysis. These sources may confirm or contradict each other but in any event the complexity of identity will be exposed. At the very least preachers can interrogate family narratives.

Getting to know yourself can become a spiritual practice.¹⁰²⁶ Uncovering unexpected branches, grafts, and pruning on one’s family tree can be painful but it can also break open new hermeneutical horizons of complexity and allow space for grieving

2018., Helsel, Carolyn B. *Preaching about Racism: A Guide for Faith Leaders*. St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2018.

¹⁰²⁴ Douglas, *Stand Your Ground: Black Bodies and the Justice of God*, Chapter 1. Also see Douglas for more information on white assimilation and its ties to exceptionalism.

¹⁰²⁵ Douglas, chapter 1.

¹⁰²⁶ for more concerning complicated identities and the intersections of ethics, spirituality and genealogical research see Melanie Morrison, “Genealogy as Spiritual Practice,” *South of the Garden*, June 2011.

the ways in which identity cannot be fully known or neatly reconciled. Historian and activist, Aurora Levins Morales puts it this way:

The decision to examine exactly who our ancestors, all of them, have been—with each other and with everyone else...is an accounting of the debts and assets we have inherited, and acknowledging the precise nature of that inheritance is an act of spiritual and political integrity.¹⁰²⁷

DNA analysis can point to countries of origin and genealogical research can lead to more specific identification of homelands. This identity provides a more complete picture of ‘who our people are?’ and ‘where our people are from?’ The answers to these questions give white settler/immigrants the opportunity to explore the songs and stories of their ancestors which may have been lost from memory.

At this juncture, I want to address Native American Ancestry. One harmful claim settlers or arrivants make is to mention that they “may have some Native American ancestry.” To begin with if we have self-identified as white and lived in Amer-european culture and embraced euro-christian settler/immigrant norms this is not an appropriate claim to make. We must realize that this is a racist and colonizing act.

Often the romantic stereotypes we discussed in the last section are reinforced. In addition, cultural norms are lost outside of the community. Furthermore, Native American identity is legally regulated by the United States Government and Tribal Governments. If indeed a DNA sample or family history indicates Indigenous ancestry is present it will take some investigating on our part in order to discover our Nationality, followed by

¹⁰²⁷ Aurora Levins Morales, *Medicine Stories: History, Culture, and the Politics of Integrity* (Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 1998), 75.

relationship building, and cultural reclamation under the laws of the particular Nation.¹⁰²⁸

In case I have not made it clear thus far, Native American Identity is a community endeavor.

Once preachers have begun to know themselves more fully it will inform their relationships and how they present themselves from the pulpit. Rhetorically, beloved speech is congruent with the preacher's identity. Beloved speakers are not afraid to be vulnerable but are also secure in their identity and their place in the community. They are without prejudice, sharing stories that reflect respect and dignity for all human beings and creation, with the welfare of the community in mind.

Identity formation is an ongoing process and happens over a lifetime. For white settler/immigrants who seek to come into a deeper understanding of their own belovedness it will require some deep listening to others who have already done the work and can guide them.

As we come to know ourselves we can be clearer about our own social location from the pulpit. We can state it clearly in the sermon or we can make it apparent in the way we listen to scripture and tradition. In her sermon Judy came to the text with her experience as MVSOKOKE/Creek woman. The full force of her personal experience and her heritage and ancestry came to the text. She could speak about segregation because of her experiences of colonial racism in the institutions where she went to school and where she worked work. But she also could speak to it because of the collective memory and generational trauma of those who walked the death marches during relocation days. She

¹⁰²⁸ Consider the case of Senator Elizabeth Warren who has stories handed down by her family and minimal DNA and claims Cherokee heritage but has not been recognized by the Cherokee Nation.

could speak to the silencing that occurs when someone steals your inheritance such as the land during the Allotment act. And I am not speaking of monetary inheritance but the very connection with the land that so many died and sacrificed for so she would have it. She opened her sermon with her song in her heart language. From the moment she began until the final word she poured her identity into the text. Not only that but when she addressed her people on their prejudice her love for them was evident by the way her voice changed. She wanted to make it clear that she was saying the hard word because she cared about them.

The possibility for change comes not only through relationships that can be challenging or attending to our identity and recognizing the need for an expansive view of identity and articulation of identity. But also, by engaging in the hospitality of listening as we expose the true narrative of history of how the systemic racist and colonial structures became the dominant story and continues to impact all of us today. Listening will expose how the dominant narrative of conquest is being lived out in the lives of people and reified by our perpetuating harmful narratives. By listening for narratives different from the dominant view that has been historically told and understanding the influence of Manifest Destiny, and the Discovery Doctrine and importance of sovereignty rights; understanding the continuing influence by and upon the church through the doctrine of discovery, white preachers can become more aware of our own white supremacist and colonizing beliefs that come out in our language from the pulpit and seek new terms and images that undermine dominant white supremacist colonial euro-christian settler narratives.

Likewise, as the preacher opens the scriptures and reads through a decolonizing lens they will be paying attention to the biblical interpretation and theological views that seek to challenge Imperialistic, hegemonic forces.¹⁰²⁹ Historically verses have been used to justify assimilation or annihilation of the heathen. Deconstructing these interpretations and reconstructing them can be helpful. One text in particular has been most traumatic comes from the Hebrew bible and the interpretation of the Canaanites. Images such as Canaan and Biblical Patriarchs such as Joshua who declare war on people inhabiting the Promised Land can become hero's or cautionary tales.¹⁰³⁰

We can choose reify or reveal the Manifest Destiny image in our worldview, our biblical interpretation, and ultimately our speech. But in order to reveal these images we must be aware of their existence thus the historical analysis of colonization alongside scripture can provide a conscientizing reading. For further decolonizing, a preacher can interrogate the church tradition and investigate of the religious colonial narrative of the United States of America for the settler/immigrant worldview that lies within a particular reading or interpretation. David P. Hansen quotes Kiowa novelist and poet Scott Momaday, who writes,

The morality of intolerance has become in the twentieth century a morality of pity...The contemporary white American is willing to assume responsibility for the Indian—he is willing to take on the burdens of oppressed people

¹⁰²⁹ For a comprehensive review of biblical interpretive tools and theological considerations see Travis, *Decolonizing Preaching: The Pulpit as Postcolonial Space*, Chapter 6-7.

¹⁰³⁰ For more examples see Smith, Andrea. "Decolonizing Theology." *Union Seminary Quarterly Review* 59, no. 1-2 (January 1, 2005): 63-78; Warrior, Robert. "Canaanites, Cowboys, and Indians: Deliverance, Conquest, and Liberation Theology Today." Accessed January 6, 2018.

https://www.academia.edu/17688887/Canaanites_Cowboys_and_Indians_Deliverance_Conquest_and_Liberation_Theology_Today., Myers, Ched. *Who Will Roll Away the Stone?: Discipleship Queries for First World Christians*. Maryknoll, N.Y: Orbis Books, 1994.

everywhere—but he is decidedly unwilling to divest himself of the false assumptions which impede his good intentions.¹⁰³¹

The colonial narrative of the United States has been presented in previous chapters. Suffice it to say the United States imposed itself on existing nations who had laws and agreements of their own. Citing the Doctrine of Discovery, the United States sanctioned her own sovereignty. The concept of Manifest Destiny justified what the settlers believed to be the inevitable extermination and expulsion of the peoples from their lands. These acts of aggression were supported by theological and biblical exegesis solidified into a colonial worldview into the minds of the settler/immigrants. By interrogating the texts and the traditions through a decolonized historical lens an opportunity to humanize our message comes forth. The text can be reimagined by the preacher so that their voice can begin to speak a beloved word that conveys grace where only hate was spoken before.

Integral to listening fully is the preacher's willingness to look at their own worldview and question their own assumptions. The most pronounced change in my worldview came in regards to showing respect and giving honor to Elders through listening. Throughout the interview with Lois she patiently answered my questions even though in retrospect I spent more time worrying about getting my facts straight than allowing her to answer the questions fully. I had been trained in Active Listening and sought to engage with Lois by asking lots of questions and follow up questions. As we progressed Lois began to tell stories and the conversation became more discursive. It would have been more respectful if I had listened more and talked less.

¹⁰³¹ Hansen, 23 from Momaday, "The Morality of Indian Hating," in *Man Made of Words*, 57–76, passim 69, 71–72.

Dennis McPherson says “paramount of all [Native American] cultural values is the value of respect. Respect must be given and shown to all that is in creation. Without respect for self and all that is in creation, the aboriginal person is unable to live his or her life to the fullest and will be unable to fulfill his or her purpose for being.”¹⁰³² Lois deserved my respect not only as a human being but also as an Elder.¹⁰³³ One does not become an Elder merely because of age, it has to do with community discernment and it is an honor bestowed on you. Freda McDonald says, “you have to earn the trust of the people before they declare you to be an Elder”¹⁰³⁴

Nevertheless, Lois patiently listened with me. She did not give up on me. She led me into a new way of listening that allowed space for stories and time to be in each other’s presence as human beings. For the preacher who wants to engage in beloved speech, the kind of deep listening Lois encouraged me to experience and the patience she showed to me is indicative of the kind of relationships that humanize and honor each other.

Beloved speech was not only evident in the answers Judy, Lois, Julienne, and Billie gave to my questions but it was also evident in their way of being in the world. It came across in the way they invited me into their lives and their personal spaces. They honored me with their stories which began a relationship that went beyond the initial interviews. It was also distinct in the self-assured understanding of their own identity and their place in the communities that formed them. It became manifest in their humble

¹⁰³² Weaver, *Native American Religious Identity: Unforgotten Gods*, 96.

¹⁰³³ I am using a capital to indicate that this is an honorific title. It is not related to her elders’ orders or ordination in the UMC.

¹⁰³⁴ Freda McDonald, “No Longer an Indian My Story,” in Weaver, *Native American Religious Identity: Unforgotten Gods*, 69.

hospitality extended to me both as they listened to my story and in their patient sensitivity to my missteps.

The process of discovering our own beloved voice unfolds within relationship with those who practice beloved speech with us. Those relationships are based in mutual trust and sharing stories. An aspect of this dissertation that made itself manifest was that the project itself began to perform or demonstrate what I was reflecting on and ultimately writing about. The relational value of beloved speech was built into the methodology which encouraged sharing stories, and sought to nurture relationship and trust.

After the interviews, I had the added benefit of Anne's company to reflexively consider what occurred. Anne and I got to know each other better as we spent time in the car together and roomed together. She engaged in beloved speech with me during meals and travel. She not only shared her own stories and experiences but offered important guidance about some of the cultural cues I missed and the protocols I needed to follow.

In particular, Anne brought my attention to the fact that I needed a preamble before I began the interviews. Kovach tells us, "preparation assumes self-awareness and an ability to situate self within the research. It requires attention to culture in an active, grounded way."¹⁰³⁵ She also indicates that this work builds reciprocity, rapport, and trust because you need to be able to answer for yourself if an Elder asks about your research.¹⁰³⁶ Part of my introduction was corrected to include my background in the church as well as a more detailed explanation of my work.

In addition, Anne also indicated that I was not paying attention to some of the physical cues Lois gave me in her interview. At the very end of first session with Lois, I

¹⁰³⁵ Kovach, *Indigenous Methodologies Characteristics, Conversations, and Contexts*, 109.

¹⁰³⁶ Kovach, 110.

asked her how she was feeling. Her voice conveyed lots of energy and she told me she was fine, “I feel great!” and “It’s OK.” What I did not know was that I transgressed a protocol. My experience as a pastor in the dominant culture had taught me to trust Lois’ answers. What I did not consider was that in this instance I was sitting before an Elder – a matriarch of her Nation and The United Methodist Church – who had certain expectations of another clergyperson, especially a white woman. Anne explained to me afterwards that Lois would speak until I stopped the conversation.

Anne’s reflections helped me to communicate more clearly in my interviews with Julienne and Billie. However, they also conscientized me to another aspect of my identity namely my euro-christian settler/immigrant cultural norms that presented themselves in the interviews. In an attempt to fulfill a predetermined agenda, I wanted to make sure that I asked all the questions and collected all my data accurately. This agenda affected my interviewing technique which at times sought to compile facts instead of receive knowledge. I battled within myself between asking questions I had devised beforehand to gather information and allowing the interview to be a conversation that unfolded through storytelling. In addition, I exhibited some privileged behaviors when I neglected to ask for help, when I spoke instead of listening, and when I showed up less prepared than I should have.

Even though I was embarrassed at my mis-steps I wanted to learn, so I asked Anne how she would recommend I proceed with the next interviews. She reiterated the need to firm up the preamble and asked me to clarify what my method was. At this point I began to listen more closely and came to realize that she had risked her reputation taking me to meet Judy, Lois, Julienne, and Billie. Our conversations moved beyond research

and planning and began to become more personal. For the final two interviews she sat with us for the first couple minutes and then left us alone. I took this as a sign that I had listened and learned. Exposure of the colonial narrative that lives inside of white settlers is imperative to beloved speech. Guides like Anne can help reveal the ways in which our worldview continues to colonize, and help us to imagine a new view of the world.

Reading Robin J. DiAngelo's reflections on feedback brought back memories of this time with Anne. In *White Fragility: Why It's So Hard for White People to Talk About Racism*, DiAngelo writes that she initially "dreaded getting feedback from people of color on [her] racist patterns and assumptions" but later as she matured she welcomed feedback and saw it as a positive sign of relationship.¹⁰³⁷ She mentions that she also experienced embarrassment or defensiveness when confronted with problematic patterns but took this also as a sign that the person trusted her enough to take the risk of confronting her.¹⁰³⁸ Reframing my emotional reaction into a racial identity framework was helpful for my own development in my antiracism decolonizing work. Viewed through this lens it became clearer that these kinds of interactions are not completely due to personal failing but also a consequence of systemic colonization and white supremacy. Instead of triggering hurt feelings and shame this experience could become a source of growth and a sign to stay and remain in relationship even and especially when it is uncomfortable to do so.

The true difficulty comes when white euro-christian settler/immigrants make mistakes and begin become defensive and recolonize with their words or actions. Any settler/immigrant who would engage in activism must realize that the colonial narrative is

¹⁰³⁷ DiAngelo, *White Fragility: Why It's So Hard for White People to Talk About Racism*, 147.

¹⁰³⁸ DiAngelo, 147.

strong and it will require intentional reflexive work to change the narrative. Those who partner with us, both Native and non-Native, can be a guide to help us move through the difficult business of decolonizing our voices over and over again.

As we work together side by side conversations emerge, confrontations and challenges erupt, and that is when settler/immigrants have a choice to stay or go. At these moments white euro-christian settler/immigrants must be willing to remain humble and vulnerable enough to listen and learn about alternative ways of being in the world. My experience of guidance from beloved Indigenous men and women mirrors what Andrea Smith talks about in her monograph *Conquest*. She presents Native women activists who do not depend on “domination and force [in their activism] but rely on systems of kinship, respect, and reciprocity.”¹⁰³⁹

The kinship and respect come through in the actions and words used as we share one-on-one or in the pulpit. But it also comes across in the tone of the voice. A beloved speaker uses a tone that is honest with passion befitting the message, without guile or contempt. Whether the speaker is using humor, or speaking truth in a forthright manner, encouraging, or firm – the tone fits the context and seeks to inspire conscientization rather than shame, so that the listeners can receive the message. The speaker may passionately address injustice seeking to unmask deceptive narratives or behaviors or the speaker may become more conversational when delivering a difficult word. Beloved speaker is discerning what will be best received. Likewise, placement in the preaching

¹⁰³⁹ Smith, *Conquest: Sexual Violence and American Indian Genocide*, 6.

space will be determined to help the preacher be heard. If the preacher needs to convey intimacy a position closer to the congregation may be preferred.

Mostly it is the willingness for the preacher to remain and be fully present. When delivering the challenging word, the beloved speaker remains steadfast and listens seeking to keep the communication open. To begin the process of expressing antiracist, decolonizing, and humanizing speech one must experience beloved speech. Some signs of beloved speech include, content that seeks to decolonize and dismantle white supremacy. Thus it contains narratives and images that undermine stereotypes and expose historical accounts of violence and conquest. It is contextualized giving evidence of a speaker who is listening deeply to the community as well as the surrounding societies and cultures. As a result of this listening the content is sensitive to the weaknesses and areas of the community that need strengthening and encouragement as well as the colonizing and white supremacist influences that need to be addressed and challenged. It shows respect for alternative worldviews and traditions. The beloved speaker interprets the bible with a decolonizing lens. Images of beloved community/kin-dom of God, self-determination, sovereignty, and the interdependence of all creation are used. Beloved speech is sensitive to intersections of race, gender, nationality, sexuality, economics, physical and cognitive abilities. Speakers seek to use various languages, and music, and storytelling to convey messages through various means of communication. But most of all beloved speech recognizes our common humanity and calls it forth. As white euro-christian settler/immigrants, our own reflexive attention to identity can open us to the grace of God in order to see our own humanity as God sees us. Likewise, our relationships can enable us to see the humanity in our neighbor and their belovedness.

And our ability to listen can empower us in beloved speech to speak a word of beloved grace to our congregations.

Conclusion

An amazing dynamic exists between our lives and our stories: each one shapes the other. Our collective life experiences are interpreted through a personal narrative framework and shaped into a master story that, in turn, influences subsequent interpretations.¹⁰⁴⁰ We do not need to be trapped in our stories. It is possible to find new stories for shaping meaning in our lives and by “so doing bring forth new worlds of possibility.”¹⁰⁴¹ Reframes create a new narrative and can be used in biblical interpretation, theological reflection, and preaching as well as in our personal lives. These reframes come from our relationships as we listen and experience a new way of seeing the world. Delighting in the belovedness of each other is a means by which the Divine and human story intermingle as God's beloved people meet and truly listen to each other.

In the beginning I shared with you a decolonizing, antiracist, humanizing sermon from Rev. Thom White Wolf Fassett of the Seneca Nation as an example of beloved speech from the perspective of an original inhabitant of this land. Now I offer a glimpse into a sermon that comes from another view. This is my attempt to speak a beloved word to my fellow settler/immigrants and arrivants. As a non-Native serving on my Annual Conference Committee on Native American Ministries (CONAM), and an antiracism trainer for my Annual Conference, I was asked to preach at a number of United Methodist Churches about the Act of Repentance and explain the ramifications. I had

¹⁰⁴⁰ Anderson and Foley in Graham, Walton, and Ward, *Theological Reflection, Sources*, 131.

¹⁰⁴¹ Anderson and Foley in Graham, Walton, and Ward, *Theological Reflection, Sources*, 136

interviewed Native American leaders concerning the Act of Repentance in Oklahoma and California to better understand how the worship services had been conducted and what measures the conferences were putting place following the services. I also interviewed white settler/immigrant leaders who had participated in services, for insight into their experience of the Act of Repentance. I was part of the Annual Conference Committee to adopt liturgy and plan the Act of Repentance Worship service and I was part of the Northeast Jurisdiction Committee to write the liturgy and plan the Jurisdictional service.

When I spoke across the Annual Conference, I was trying to encourage churches to understand the Act of Repentance and the reasons behind its importance. I preached this particular sermon several times. Each sermon was reframed for each particular context. Before preaching, I conducted research to try and discover something about the original inhabitants of the place where I was preaching. Additionally, I would interview the pastor or the lay person who contacted me to understand the demographic of the congregation and their familiarity with the Act of Repentance. Finally, I would plan to stay afterwards to speak with anyone who wanted to talk with me about the Act of Repentance or Native American Ministries.

This is an example of a sermon that is overtly decolonizing, but more subtle examples could be given. Whether non-Native preachers are engaging with a particular topic such as the Act of Repentance or the lectionary text, words and illustrations can be chosen to deconstruct dominant white supremacist colonial narratives of conquest. Decisions about vocal tone, pitch, and body placement will all be factors that have the potential to communicate a beloved word. Regardless of what decisions the preacher

finally makes, as long as they are based in an experience of listening and relationships with the people in the congregation, beloved speech can come forth.

Preachers can make these decisions to decolonize their speech regardless of social location and identity, whether they identify as a white settler/immigrant or an arrivant. However, it is we white settler/immigrants who have the most to learn, so I am calling my fellow white settler/immigrant colleagues to begin this journey towards humanizing their sermons and speaking a beloved word.

This particular sermon was preached at Arch Street United Methodist Church in Philadelphia for Native American Ministry Sunday on October 19, 2014.¹⁰⁴² Founded in 1862 Arch Street's has a rich history in Methodism. It was the home of Bishop Matthew Simpson.¹⁰⁴³ Presently it is a multicultural, progressive, and Reconciling Congregation. The congregation is committed to social justice ministries. Arch Street was the site of a public witness for justice when over 30 United Methodist clergy officiated at a same sex wedding for two longtime members in 2013.¹⁰⁴⁴

This congregation is also actively engaging with the Act of Repentance. They hold regular Wednesday night meetings for Native Americans, both Traditionals and Christian, and allies to meet and discuss advocacy issues as well as offer mutual support.

I preached for the first service in the crypt which was an intimate environment, so I adjusted my vocal dynamics for the smaller space and moved amongst the people. The sermon presented below was delivered in the 900-seat gothic style sanctuary. The

¹⁰⁴² Dale Shillito, "Our Story" Arch Street United Methodist Church (website), accessed March 11, 2019, <http://archstreetumc.org/who-we-are/our-story/>.

¹⁰⁴³ Bishop Simpson was an influential 19th century Methodist who held strong views concerning The United States exceptional mission from God. See chapter 3 for more information.

¹⁰⁴⁴ Shillito, "Our Story."

congregation was predominantly composed of African American members that morning. There were also numerous Asian American and Filipino members as well as a significant number of cognitively challenged members in the congregation who were fully participating in worship.

It was a cold fall day and the feeling of winter was in the air but the congregation was warm and expectant. I looked out from a high pulpit to the people far below and into the balcony. The traditional Methodist service progressed with scripture readings and liturgical prayers but the music was modern. Spirit Wing, a husband and wife musical group performed original compositions. She is Seneca and Munsee; he is Munsee.

Sermon: A Light to the Nations Isaiah 42:5-7 (NRSV)

My journey began at the United Methodist Clergy Women's Conference in San Diego. We sang together. We danced together. We worshipped together. On the final day, as we prepared to go our separate ways, there was one last preacher to preach. So, we turned our ears toward Reverend Tweedy Sombrero, who is Diné.¹⁰⁴⁵ In this expansive overly air-conditioned space we huddled together. Our bodies were rigid from a week of uncomfortable conference chairs. Our thoughts focused more on taxis and airplanes and getting home, than on the speaker.

It was when she spoke, we found ourselves absolutely transfixed. Not a sound could be heard among the 3000 as we listened to her indictment of us all. She explained how she sat through every plenary with us. She heard the greetings at the beginning of

¹⁰⁴⁵ The Rev. Evelene Tweedy Sombrero-Navarrete, Diné Nation (Navajo)

every service. She recalled the kudos given to the African American and African sisters, the Asian and Asian American sisters, the Latina, and Hispanic sisters, to all sisters in our midst, and to the elders as well. She named others who were recognized, for instance, the men who were present, the different people who spoke different languages, Korean, Filipino and German women – so many different women from all over the world. So many Nations and languages in one room. Finally, and deliberately, she said, not once did anyone acknowledge the silent minority of Native American women who are present in the same room.

Rev. Sombrero told us that we once again silenced those who are the most left out, overlooked, and marginalized women. She began a deconstruction of race that was going to change my life forever. Up to that point, I had been told that race was essentially a black/white issue in the United States. I had been directed to read autobiographies on civil rights leaders, monographs on the history of slavery and the slave trade. I was told about The United Methodist Church's history with Harry Hoosier and Richard Allen. I learned about the United Methodist Women's justice work, the anti-lynching campaigns in the early 20th century, and Mary McCleod Bethune, but not about Native Americans. I had never been directed beyond a few linear notes in the textbooks about John and Charles Wesley's failed work with the Natives in Georgia.

I remember in high school, I was a sophomore and in history class, we spent a unit memorizing the map of North America before European contact. We were required to name some of the geographic locations of different tribes. About three weeks into the fall quarter, our teacher became ill and was replaced by a teacher who taught from the textbook. The extent of our education from the textbook began with the Revolutionary

War, some vague references to pilgrims, puritans seeking religious freedom, U.S. constitution, and the repercussions for church and state. Again, nothing about Native Americans.

So, there I was in San Diego, listening and transfixed on the speaker when I became convicted to see my world differently – to see my life differently. I was a candidate for ordination, a trainer in antiracism work in the conference, and in my seminary. I thought I understood everything I needed to know about race. By all accounts I knew about my own identity because I had done the work to discover my ancestry. I was a fourth or fifth generation immigrant to the United States from Ireland and France. I knew about the history of immigration to the United States. I knew about Ellis Island. So, you would think, I knew about immigration, right? Apparently not! No one had ever spoken to me about colonial immigration and settlement. I had not been confronted with the gaps in my experience and my education – or any of the other historical realities about colonization and race that I needed to know. I thought I understood everything I needed to know about race and identity. I knew about my own identity, because of the ancestry journey I completed.

Of course, my history with racism did not begin on that day. I had many experiences with racism. The first time I became aware that the color of my skin made a difference, was when my seventh-grade teacher required us to read an excerpt of Dr. King's Dream Speech. Reading his speech set my heart on fire with a passion for anti-racism work. My experience was broadened further in college with Wanda Lofton, the founding member and matriarch of Healing the Wounds of Racism in Eastern P.A., She had a gentle soul,

but a fierce spirit for justice and she tried to help me begin to grasp all the complexities of the intersections of race, class, gender, and sexuality.

I think all these experiences were leading up to San Diego. The sermon I heard changed everything about my understanding of myself, my faith, the Bible, and my church. It went beyond personal, to political and ethical, and it led to my work in Critical Race Theory.

The scripture verses we focused on today were from Isaiah 42. In Isaiah 42, we hear God's voice say, "I have given you as a covenant to the people, a light to the nations." A light to the nations, imagine how that would have felt or sounded to the exiled people of Israel. God is essentially saying, "Things have been rough, but I haven't forgotten you." Can we hear God's voice? "I haven't forgotten you. Give me your hand. Come! Remember when I first called you. Remember that I love you so very much."

God called out to Abraham so long ago in Genesis 12. It was Abraham's call to be a blessing to all the families of the earth. Finally, the call comes again. It is expanded in Isaiah 42 and its sister verses in Isaiah 49. God proclaims that God's justice will be a light to the people. This verse in 42 is very important it reaffirms the covenant and it lays out a structure that it is not just for some. We have to ask ourselves, who is it for? It is for ALL, ALL people, ALL people. It is not just for some people who have a special sense of entitlement. It is for the righteous to spread justice – the true JUSTICE of God throughout the earth – the whole earth!

What better way could we have to start worship together this morning! God is declaring to us that we are a light to the nations. God will – through us – "open the eyes that are blind" and "bring up the prisoners from the dungeon, from the prison those who

sit in the darkness” (Isaiah 42:7, NRSV). Think about that. It is beautiful. All who love God and love God’s justice will see that “former things have come to pass” and the “new things that God now declares will spring forth!” (Isaiah 42:9, NRSV). Doesn’t it sound great! And then when we interpret it through Jesus’ life, it is a beautiful picture. Am I right?

Then the verses move into praise and thanksgiving, telling us to “sing to the Lord a new song” (Isaiah 42:10, NRSV). Remember that part? “Praise from the end of the earth!” “Let the sea roar and all that fills it! The coast lands and all their inhabitants, the desert and its towns lift up their voices” (Isaiah 42:10, NRSV). It continues from village to village and town to town. “Let all give glory to the Lord and declare God’s praise! Declare it in the coastlands!” (Isaiah 42:10, NRSV). The whole world will declare it!

This is good news! A new day is coming! We can give thanks to whatever happens. We will be taken care of. God will never leave us!. That is what it says, “Never.” And when these words were spoken, Israel was in exile. The people of Israel have been taken from the land. The country has been divided from itself. Some of the people were left behind. Some, and you probably know this – the elite, the wealthy, the ruling class – they were taken off to live in Babylon. But a “New Day” is coming and they can go home. They can go home!

Life for them changed dramatically since their captivity, everything the people of God knew was changed. The customs, the values they held dear, their beliefs and traditions were challenged. They had come slowly to adopt new ways. One of the changes they were introduced to was that “all are welcome.” But if all are welcome that

meant they needed to assimilate. They needed to take on the new customs, while still managing to hold onto many of the things that they held dear.

This includes the customs and concepts of a prophet.

Regardless of social status the prophet is the person who speaks words from the streets to the royal thrones, from the marketplace to the courts and expects to be heard. Prophets declare what they hear God saying. Prophets tell the people what they are doing wrong and what God thought about it. Prophets watched the political landscape and through their relationship with God would try to explain why the world was the way it was. Prophets try to tell the people what the next move should be and what would please God. This is a story of a God who is preparing to take them back home. “Get ready, pack up, we’re going home!” Imagine the joy! They would see their relatives once again, their houses, their orchards, and their capital city.

These verses illustrate great joy of Israel’s return home. These verses are also meaningful for the United States. The United States have a long history with these verses. On September 11th George W. Bush tried to comfort a shocked country by reminding us that we were a “Light to the Nations” (Isaiah 42:6, NRSV).

We can go back much further, to John Winthrop of Massachusetts Bay Colony, he saw the Puritan exiles in North America as a beacon of light to the Nations.¹⁰⁴⁶ This was to be a new world. This is where God was going to do a new thing, this was going to be a place where people were going to be ruled by God alone.

¹⁰⁴⁶ L. Daniel Hawk, *Joshua in 3-D: A Commentary on Biblical Conquest and Manifest Destiny* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Pub, 2010), xxx.

What happened? We cannot ignore the facts, the Puritans wiped out anybody who got in their way. They destroyed whole peoples, whole cultures, and they did it in the name of God. They used these very verses.

The basic premise did not sound like a call to violence. The Puritans wanted to create a nation where God could work through human beings to “open the eyes of the blind, bring the prisoners out of the dungeons, and those who sit in darkness. Those who love God and God's justice could see the former things come to pass and hear the new thing.”

But they did not stop there. They kept reading and they interpreted the following verses in very harmful ways. Because these verses of praise for everything that God will do for us, move on into some pretty horrible ideas about God in the next verses. In the next breath, the prophet's words revealed a shadow side to Israel's calling to be a light. This prophet does more than just praise God. The prophet actually says, “The Lord goes forth like a soldier, like a warrior, God stirs up his fury and he cries out and he shouts aloud, and he shows himself mighty against his foes” (Isaiah 42:13, NRSV).

The Prophet says essentially, in order to take them home, there is going to be violence, because there are others living in the land. Other people were living and working in what was their homes, their government offices, and their places of work. Some of those people were from Babylon, but some were from other countries. Some were people who were captured, removed from their homes, and placed in Israel, so they couldn't cause any trouble. Innocent people who were trying to make the best of their situation, just like those the Prophet is talking to in Israel.

In order to return home, it is obvious more bloodshed is going to happen, and more people are going to have to die. More families are going to be destroyed. I do not know about you, but I look at this and I ask “Why?” “Why?” “Why does it have to be this way?” “Why? Why do more people have to die?” “Why does violence have to beget violence?”

Maybe we take a minute and try and step in their shoes for a moment. The exiles have seen for themselves, great traumatic experiences – some of them were very young children and, they were carried off, not understanding why. Others may not have experienced it firsthand, but they have experienced it through the narrative told by their parents and their grandparents. They have heard the stories over and over again. Stories of torture, murder, and the march to Babylon. They have experienced the hardship of trying to make a home and living amongst people who do not want them in their neighborhoods. They struggled and yet they survived. Not only did they survive, but they thrived!

Now when one has that much trauma, what happens? What happens inside? Can we imagine? Maybe we have experienced some trauma ourselves. Maybe we have lived it. Maybe we have walked it. Maybe we know it. Now, it is time for this generation, innocent of any wrongdoing to go home. Now, it is time for this generation who suffered to go home. Now, it is time for those who have been told in chapter 40, “you've been given double a portion of bad news and a double portion of suffering” to go home (Isaiah 40:2).

It is time at last for you to go home. Maybe we can empathize. But there is more to know. Because as bad as it is for Israel, I would offer to us in this room listening, it gets

even worse. Because we are not Israel. This remnant in exile is a poor little group of people. It is all that is left of that ruling class of the mighty nation that they once were. They have been almost destroyed by the most powerful nation in the world known at the time – Babylon. If anything, the truth is – we are not the remnant, as much as we want to see ourselves as such, we are not the exiles. Folks, we are Babylon. We are Babylon.

We are not the ones who are going to bring light to the nations. We are the receivers of it. Some of us were brought to the United States under force and against our will. Some of us have been wooed here by colonial promises of a better life and the American Dream. Some of us came here generations ago, but we sit here because someone came here from somewhere else. Any of us who are non-Natives – and granted as an Amer-european woman – as someone who lives in white culture – I have a lot more answer for than some others – But anyone who is a non-Native needs to understand, we together are Babylon.

This is a difficult word to hear. The reason you only find these kinds of words in the Hebrew tradition is because nobody else would stand for it. Hebrew prophets speak a hard word to us, and they don't just speak it for their time, do they? Sometimes they speak it for all of us.

I am going to change gears a little bit on you. I am sure you know the story of William Penn? If you do not know it, I invite you to look at it, and look at it more deeply and deconstruct it. William Penn, amongst others who came here, said they came for religious freedom for all. However, at the same time, they saw this land as a way to sing a new song – to go to a world where God was going to do a new thing – ruled by God alone – and become a beacon of light to the nations.

There was only one problem. The land was not uninhabited, was it? No, no. And many were made to feel as foreigners in their own land. Their languages, their customs, their traditions were all taken from them forcibly. Many, many people were harmed by these verses, the theology behind it, and the narrative that we have built up around it.

I would invite us as non-Natives to consider William Penn and others not as enemies however but as good Christians. They were seeking justice. They were seeking to do the right thing. They were studying their Bible. They were praying together. They were doing good theology together and apparently some bad theology too. So even though we may want to say, well, “those” people were bad. I would offer that, there are times when all of us have something to account for.

So, we gather, trying to understand, trying to join each other, hand in hand, and with God's Spirit to bring justice. At the same time, we walk in this legacy, that I just described. A legacy backed by this verse in Isaiah, justifying aggression against Indigenous people's sovereignty and land rights.

All you have to do is look at how we have done mission as the United Methodist Church. All you have to do is look at how our U.S. Government has behaved itself in the Philippines and other places in this world. Indigenous peoples are being torn from their lands, even now in the name of the War on Terror. These are our legacies, this is what we carry. We may not agree with it, but it is being done with our money in God's name.

At the same time, let us understand that these texts have given great inspiration to many Christians who want to spread Christianity and the good news of God's love and justice. There are plenty of people with good motives who take comfort in these verses. It has provided comfort to those who are captives, African slaves, indentured Chinese and

Indian railroad workers. They dreamed of a day when they would be delivered from exile, knowing that their suffering was not in vain.

These verses have provided a means to oppress and a call to liberty from oppression. In one verse, justice reigns and in the next murder. Christians, whether from the U.S. or other countries, will continue to call upon these verses to speak against the Empire. But we have to realize the covenant that calls us to be a light to the Nations, makes us inheritors both of the call to be a light and the pitfalls that surround such a call.

In 2012, the United Methodist Church engaged in an Act of Repentance towards Native Americans and Indigenous Peoples around the world. We had a worship service and there was a ritual involved. But we were told plainly by the preacher that day that repentance is not a one-time action. An apology is not enough. Repentance requires us to walk every day, day in and day out, in a new way. It requires a new way of understanding who we are, and understanding all the ways in which this verse might be lived out in us – both for the good and for the ill.

Our Annual Conference is preparing to have an Act of Repentance in 2016. Local churches are being encouraged to prepare for the Act of Repentance. It will not be just a ritual where we say, “we are sorry,” but it will actually be a new beginning toward walking in new way.

Here at Arch Street you have done incredible things. You are already in many ways walking in this way of repentance. I would invite you, if you are not walking in this way, to have a look, and have a listen to the things that are already happening. But also, I would invite you to look at yourself. I mentioned earlier that I have French and Irish roots. I also found out that I have all sorts of other things, East Africa and Southeast

Asian. I did not know that about myself. I found this out later by getting a DNA test. It is a very simple thing to find out about yourself. A Navajo elder came to me and said, “if you're going to be in the work, you need to know who you are.” So, I invite you to discover who you are. We know that when one is diminished, then all are – Right?

Well, that goes even for people who look like me. People who look like the oppressor. If all of us are not together helping each other, then none of us are really going to be able to heal and do things differently. So, I am not here today to make you feel guilty and the Act of Repentance, is not to make us feel guilty. It is a chance to go forward in a new way, to reinterpret that light. I would offer, that those of us who are Babylonians, we need to let go of the idea that we carry the light. We need to open our hands humbly and accept that maybe we need to be willing to receive the light.

Receive the light from the Native Americans and Indigenous peoples around the world and the wisdom that they carry. Not stereotypically jumping into Powwows or into their traditions and trying to co-opt some rituals like sweat lodges, but rather to listen, to honor, to understand, and to share our lives in a very deep way.

I offer this as one way. You will discover many more. I offer that on this land, the very land that this church is on right now, there were people living here. Before this building was built, before Philadelphia was built, they were here. Yes! Find out who they were! If you do not know already. Find out where they are, because I assure you they are here. As much as we want to say, “well, folks have died,” “they have disappeared.” “There are no Native peoples left here.” Let me say one word. Assimilation. It is a very sneaky thing. Amongst you right now are the descendants of the first people of this land.

Find them! Talk to them! Learn from them! Just one step. I invite you, I want to hear about it. Let me know what you find out.

As Thom White Wolf Fassett says, “you may think that these historical references are dusty tidbits from history that have little meaning in today's context, but ... [history is] alive and well today among Native people. The historical trauma is palpable.”¹⁰⁴⁷ So find it, seek to understand, discover the history, and I would offer – you will discover yourself. Amen.

¹⁰⁴⁷ See appendix A Thom White Wolf Fassett, *A New Beginning*, Annual Conference of the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference of The United Methodist Church, Lancaster, PA, June 16, 2016.

Rev. Dr. Thom White Wolf Fassett¹
A New Beginning John 1:1-5

Everything is falling around us. The whole world's pressing in and here we are in a service of repentance for the United Methodist Church. Some people will say, "I've had enough of this. I didn't have anything to do with it. I'm not apologizing." Well, of course, we're not here apologizing. We're here taking a look at how we reshape the future, reshape relationships, how we bring about healing relationships.

Some years ago, we had repentance in the context of the African-American experience, and some of us were discouraged that greater changes didn't emerge from that event in the United Methodist Church. We're quite hopeful now. It's taken nearly 40 years in my experience to get to this place today. We're not being asked to apologize. We're being asked to reconstruct our institutions, our principalities so that we can live together in peace with a greater hope for the future, assisting one another, addressing issues of justice. Oh, we have so many, don't we?

As we sit here thinking about all of the places in the world that are facing violence. We speak of Orlando. We call it to our attention in this session. We talk about the massacres of a variety of kinds in what is now the United States among Native peoples. In our tradition, in the tradition of the Haudenosaunee, the Iroquois, the Six Nations as the English would call us. We have a Tree of Peace brought to us by the Peacemakers; Aiiionwatha and Dekanawidah. Longfellow called him Hiawatha. The Tree of Peace was planted as a means of sheltering all who would seek peace and all who would seek peace are invited to come beneath the Tree of Peace.

You must ask what kind of pine tree is that? It's a pretty huge white pine tree and underneath the Tree of Peace, one may seek refuge. The Tree of Peace sends its roots, its white roots of peace, throughout the Earth. We're all one. We all belong to each other.

In the first few verses of John, John 1, we read, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God and all things came into being through him and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness and the darkness did not overcome it."

Well, with apologies to New Testament scholars, I love this particular quote because it tells us of our oneness. Did you hear what it said? God created everything that is and there is nothing created that God did not create. We might imagine ourselves not only related to each other. How easy that is because we look somewhat similar, but to how much more difficult it is to think of ourselves are related to other life-forms. You mean to tell me that I'm related to the whale or to a giraffe? How far do we extend this

¹ Thom White Wolf Fassett (Seneca), "A New Beginning", Annual Conference of the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference of The United Methodist Church, Lancaster, PA, June 16, 2016.

relatedness? Well, we extend it to all living things and all life forms on the Earth because God made everything that it is and there is nothing God did not make.

We've had a hard time understanding that in Methodism since the beginning of the first missionary being sent here by John Wesley in the late seventeen hundreds. We've had a very difficult time understanding that. There is an expression in my father's language. There's an expression that goes something like this: Mitákuye Oyás'ı̄, which is to say all my relatives. That's another way of saying those verses. Those verses in John. Mitákuye Oyás'ı̄, all my relatives. How difficult it is for us sometimes to turn to one another and say: Mitákuye Oyás'ı̄. You are my relative. We have so much brokenness in the human community. Such a difficult time trying to get along through all the issues, all of the challenges.

I once was asked to speak in The Longhouse. Probably one of the scariest times that I've ever had to speak anywhere. The Longhouse is the central government of the Six Nations Iroquois Confederacy, The Haudenosaunee. I was asked to speak in front of all of our chiefs from all of our nations and all of our clan mothers. I thought how am I ever going to deal with this? I'm sitting before these people who have such great wisdom, who represent ages, centuries of experience and oral tradition. Then I remembered that we, in the Six Nations, talk about making decisions for the next Seven Generations.

I thought that was the answer. I will address the Six Nations Grand Council based on some expectations and aspirations for the next seven Generations and it was good. It worked. I often look around us in the United Methodist Church and ask, and it's not a rhetorical question: how do we care for the next seven Generations? How do we make decisions in our church councils, in our conference committees that will have an impact on the next Seven Generations of church members born into the church?

I often say that history is theology. If you wanna know what our theology is you follow our history, and our history as a Methodist Church in the developing nation called the United States of America has some startling stories to tell. You might have thought that with the European arrival in 1620, and I know that there were others who arrived before that, the Spanish and the French, but I pick on 1620 because they're probably some Mayflower Society Members here.

It was a time that we might question with the new arrivals, the undocumented immigrants coming to North America, who brought with them a technology and a certain point of view of economy and a certain belief system and theology met up with a people who didn't have those same attributes, but who lived out of a context of spirituality. Wouldn't [it] have been extraordinary if these two forces could meet in a different context and work together to form a whole new approach to civilization and people living together in peace and harmony.

Native peoples had much to be fearful of because immigrants coming to North America were hungry for land and resources. They wanted to own land. Native people had no concept of land ownership. They shared the land together. But what could have

been exchanged between the immigrant population and the Native population? It's always been said that the Six Nations Iroquois and their Confederacy had concepts of democracy that were used by the fathers and mothers of the United States Constitution and Bill of Rights.

A meeting took place here in this town in 1744 that began to address some of those issues between Pennsylvania and Maryland, but it wasn't until 1754 in Fort Orange, New York, which is now Albany, New York, where the heads of the Six Nations Iroquois met with the mothers and fathers, mostly fathers I must say, Benjamin Franklin and people like him, who were forming a new nation. That's where they began to learn about the Articles of Confederation and the issues of democracy among the Six Nations.

How interesting that those principles that came out of those conversations were translated eventually into the Bill of Rights and the Constitution of the United States of America. Even more ironic that the Bill of Rights, and the Constitution of the United States of America would hold African-Americans as three-fifths human and Native American's as savages. The term savage has been current up through the administration of Teddy Roosevelt.

How do we justify, if we can justify at all, the separation that we have created as a church, carrying the Gospel into the Wilderness Territories. We used to call them Wilderness Territories by our Circuit Riders, spreading the Gospel. We were a part of those brigades that came in large numbers and punished Native people if they did not believe, could not be converted back in the days when the pilgrim, so-called pilgrim colony, existed and Plymouth was the center of their civilization.

Somebody wrote to Governor Bradford saying "I understand that several Indians were killed the other day. I'm only sorry that before we killed them, we didn't convert them to Christianity." We're part and parcel that. It doesn't mean that we need to go around wringing our hands over something that we have done, but it does mean that we have an obligation to future generations to rebuild, reconstruct, redesign, reconfigure our approach to ministry and mission as United Methodists; to open our doors. Not only our doors and our hearts and our minds, but open our history. If history is theology, we need to examine our history. We need to take a look at what that history tells us about what we claimed we believe.

We're still making history. We're still demonstrating our theological commitment through the history that we're making even here today. It's not a simple measure of coming together in an annual conference and making decisions, adjudicating resolutions and returning home, hoping the somehow in the vast bureaucracy what we've decided is going to be implemented. It's going to be made known across the land, but that we have a holistic idea of who we are, who we are, Mitákuye Oyás'īñ, all our relatives. We are relatives.

We've been pretty nasty people on the scene. I have to claim that since I'm a Christian. Christianity has worked some strange magic over the past hundreds of years.

One of our chiefs, Chief Red Jacket was the chief of the village at Buffalo Creek, New York, which is now Buffalo, New York. In the early 1800s, a man by the name of Cram was sent by the Boston Missionary Society to Buffalo Creek to speak to Chief Red Jacket and his people. He came, and he sat in The Longhouse, and he told a story.

He said, "I have come to teach you a better way to worship God." Missionary Cram went on and on and on until late in the afternoon when he finally concluded. Chief Red Jacket stood up and said, "We have been very patient. We have listened to all that you've had to say. Now if your God brought this book for everyone to read why is it that there are so many of his houses," pointing to the churches around the reservation. "Why is it that all of you who live with this book do not live together in the same house?" He said to Cram, "When the people living in those houses and all of those churches choose to treat Indians decently and be honest with them, you can come back and talk to us again." I like to think that the term "cram it down your throat" came from this conversation.

Churches, what people are not aware of necessarily, it's not taught in your history books or in your classrooms, is that churches were given responsibility for managing Indian country since the early 1800s. President Grant had a Peace Commission, so-called Peace Commission, and he called in the Baptists and the Methodists and Presbyterians and Episcopalians. He said, "I want you to manage Indian country," so they parceled off Indian country throughout the United States and later Alaska. That is why today you find so many concentrations of Presbyterians and Methodists and Episcopalians and Baptists in certain parts of the country, ministering with Native peoples.

Money was given to those denominations, and those denominations opened Indian schools. Schools that took children from their mothers and their fathers. They were more local. They were closer to their home base, but coincidentally, in 1879 and I know you know a lot about this because you have Native people in your conference who have been talking about this for a long time, the Carlisle Indian School was opened in 1789. It was opened by Captain Richard Pratt. His credentials were basically that he was the commandant of an Indian prison in St Augustine, Florida so you have an idea of what they had in mind right away. They brought in Indian children, modeled after Methodist schools and Baptist schools, other denominational schools to abstract the children from their parents.

I was born in Washington DC. My mother was on the streets. She was indigent. Of all the hospitals in the city, Columbia Women's Hospital took her in and there I was born. That was a very upper-middle-class hospital and for some reason, they took her in so that I could be born. She had no husband. Later, she took me back up to northern Pennsylvania, where we were to live and before long, I was taken away from her. I was remanded to an orphan's court until I was 4-years-old. I had no idea what the meaning of this was until much later. When I was four, I was adopted by the Fassetts, a non-Indian family. Fortunately, thank God, later in life, my birth mother and I got back together, but by then, I had learned about how children were taken out of the arms of their mothers and fathers, quite literally, quite literally.

Now you may think that these historical references are dusty tidbits from history that have little meaning in today's context, but I wanna tell you something. Everything that I've said about history, every reference point I've made, is alive and well today among Native people. The historical trauma is palpable. Why do we have the highest incidence of alcoholism? Why do we have the lowest unemployment or the highest unemployment on reservations anywhere from 30% to 90%? Why do we have today the controlled substance abuse epidemics on reservations? Why do we have on some reservations the highest per capita murder rate in the United States? I could go on.

These historical fragments all come together to give us a picture that is shocking as we look at Native Americans today. I knew later in life why I was taken away from my mother. That's how you assimilate people. That's how the churches function to take them away from their culture.

Then it wasn't until 1924 that we were given Indian citizenship. Not that that was good for a lot of people. The Six Nations Iroquois still do not accept citizenship. They're still Sovereign Nations of the United States of America in the United States. Not long ago because there are no protections, they're building. Supreme Court is making decisions that strengthen the laws in Indian country and give them jurisdiction, civil and criminal jurisdiction, but very recently, Indian women would go to Indian health service clinics for examinations and end up being sterilized without their knowledge.

22:06 How do we talk about issues of kinship? If we're to believe, as I do, those verses in John and we are sisters and brothers. We are related to each other, and we are related to all people, whether they're in a dance hall in Orlando or a massacre at Sand Creek or Lancaster City. Or children who are in big trouble on the reservations or animals that are being marginalized by mining and misuse of the Earth and the Earth itself. Mitákuye Oyás'ïŋ.

22:58 Out in Lakota country, which is Sioux country, in the Plain's States, in the Northern Plains States, there is a gathering now, a rebuilding of the nations, the Indian Nations. They call it the Tiyóspaye [inaudible 00:23:16], family, bringing the families together, the Seven Band Lakota and others, to renew, to find a future together, to grow, to regenerate the nations.

In Hawaii, their term for it is "Ohana," family, coming together to rebuild. What do we call it in the United Methodist Church? What are we going to call it in the United Methodist Church when we come to understand our responsibility, under this Tree of Peace, under this peace that comes to us through Jesus Christ. That's our Tree of Peace. Is he not? What does he tell us about the ingathering of the needy, and the brutalized, the marginalized, and our responsibility? We are kin. Even if we were to leave here at the end of these days of conferencing, not having adopted one resolution, but resolved collectively to serve Jesus Christ as kinfolk; loving all people no matter what race, what gender, what sexual preference, who you love, who you don't love, finding oneness in Christ in all that we are and do.

Our hope is in the next 40 years that Native Americans can become an equal partner in the United Methodist Church. That they can be looked upon as human beings who have not been marginalized, who have great wisdom to contribute and who are welcomed because of who they are, and their theological history. We give thanks in the name of Jesus Christ that we are drawn together in these moments. Amen. Amen.

The following analysis provides further identification of the elements of Beloved Speech exemplified in Dr. Thom Whitewolf Fassett's sermon, "A New Beginning."

His sermon provided a series of images which moved between the state of the world today, historical events, and personal testimony. He inductively moved the hearers into what Fred Craddock called a "word event."² Reminiscent of Craddock's work, his illustrations were concrete and experientially invited the congregation into a new consciousness through images and concepts that were new and perhaps strange.³

He engaged in deep listening of his own self-awareness that not only conveyed his own journey of identity formation but fostered trust with his audience. He gave voice to his own journey at times with forceful passion and at times with a quiet but impactful explication. He also listened deeply to members of the communities he journeyed with so that he could present people without resorting to stereotypes or generalizations. The language he used and descriptors were chosen with care and sensitivity and presented as normative.

Furthermore, he listened deeply to the context in which he delivered his sermon. He acknowledged their worldview without blame and pastorally engaged with them expanding their perceived ideas about the meaning of the text and utilizing illustrations that disrupted stereotypes. At times these moves appear almost imperceptible but it could be argued that this is due to the skill of the preacher and a sign of Beloved Speech. A close reading reveals Dr. Fassett's ability to interweave stories which not only moved his

² "imagery is the message. For this movement, sermonic content is not propositional truth but a true, existential, transformative experience of the good news. The sermon, like Scripture itself, is a word event." O. Wesley Allen, *The Renewed Homiletic*, (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2010), 9.

³ "Figurative language, metaphors, and stories are not rhetorical flourishes in sermons; they are what bring into being a new consciousness of the hearers. They do not simply show hearers reality; they initiate the congregation into the really real." Allen, *The Renewed Homiletic*, 9.

message forward but inspired the congregation to envision a new worldview. This is another key to this homiletic. The preacher's sensitivity to attending to identity, care for community, and hospitality to listen deeply before, during, and after the preaching event will often result in an invisible invitation that encourages individuals and congregations to expand their horizons while a more direct sermon on colonization or race might erect barriers.

Dr. Fassett began with the rhetorical strategy of siding with his audience, "Everything is falling around us, the whole world's pressing in." He then showed that he had been listening by taking the words right out of the mouth of some who complained about this service with, "I've had enough of this. I didn't have anything to do with it. I'm not apologizing." Later he reiterates that "We're not being asked to apologize."

He also acknowledges that he is talking to a multiracial congregation with a complex history. Since the Philadelphia Episcopal Area encompasses Old St. George's, which gave birth to the AME church, the mention of the "Act of Repentance in the context of African-American experience" was an important acknowledgment.

Once he sided with people's resistance and made it clear what he planned on doing in this sermon and what he didn't plan on doing in this sermon, he began to build some rapport. His belovedness came through his stories which gave evidence that he had been reflexively listening to his own engagement with his community he was born into but separated from at a young age. He showed evidence of his own personal work when he said "In our tradition, the tradition of the Haudenosaunee...".

Moreover, through storytelling, he presented a worldview different from the prevailing view held by his audience. However, he acknowledged their experience by

referring to the parallel, if romanticized, version of his tradition as it was presented by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow in the poem, the Song of Hiawatha. He also engaged with his audience through the use of questions such as, “You must ask what kind of pine tree is that?” He doesn't talk down to his audience or express dismay or disdain that they do not understand these traditions but rather invited them into his world. In so doing he recognized their humanity and his words firmly spoke his truth while also giving honor.

Up until this point his sermon mostly dealt with rhetorical considerations but now he began to unpack the biblical text and this is where we hear Beloved speech give voice to the belovedness in the text. His apology to New Testament scholars, of which there were more than a few in the congregation, was both charming and honest. He continued to build trust by acknowledging that he was not approaching this as a biblical scholar but rather as an interpreter from a particular social location, namely the Haudenosaunee tradition and, as he reveals in the next section, a Lakota lens as well.⁴

He then moved into another rhetorical move, which he will elaborate upon more later in the sermon, when he acknowledged Methodist historical and missiological contexts. He identifies both as colonizer and colonized when he identifies as a Methodist and within that same paragraph he presents another aspect to his identity by talking about an expression from his father's language. He began to deconstruct what it means-to be Native American without telling us that this is what he is doing. By introducing us to another aspect of his identity, namely his Lakota background, he is showing us the

⁴ This kind of hermeneutic begins the process of dislocation that Campbell describes, “dislocation is critical to the process of discerning the work of the powers in the world. By stepping out of their own social context and spending time with people who are the most visible victims of the Dominant System, privileged Christians not only begin to see the deadly work of the powers among the marginalized in new ways; they also begin to discern more clearly the ways in which they themselves are captive to the powers.” Charles L. Campbell, *The Word Before the Powers: An Ethic of Preaching*, (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002), 154.

complexity of Indigenous identity. And just as important, he is not only showing the complexity of his own identity, he is inviting the hearer to consider their own complexity while at the same time breaking down stereotypes about Native Americans inherent in the label. Without addressing it directly he has already raised awareness to the intersections of language, culture, Sovereignty and Nationhood while keeping the focus on his further deconstruction of the biblical text. He began to open their minds ever so slightly to the political aspect of identity. It will be made more explicit later, but this is an introduction to the systems that lie beneath the surface which conflated and codified those identities as was expedient and beneficial to the dominant culture through jurisprudence that created levels of tribal affiliation through blood quantum levels and tribal rolls.

As he moved into the next illustration of his sermon he not only broke up stereotypes with the illustration he chose but he began to suggest that there are gender role differences too. When he described his experience of speaking in The Longhouse he mentioned the “chiefs from all of our nations and all of our clan mothers.”⁵ This illustration not only reflects work he has done to understand his own identity, but the deep listening he continues to engage in with the different Nations he is describing.

At this point he re-connected his audience to his narrative by weaving back into the structure of the United Methodist Church asking “How do we care for the next Seven Generations?” These connections about conference committees and church council decisions were indicative that he is actively listening even as he preaches. Rhetorically, it

⁵ He engages in gender deconstruction in a few places in the sermon. The subtlest exposure of gender roles comes when he describes how “the heads of the Six Nations Iroquois met with the mothers and fathers, mostly fathers I must say, Benjamin Franklin and people like him, who were forming a new nation.” The most explicit mention comes at the end of the sermon when he lays out what he means when he declares all people animals - all creation his kin - this includes “loving all people no matter what race, what gender, what sexual preference, who you love, who you don't love, finding oneness in Christ in all that we are and do.”

acknowledges his context and keeps the congregation engaged, preventing him from getting lost in his personal narrative.

Once he introduced the congregation to the worldview of the Six Nations he could speak more directly to the sermon theme. He introduced a new concept telling them, “I often say that history is theology. If you wanna know what our theology is you follow our history, and our history as a Methodist Church in the developing nation called the United States of America has some startling stories to tell.” He begins to weave in and out of the history of what is known by his audience as the Northeastern United States. He immediately uses a surprising turn of phrase that is both timely and instructive. He uses the terminology “illegal immigrant” to hold a mirror before the faces of those belonging to the dominant culture. He thereby exposes their true marginal status and reveals the flawed dominant narrative built on the underlying assumptions of the Doctrine of Discovery, the myth of the American Dream, and the ideological concept of Manifest Destiny which led to the codification of “civilizing” and “assimilation” policies. With one turn of phrase he broke down stereotypes and assumptions that people seeking religious freedom arrived in the lands of the Six Nations only to find barren wilderness in need of civilizing. On the surface, he breaks down the stereotype of undocumented peoples but the many layers of this Rhetorical move will be revealed as the sermon continues to unfold. These layers will thicken the historical understanding of the congregation’s identity.⁶

Now he can call into question history itself and according to his theory, the theological underpinnings of the congregation’s beliefs about themselves, the church, and

⁶ In particular he will later interrogate the terms such as “Wilderness Territories” and “so-called pilgrim colony.”

the nations of the Iroquois Confederacy. As he described the history of conquest and colonization he painted a picture that is different from the one taught in the mainstream public schools. From his passion and knowledge, he demonstrates that he clearly knows the traumatic history intimately but he also makes it explicit that he identifies with the colonizer as well. He is turning tables within tables here. He challenges the assumptions his audience may have had about him before he began to speak. He is not preaching in order to shame anyone — in fact he says in the next paragraph that even though “We're part and parcel of that. It doesn't mean that we need to go around wringing our hands over something that we have done...” Notice also that he self identifies as a Christian and admits that “we've been pretty nasty people on the scene.” He is part of the system too.

After this thick reading of history, he provided another illustration about Red Jacket's encounter with a missionary. Superficially, it seems to reinforce the stereotype of the “Wise Elder.” However rhetorically this illustration provided both a breather for the audience and satirical address of a traumatic historical truth.

He then took the listeners back into this historical journey to further reveal not just the government and ideological transgressions but the religious — Christian — and particularly the Methodist — enmeshment with these unjust systems. He explained not only the role the church played in land acquisition and assimilation but also acknowledged the particular transgressions of this group of United Methodist's in the Philadelphia area. He reminds them about the Carlisle Indian school that was located in their own backyard and became the model for Federal Boarding schools across the continent. He informed them that the basis of this institution, manned by Methodists and based on Methodist educational models, caused disruption of Native families that

continues today. Up until this point he made allowances for people. They may not have heard this history before. However, on this point he is clear — they have heard this particular history because he has listened to the Committee on Native American Ministries and knows the work they have been doing to educate the conference about this legacy.

Then he invited his audience into his most intimate testimony and vulnerable self-revelation. He interwove the historical story with the resultant trauma that manifests itself within his own psyche. This is not the first time he has related this story with a congregation.⁷ Clearly, from the perspective of belovedness, he has come to know his own heart and become vulnerable enough with himself that he can tell this story in a way that does not cause the hearers to feel sorry for him or feel the need to take care of him. Rather over this short time he already built up trust with the congregation and his tone and pitch evenly and firmly brought the history to life before the congregation.⁸ They can see the four-year-old boy and have been given the opportunity to step into his shoes and try to understand more deeply what it felt like to be taken from his family at such a young age. Furthermore, he engaged in a Hermeneutic of Suspicion about his own experience. His story revealed the ways in which systems perpetuated trauma and marginalization of people essentially dehumanizing them. He expands upon this story to point towards multiple intersections of injustice that have affected the Six Nations Iroquois. This

⁷ This illustration about his experience and the consequences of his removal from his mother has been shared with congregations across the Jurisdiction at various times in his preaching and teaching.

⁸ The benefit of preaching amongst the same community weekly is that trust can continue to be built and can be woven into the fabric of relationships not only in the worship service and the preaching encounter but in the ongoing deep listening with the congregation, community, and preacher.

evidences Beloved Speech which requires the preacher to come to terms with both individual and systemic oppression, their causes, and consequences.

To finish his message Dr. Fassett brought in a message of Good News and ended with a re-envisioning of the future.⁹ This elegant formatting choice provided both a source of hope as well as a return to where he began. In his opening paragraphs he asked the congregation what might have been? Now he helped them envision a second chance. This is a public proclamation of Beloved Speech at its best because while this homiletic will help a preacher expose and undermine reification of white supremacy and racist tendencies - and seek to decolonize on multiple levels while also inspiring people to engage in similar deconstructions for themselves as they envision a different future.

In order to do this Dr. Fassett circled around to the text and interwove his listening of the context once again when he said, “We are related to each other, and we are related to all people, whether they're in a dance hall in Orlando or a massacre at Sand Creek or Lancaster City.” He provided a message of Good News not from the missionary colonizer but rather from the colonized. He made it clear that it is the Lakota and Hawaiian people who provide the means of the Good News to be shared. They are gathering and working towards rebuilding the Nations. He does not say it explicitly but this image refutes the stereotype of victim often projected on Indigenous peoples.

Furthermore, his image of the Tree of Peace provided a means by which the congregation could envision - or re-imagine their relationship with The Six Nations and

⁹ Campbell says, “Amnesia and a ‘disconnection from history’ are important allies of the powers... In exposing the powers, preachers thus need to revisit-and reenvision-history in order to re-form memory and set congregations free from amnesia.” Campbell, 110-111.

other Indigenous peoples' in solidarity and justice together to rebuild or "reconstruct our institutions."¹⁰

He broke up some stereotypes about language and refused to conflate the Lakota and Hawaiian words and concepts. He introduced people to the idea that these are different nations with different languages and their values and the concepts they are developing though similar will not be exactly the same across Nations and tribal boundaries.

And finally, he finished by speaking of Indigenous peoples' humanity. He envisions a future where Native Americans can be equal partners within The United Methodist Church and "...they can be looked upon as human beings." This is a significant statement considering the history of Native peoples in the United States and The United Methodist Church. Throughout the interviews and subsequent meetings I heard that while differentiation and identity is important, in the final analysis people want to be seen as human beings if nothing else.

¹⁰ See his opening remarks as he parses out the differences between apologies and repentance.

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