

**The historical impact and current  
challenges of Christian ministry among  
the Aboriginal people of the Delaware Bay  
region**

**JR Norwood  
24060410**

Thesis submitted for the degree *Doctor Philosophiae* in  
Missiology at the Potchefstroom Campus of the North-West  
University

Promoter: Dr RG Galloway  
Co-Promoter: Prof PJ Buys

May 2015

It all starts here™



## **ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this research is to assess and address issues of contextualization and reconciliation as they pertain to Christianization and cultural preservation within the three Nanticoke-Lenape American Indian tribal communities remaining in the states of New Jersey and Delaware in the United States. The study seeks to provide insight into the challenges for ministry within the socio-cultural and political context of the tribal communities, particularly in regard to meaningful healing and reconciliation over the lingering effects of colonization, in a manner that promotes integral, holistic, contextualized Christian ministry. To achieve this, the study investigates the historical backdrop of the tribal communities, including European contact, colonization, missions, assimilation and cultural survival. Past and present tribal lifeways, beliefs, and practices are evaluated through documented historical sources and contemporary accounts. The research highlights the histories and current ministries of the principal historic tribal congregations, and their role in the spiritual, cultural, and political survival of the tribes. It also assesses possible approaches for effective, mission oriented, compassionate engagement as a matter of faithful contextualization and social justice.

It should be noted that within this work the terms “American Indian,” “Native American,” “Indigenous American,” “Aboriginal American,” and “First Nations People” are all used to describe the indigenous people of America. These terms should not be confused with the term “Indian American,” which describes an American citizen whose ancestors can be traced to the nation of India on the continent of Asia.

### **Key Words:**

American Christianity; American Indians; Contextualization; Delaware Bay; Delaware Indians; Doctrine of Discovery; Indigenization; Lenape; Ministry Challenges; Missions; Nanticoke; Native Americans

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Much gratitude is extended toward those who were my angels of grace in the completion of my dissertation. My promotors, Dr. Ron Galloway of the Greenwich School of Theology and Dr. Flip Buys of North-West University provided guidance, constructive critiques, and encouraging words, while exhibiting Christian patience with the slowness of my pace in research and writing. The Greenwich School of Theology Liaison Administrators, Tienie Buys in South Africa and Peggy Evans in the United Kingdom, were always swift in responding to questions (of which I had many) and attentive to their ministry of gentle prodding, which kept me moving toward the goal of completion. My language editor, Dr. Stuart Rochester, provided not only helpful suggestions, which improved the final draft of my work, but also provided gracious and kind words to lift my spirit.

I am grateful to all those who shared their thoughts and experiences through the many interviews conducted during this research, especially the late William Davis, Nanticoke elder and tribal historian, who died at 91 years old in December 2014. I deeply regret that Richard Twiss, Lakota minister and missiologist, died in February 2013, before we were able to schedule an interview. The wonderful work they have done continues to speak for them.

I thank the Lord for my loving wife and children, who supported me with their words, with their prayers, and with their understanding of my occasional grumpiness during this process.

I pray that my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, is honored by this effort.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>1.0</b>	<b>BACKGROUND AND PROBLEM STATEMENT</b> .....	1
1.1	Background .....	1
1.2	Problem Statement .....	1
1.3	Aim and Objectives .....	3
1.4	Central Theoretical Argument .....	3
1.5	Methodology .....	3
<b>2.0</b>	<b>CLASH OF CULTURES, FAITHS, AND WORLDVIEWS</b> .....	5
2.1	<b>Introduction to the Three Nanticoke-Lenape Tribal Communities in the area of the Delaware Bay</b> .....	5
2.1.2	The Nanticoke-Lenape Confederated Tribes as they are Today .....	5
2.1.3	Early Christian Institutions among the Three Tribal Communities .....	8
2.1.4	A Brief Overview of the Core Historic Tribal Congregations from the 19th Century .....	13
2.2	<b>Historical Overview of the Lenape from the Colonial Period</b> .....	19
2.2.1	Lenape Identity, Lifeways, Worldview, and Placement among Other Tribes .....	22
2.2.2	Analysis of Traditional Lenape Spiritual Beliefs .....	33
2.2.3	Lenape Interaction with European Explorers, the Swedes, and the Dutch.....	43
2.2.4	Lenape Interaction with the English .....	45
2.2.5	The Lenape and British Colonies of New Jersey and Pennsylvania .....	46
2.3	<b>Historical Overview of the Nanticoke from the Colonial Period</b> .....	47
2.3.1	Nanticoke Identity, Lifeways, Worldview, and Placement among Other Tribes .....	48
2.3.2	Nanticoke Interaction with European Explorers .....	52
2.3.3	The Nanticoke and British Colonies of Maryland and Delaware .....	53
2.4	<b>Historical Overview of the Nanticoke-Lenape of the Delaware Bay</b> ..	54
2.4.1	The Breakup of Lenape and Nanticoke National Life around the Delaware Bay and the Coalescing of the Remnant Tribal Communities..	55
2.4.2	The Adoption of New Lifeways and Nanticoke-Lenape interactions during the early Federal Period .....	56

2.5	<b>Traditional Spiritual Foundations and Adapting Christian Spiritual Formation during the Era of initial Nanticoke and Lenape Conversion to Christianity</b> .....	57
2.5.1	Ancient Spiritual Traditions among the Nanticoke and Lenape during the Rise of the “Praying Indians” and “Praying Indian Towns” and the Impact of Colonial Era Missionaries .....	57
2.5.2	Racial Misidentification, Reclassification, and the Consequences of Conversion when a Common Perspective was that One Could Not Be Both Indian and Christian .....	59
2.5.3	The Rise of Church Based Tribal Governance among the Nanticoke-Lenape .....	61
2.6	<b>Conclusion</b> .....	62
3.0	<b>DISCOVERY DOCTRINES AND THE ASSAULT ON NANTICOKE-LENAPE TRIBAL SURVIVAL</b> .....	63
3.1	<b>European Formal and Informal Discovery Doctrines Influence on Early Contact with American Indians</b> .....	63
3.1.1	The Doctrine of Discovery .....	64
3.1.2	The Doctrine of Discovery’s Influence on Early European Colonial Interactions with American Indians .....	67
3.1.3	Mission Efforts Misused Instruments of Conquest and Domination .....	72
3.2	<b>The Codification of the Doctrine Of Discovery in American Indian Law and Policy</b> .....	78
3.2.1	The Doctrine of Discovery, Nanticoke and Lenape Reservations, and The Loss of Traditional Homelands .....	83
3.2.2	Treaty Breaking .....	85
3.3	<b>Perspectives Impacting Tribal Cultural and Spiritual Survival</b> ....	86
3.3.1	Federal and Mission Indian Boarding Schools .....	88
3.3.2	The Denial of Continued Tribal Existence and Perpetuation of Stereotypes in New Jersey and Delaware Public Education .....	91
3.3.3	The Efforts of Organized Anti-Tribal Groups and Elements of an Ongoing Push for Detribalization .....	95
3.3.4	The Continuing Perception among Some Churches and Religious Leaders that Traditional Ways are of the Devil .....	99

3.4	<b>Tensions In Indian Country Impacting the Nanticoke-Lenape</b> .....	101
3.4.1	Difference Between the East and West .....	102
3.4.2	Racism’s Continuing Impact among Tribes .....	105
3.4.3	Federal Acknowledgment and Alienation .....	107
3.5	<b>Conclusion</b> .....	110
<b>4.0</b>	<b>THE TRIBAL CHURCHES AND THE CONTINUING ELEMENTS OF NANTICOKE-LENAPE TRADITIONAL SPIRITUALITY</b> ....	111
4.1	<b>The Tribal Congregations</b> .....	111
4.1.1	Core Tribal Congregations which Served as the Seat of Governance for Each of the Three Tribal Communities .....	112
4.1.2	Congregations with a Strong Connection to the Tribal Communities..	125
4.1.3	Tribal Institutions Originating from the Tribal Congregations .....	128
4.2	<b>Pan-Indianism and the Re-Embracing of Tribal Spirituality</b> .....	130
4.2.1	The Reaffirmation of Tribal Identity and Spirituality within Modern Tribal Practices .....	132
4.2.2	The Rise and Impact of the Modern Powwow .....	137
4.2.3	A Renewed Connection with the “Sacred” .....	138
4.2.4	The Continuing Influence of Christianity within Tribal Governance ....	140
4.3	<b>Conclusion</b> .....	150
<b>5.0</b>	<b>HOLISTIC CHRISTIAN MINISTRY IN CONTEXT FOR NANTICOKE-LENAPE PEOPLE</b> .....	152
5.1	<b>Compassionate Contextualization of the Gospel</b> .....	152
5.1.1	The Importance of an Increased Understanding of the Sensitivities and Concerns of Tribal Communities .....	157
5.1.2	Contextualization as a Part of Evangelization .....	161
5.1.3	Respectful and Compassionate Engagement .....	178
5.2	<b>The Jesus Way on Turtle Island</b> .....	187
5.2.1	Contextualized Spiritual Formation .....	190
5.2.2	Contextualization in Christian Worship Among the Nanticoke-Lenape.	198
5.2.3	Compassionate Engagement in the Context of the Personal Life of Nanticoke-Lenape Christians .....	207
5.3	<b>The Call For Repentance and Reconciliation in Context</b> .....	212
5.3.1	Reconciliation Requires More than an Apology .....	215
5.3.2	Justice and Advocacy in Context .....	217

5.4	<b>Conclusion</b> .....	222
<b>6.0</b>	<b>SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION</b> .....	224
6.1	<b>Proposed Questions and Objectives addressed by the Research</b> .....	224
6.2	<b>General Overview</b> .....	228
6.3	<b>Conclusion</b> .....	233
<b>7.0</b>	<b>REFERENCES</b> .....	235

## **1.0 BACKGROUND AND PROBLEM STATEMENT**

### **1.1 Background**

Around the Delaware Bay, which divides the State of New Jersey from the State of Delaware, there are three communities of aboriginal people which are the continuing families of Nanticoke and Lenape Native Americans, also commonly referred to in the United States as "American Indians" (Weslager, 1983:252-253). The communities are well documented over the past three centuries (Fisher, 1895; Delaware, 1881; Scharf, 1888:1124; Anon., 1892; Delaware, 1903). Up through the mid twentieth century, they came to be known variously as "Moors," "Indians" and "Nanticokes," with these designations being used interchangeably in public records of the period (Babcock, 1899:277-282; Mooney, 1897a-b; Gilbert, 1948:414-416).

Each of the three interrelated Nanticoke-Lenape tribal communities is zealously protective of control over the Christian congregations historically tied to the the tribal community, to the extent that any demographic shift in the congregation to include non-tribal people has historically provoked church splits (Porter, 1979:341-342). The core congregations serve as the seat of tribal governance and are a catalyst to continued interaction between the three communities. The Nanticoke-Lenape people who remained in the area of their ancient homeland were largely Christianized by the end of the eighteenth century. The tribal families closely identified with the founding and continued support of the historic tribal core congregations continued identifying with those congregations through to the modern era. The churches were a vehicle for interaction between the communities and for action within the communities at a time when overt tribalism was a dangerous venture. The tribes were zealous in protecting tribal control over the Christian congregations established by tribal people, which served in a dual role as both houses of worship for the devoted Christians within the tribes and as centers for tribal governance even for those who may have been unchurched (Porter, 1979: 341-342).

### **1.2 Problem Statement**

Christianization, which for the Nanticoke-Lenape was essentially an uneasy assimilation, divided tribal communities, forced an erroneous identity due to

administrative racial reclassification (Heite & Blume, 2008:69, 71), contributed to the loss of language and much of the culture as the method of Christianization was intermixed with the eradication of cultural identity (Eliot, 2008:130), and is currently resulting in a backlash against Christianity by some. While some accounts of ancient and early modern spiritual beliefs and practices have been completed, contemporary accounts are few, and no comprehensive study on Christianity's impact and influence or evaluation of the current ministry challenges has been done. The Nanticoke-Lenape became Christian during the most turbulent era for their people, a time when their very survival was in great doubt (Porter, 1979:325; Dowd, 2001:43). Documents show that the cultural and ethnic identity of the colonizers was imprecisely self-identified as "Christian," regardless of the disparity between the tenets of the biblical faith and the practices of those identifying with it (Lindstrom, 1928:226; Meyer, 1970:40). Conversion among the tribal people contributed to cultural assimilation and racial reclassification, as there was a perceived dichotomy between being "Indian" and being "Christian," such that tribal converts were typically racially reclassified in public records (Heite & Blume, 2008:69-70). While some early converts may have chosen Christian baptism as a practical survival strategy, there were many earnest spiritual conversions and the continuing legacy of the Church's influence in Nanticoke-Lenape tribal life grew through the generations to the modern era of tribal governance that has once again become independent from the tribal communities' Christian congregations. The Nanticoke-Lenape tribal communities are continuing to negotiate a balance between preserving and celebrating tribal heritage while also confronting current political and social challenges. The Christian Nanticoke-Lenape tribal congregations, which had been at the core of Nanticoke-Lenape tribal affairs and cultural preservation, are increasingly sidelined within the tribal communities and are experiencing a decreased influence and prominence. The challenge before these churches is to negotiate ways to provide the integral holistic contextualized Christian ministry of the gospel among the Nanticoke-Lenape tribal communities that incorporate a mission of social justice as the gospel is ministered (Keller, 2010:18, 85; Stott, 2008:37). The questions arising from this challenge are: 1) What historical realities continue to be unaddressed missional and pastoral issues among the Nanticoke-Lenape tribal communities and how do these hinder the spread of the gospel among those tribal people who are not vested in the congregations? 2) How can the Christian congregations at the core of the Nanticoke-Lenape tribal communities, and those interacting with the Nanticoke-Lenape tribes, strive for meaningful reconciliation in the light of past

atrocities? 3) What critical sensitivities and strategies must be engaged in order to effectively minister to the Nanticoke-Lenape tribal communities? 4) How can the Church promote integral, holistic, contextualized Christian ministry of the gospel among the Nanticoke-Lenape tribal communities?

### **1.3 Aim and Objectives**

The main aim of this study is to assess and address issues of contextualization and reconciliation through which the Church may reinforce the blessings of Christian *koinonia* within the context of celebrating tribal heritage and struggling for justice in such a manner that the gospel is spread afresh to the tribal people.

The specific objectives of this study are: 1) To study and analyze the historical backdrop of the three Nanticoke-Lenape communities of the Delaware Bay as it pertains to their Christianization and the particular issues of racial, cultural, and political subjugation which continue to impact the modern Nanticoke-Lenape communities; 2) To study and evaluate historic and contemporary ministries and their efficacy in addressing unresolved issues of injustice that continue to impact the Nanticoke-Lenape tribal communities; 3) To evaluate the manner in which cultural preservation relates to missions among the Nanticoke-Lenape tribal communities.

### **1.4. Central Theoretical Argument**

The Christian Churches at the core of the Nanticoke-Lenape communities today have an opportunity to bring the gospel to bear in a ministry of reconciliation that brings spiritual revival, promotes the tribal heritage, and strengthens the pursuit of justice for their tribal parishes. Such a ministry among the Nanticoke-Lenape people must be sensitive to issues of suppressed heritage, re-emerging pride in tribal identity, and social justice challenges rooted deep in the regional and American psyche and legal system.

### **1.5. Methodology**

This missiological study will be done from the perspective of Reformed Theology. The researcher is a member of the tribal communities and has served in a tribal leadership capacity for over a decade. To study the continuing unaddressed historical impact of

Christian mission among the Nanticoke-Lenape tribal communities and how it may hinder the spread of the gospel among unconverted tribal people, a review of historical documents and contemporary studies will be used in addition to the histories of the core tribal congregations acquired from interviews with church leaders and members. To study and evaluate contextualization within the core tribal congregations, and those ministries interacting with the tribes, current ministry initiatives and their impact will be compared and analyzed through a review of historical sources and contemporary accounts. To study approaches to mission that celebrate and retain elements of indigenous Nanticoke-Lenape culture, assess and evaluate elements of traditional Nanticoke-Lenape tribal spirituality and how to contextualize in a valid manner avoiding doctrinal syncretism, interviews will be conducted with Nanticoke-Lenape tribal spiritual leaders and tribal historians, and compared with sources documenting American Indian Christian missions, in order to evaluate perspectives on contextualization in missions and Christian ministry and to establish the critical sensitivities and strategies for effective, culturally sensitive ministry with the tribal communities, while affirming the tribal heritage in the light of the gospel.

## **2.0 CLASH OF CULTURES, FAITHS, AND WORLDVIEWS**

### **2.1 Introduction To The Three Nanticoke-Lenape Tribal Communities in the area of the Delaware Bay**

Common images of the American Indian are influenced by the romanticized notion of the teepee-dwelling "noble savage" (Buken, 2002:46; Warner & Grint, 2012:969-970) wearing fringed buckskin garments and a war bonnet of eagle feathers, living on the great plains of the mid-western and western United States, or the fierce warrior riding a mustang into battle while sounding forth war whoops, or the silent woman with long braids holding a baby wrapped in a colorful blanket. The truth is that such images do not provide an accurate or comprehensive view of American Indians as they are today or even as most were in history (Buken, 2002:53-54). Misconceptions abound, influenced by stereotypes upheld by mass media (Buken, 2002:47). Too often the history and struggles of continuing American Indian nations and communities has been denied, suppressed, redacted, or overlooked. The plight of many tribal communities is misunderstood, creating pitfalls and stumbling blocks for both tribal people and those interacting with them (Warner & Grint, 2012:971). This is a particular challenge for Christian ministry among American Indian communities.

Such challenges are evident among the Nanticoke-Lenape people that live in the area of the Delaware Bay. The bay, which is at the base of the Delaware River, feeds into the Atlantic Ocean and divides the State of New Jersey from the State of Delaware.

#### **2.1.2 The Nanticoke-Lenape Confederated Tribes as they are today**

Over the past 400 years the indigenous people, historically inhabiting the region from the eastern Chesapeake Bay to the northeastern side of the Delaware Bay, have coalesced into three tribal communities (Department of Commerce, 2010; Gilbert, 1948:408, 414-416; Price, 1953:139, 145). The northernmost, headquartered in Bridgeton, Cumberland County, New Jersey, is known as the "Nanticoke Lenni-Lenape Tribal Nation." The tribal community occupying the central region of the territory, headquartered in Cheswold, Kent County, Delaware, is known as the "Lenape Indian Tribe of Delaware." The southernmost community is located in Millsboro, Sussex County, Delaware, and is known as the "Nanticoke Indian Tribe."

Each of the three Nanticoke-Lenape tribes has its own government, comprised of a chief and council, elected by its citizens. The Bridgeton and Cheswold tribal communities also have constitutions that provide for court systems. Each of the tribes operates a charity established for social, cultural, and community development purposes. Regular business meetings of the tribal communities, in addition to seasonal cultural and spiritual gatherings, are exclusive to tribal families and invited guests. Two annual public celebrations, called "Pow Wow," are conducted, with one hosted by the Bridgeton tribal community in June and the other by the Millsboro tribal community in September. During the weekend-long Pow Wows, Nanticoke-Lenape people are joined by American Indians from many other tribes. The event is open to the public during the day, but only for tribal people in the evening. The public event includes craft and food vendors along with spirited dances performed by tribal people in various styles of regalia specific to the dances being done and the tribal culture from which each dancer comes.

The three Nanticoke-Lenape tribal communities have formally united under an intertribal confederation called "The Confederation of Sovereign Nanticoke-Lenape Tribes." According to its charter, "The Confederation is a governmental union of sovereign tribes, chartered to promote the interests of the member tribes through ensuring our mutual support, addressing issues of mutual concern, promoting our shared cultural heritage, and preserving our identity and sovereignty (Charter, 2007:Article 1, Section 2)." The confederation was established,

Under the protection and guidance of the almighty Creator, in order to promote the common good of our people, govern ourselves under our own laws, protect and maintain our tribal culture and preserve the legacy of our ancestors... We do so as an expression of the sovereignty given by the Creator to our tribal communities, a sovereignty that has continued from ancient times to the present, and as an affirmation of the shared history and common ancestry between our three interrelated tribal communities, made up of Nanticoke (Nentego) and Lenape families, which have remained in the area of their ancient homeland (Charter, 2007: Preamble).

The tribes are genealogically and historically connected to each other. Common bloodlines and surnames permeate the three communities (Heite, 1998). Until the late 1960s and early 1970s there was a high rate of endogamy due to the fact that "acceptable" marriages had to be among the families of the three communities (Heite, 1997?). Each community upheld this practice, deeming those who did not marry among

"our people" to require a form of exile. According to Nanticoke Lenni-Lenape Chief Mark Gould (2012), also known as "Quiet Hawk," exceptions were made for those with spouses from other tribes, but dating was "steered" by elders who would take youth of marrying age to visit with the other Nanticoke-Lenape communities to meet those they were encouraged to marry.

Combined, the citizenship of the three tribes consists of approximately 4000 citizens comprising 2000 households (Gould, 2012). American Indian Tribes have differing requirements for tribal citizenship, called "enrollment." The most common are lineal descent, blood quantum, and familial relationship (Department of the Interior, 2013). The lineal descent standard for tribal enrollment requires that all citizens demonstrate descent from a historic tribal base roll. Tribes have used various historic lists as their base rolls, such as: a list created by the United States federal government during the establishment of a treaty with the tribal nation; a list created for federal services to tribal citizens; a tribal census; or one developed by state or colonial officials when dealing with the tribe's ancestors (Livesay, 2002). If a tribe is using the lineal descent standard, anyone documenting descent from the base roll is eligible for tribal citizenship. Some lists used as base rolls go back to early treaties during the eighteenth century. Others are only as "modern" as the first quarter of the twentieth century.

The blood quantum standard for enrollment requires that a certain percentage of a person's bloodline must be from a tribal roll. A one quarter or one eighth minimum blood quantum standard for enrollment is common among "blood quantum tribes." However, there are those with higher or lower requirements. Tribes using the blood quantum standard typically require documentation of an applicant's genealogy in order to assess their percentage of tribal descent based upon an evaluation of the blood quantum of their ancestors back to a tribal base roll (Livesay, 2002).

Finally, the familial relationship standard requires that a person be tied by close blood relationship to a tribal citizen (Livesay, 2002). This standard also typically uses a base roll, and may also use blood quantum, but the eligibility is determined by family connection to an enrolled citizen.

There are instances in which a person who is genealogically determined to be a "full blood" American Indian may still not be eligible for tribal enrollment, because their

ancestors come from several different American Indian Nations and they may not have enough blood quantum from any one nation to qualify for citizenship in a "blood quantum tribe" (Livesay, 2002). There are some who apply for tribal citizenship and can meet high blood quantum standards yet may not enroll because they did not have enrolled close relatives within a generation. Conversely, it is not uncommon for a person with a single tribal ancestor from numerous generations in the past, with no current social or cultural connection to a tribe, to be determined to be eligible for enrollment in a tribe solely utilizing a lineal descent requirement. Some tribes, including those using the lineal descent standard, will indicate the blood quantum percentage on a person's tribal identification card, which is also called a "tribal card." Another form of documenting this percentage is known as a Certificate of Determination of Indian Blood, called a CDIB card, which can be issued by the tribe or the federal government.

These measures that have become the common standards for American Indian tribal enrollment are not traditional to tribal people, but are a result of federal definitions of identity and requirements for status that have been imposed over time (Livesay, 2002). These "foreign" standards have become the embraced norms for many tribal governments, altering the perception of American Indian identity for many native and non-native people in the United States. This reality has created identity issues for many tribal people (Livesay 2002). There are tribal leaders of blood quantum tribes who worry that tribal citizenship will dwindle as more and more tribal people are marrying non-tribal spouses, giving rise to the real possibility of tribal extinction due to blood quantum standards.

The Nanticoke Lenni-Lenape Tribal Nation and the Lenape Indian Tribe of Delaware both use a one quarter minimum blood quantum standard for enrollment. The Nanticoke Indian Tribe of Delaware uses a combination of lineal descent and close familial relationship within two generations for enrollment. Enrolled citizenship entitles an individual to have a voice and a vote in tribal affairs, and potentially rise to become included among the leadership.

### **2.1.3 Early Christian Institutions among the Three Tribal Communities**

Each of the three Nanticoke-Lenape tribal communities has been impacted and influenced by Christianity. A primary means for tribal families to remain in the ancient

tribal homeland, while many Nanticoke and Lenape were removed or emigrated away during the colonial and early federal period, was that the ancestors of the three Nanticoke-Lenape communities still around the Delaware Bay became what was known as "Praying Indians," which was a euphemism for American Indian converts to Christianity.

The Anglican Church, which in the United States came to be known as the Episcopal Church, was influential on the central and southern Delmarva Peninsula during the early to mid colonial period. According to the Vital Records of Kent and Sussex Counties from the period, some of the earliest Christian marital and baptismal records referring to the ancestors of the modern Nanticoke are part of the Saint George Episcopal Church records in Lewes, Delaware (Wright, 1986), which include marriages and baptisms of various Nanticoke ancestors. By the latter eighteenth century, the Nanticoke remaining in the central Delmarva, concentrated in Sussex County Delaware around the area of the old Askekesky Reservation (which was also known as the "Indian River Reservation") were among those reported to have been "Christianized" (Heite & Heite, 1982?).

With the rise of Methodism during the latter eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the Colony of Delaware became fertile ground for Methodist growth (Williams, 2009:ix). The various "preaching services," conducted by circuit riders among the Nanticoke of Sussex County and the closely related Lenape of Kent County in Delaware, gave rise to small Methodist meeting houses (Heite, 1997?). The same Methodist evangelical outreach impacted the mixed Lenape and Nanticoke community in southern New Jersey around the area of Bridgeton in Cumberland County (Steward & Steward, 1913:141), which in colonial times was part of Salem County (Elmer, 1869:2), with the whole area having previously been deemed "New Cesarea," a province in what was then known as the "Colony of West New Jersey" (Steward & Steward, 1913:36).

Prior to the Methodist revival, the Bridgeton based Nanticoke-Lenape tribal community had been less influenced by the Anglican and Episcopal Church than it had by the Society of Friends, commonly referred to as the "Quakers," (Steward & Steward, 1913:25, 36) and the Presbyterians (Steward & Steward, 1913:140). However, for both the southern New Jersey and central Delaware tribal communities, interaction with the Swiss of the "New Sweden Colony" and Dutch of the "New Netherland Colony" during

the mid-seventeenth century (Elmer, 1869:6; Steward & Steward, 1913: 21-22) marked some of the earliest consistent interaction with European Christians.

While the ancestors of the modern Nanticoke-Lenape had periodically traded with the Dutch, as was the case with their Lenape cousins further north, the relationship was marked by hostile interaction and deadly skirmishes (Dowd, 2001:39). The interaction with the Swedes was much less explosive. While the relationship between the Lenape and Swedes is often celebrated in modern times as harmonious, with the current tribal communities enjoying a friendly relationship with both Swedish descendants and Swedish cultural organizations still in the area and even official visits by the ambassador and royal family of Sweden, the early colonial period of New Sweden was far less than "cozy" (Dowd, 2001:41-43). Possibly because of such tensions, which will be dealt with in greater detail later in this study, neither the Dutch Reformed Church nor the Lutheran Church had much success in converting the indigenous people of the Delaware Bay (Steward & Steward, 1913:140). However, between 1643 and 1648, one pastor of New Sweden, Johan Campanius, has been remembered through to the modern era by the Lenape for his preaching; his ministry among the Lenape is memorialized on his grave marker, which is inscribed in Latin and Lenape (Weslager, 2003:27).

The Quakers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries had mostly peaceful interactions with the Lenape and Nanticoke Indians of the Delaware River and Bay. Southern New Jersey, which was known as "West Jersey" prior to being united with "East Jersey" in the creation of the Colony of New Jersey, was influenced by the establishment of Quaker communities (Elmer, 1869:7). The Quaker John Fenwick sought out Lenape tribal leaders around the Delaware Bay, establishing land grant treaties in the 1670s for what was briefly referred to as "Fenwick's Colony" (Elmer, 1869:9). The British Governor of Pennsylvania, the Quaker William Penn, followed suit and by 1682 the boundaries of his colonial governance overlapped into areas of Delaware and New Jersey (Elmer, 1869:9). The Quaker principles of tolerance and peaceful coexistence, albeit under the British perspective of the presumed superior authority of the British crown, provided for the continuance of traditional indigenous villages remaining among colonial settlements in the region during the era of Quaker influence (Elmer, 1869:6). The relationship between the early Quakers and the Lenape is memorialized in Burlington City, the former capital of the colony of West Jersey, as Lenape Chief Ockanickon is buried in the historic Quaker cemetery (Sarapin,

2002:154). Ockanickon is cited as being hospitable toward the Quaker immigrants, encouraging other Lenape leaders to follow suit (Sarapin, 2002:154).

Governor William Penn learned Lenape ways and the Lenape language (Penn, 1970:57). He not only negotiated with the indigenous leaders for grants to tribal lands previously granted to him by the British crown (Penn, 1970:61), but also entered into a Treaty of Amity in Lenape fashion. The 1682/3 treaty, known by the Lenape as the "Shackamaxon Treaty" and by non-Indians as the "Penn Treaty," was ratified by the exchange of wampum belts and sharing of a prayer pipe (Milano, 2009:21). Governor Penn met with Lenape chieftains, known as "sakima," who were represented by Tammanend as chief spokesman. While the Lenape position may have been motivated by a desire to manage the sudden onslaught of European colonists encroaching on Lenape territory, Penn's approach was likely the most palatable of any with whom they had dealings. Quaker religious tolerance was well received by tribal leaders, as it translated into an effort toward coexistence and even co-mingling. Penn is recorded as stating that, "We meet on the broad pathway of good faith and goodwill; no advantage shall be taken on either side, but all shall be openness and love. We are the same as if one man's body was to be divided into two parts; we are of one flesh and one blood" (Milano, 2009:21). To which Tamanend's famous response was, "We will live in love with William Penn and his children as long as the creeks and rivers run, and while the sun, moon, and stars endure" (Milano, 2009:21).

Penn's perspective was guided by his religious view of the dignity of the Lenape (Penn, 1970:30). He also was able to see, unlike many of his contemporaries, that the Lenape were spiritually developed and demonstrated Christian characteristics more readily than many of the colonists (Penn, 1970:45).

Lenape remaining in the homeland began to cluster in small tribal villages in close proximity to communities influenced by a Quaker sense of toleration. "Indian Towns" and "Indian Fields," terms reflecting the inhabitants of a specific plot of land in the colony (Steward & Steward, 1913:10), dotted the area around the Delaware Bay (Elmer, 1869:6; Grumet, 1995:238). These havens were not as successful as was hoped. Colonial "land grabs," cultural misunderstandings, and instances of violence drove many Nanticoke and Lenape further north and west into tribal refugee villages in Pennsylvania, New York, and Ohio. By 1740, the vast majority of Nanticoke and

Lenape people had migrated to the western side of the Delaware River into Pennsylvania, leaving the areas that had been the primary centers of their population in New Jersey and the Delmarva Peninsula (Grumet, 1995:239-240). The Moravian missionaries came among these refugees, converting enough to have “praying Indian” mission congregations and settlements (Weslager, 2003:289).

Moravian missionaries, most notably David Zeisberger and John Heckewelder, recorded the history of the tribal nations they encountered, and documented their languages, traditions, and lifeways. Scripture stories were translated into Lenape (Lieberkühn, 1821:5-6). Praying Indian Moravian communities were established alongside of the migrating traditional Native communities, but were kept separate from them (Weslager, 2003:289). The Moravians learned the ways of their evangelistic targets in order to better communicate and gain their trust. The historian C. A. Weslager notes that David Zeisberger was even adopted by the Munsee Lenape and was allowed to sit in on tribal council meetings (2003:289). However, converts were subject to the adoption of a European lifestyle in the strict Moravian manner (Weslager, 2003:283). Additionally, some of the missionaries demonstrated a level of racial contempt for those to whom they ministered, their writings clearly showing that they presumed them to be their inferiors (Hubert & Schwarze, 1910:18)

The notion of converted Nanticoke and Lenape people having to turn away from traditional tribal lifeways and become more European was also part of the effort in New Jersey to create a reservation for the Lenape remaining in the colony (Weslager, 2003:270-271). Presbyterian brothers David and John Brainerd sought to minister to and convert New Jersey's Lenape and to create a protected haven for them. The Brotherton Reservation was established in Indian Mills, Burlington County, New Jersey in 1758, with Rev. John Brainerd appointed by the state in 1762 as the reservation's “Superintendent and Guardian” (Weslager, 2003:271). The colonial government established the reservation to be protected in perpetuity (Weslager, 2003:270). Most of New Jersey's remaining Lenape refused to take up permanent residence on the reservation, the population of which dwindled to less than sixty by 1774 (Weslager, 2003, 271). Small cloistered communities of Lenape remained independent, blending in with the larger society (Kraft, 2001:24; Weslager, 2003:277). David Brainerd continued to travel to preach to the small Lenape communities that were continuing in the area of

the Delaware River and Bay. His preaching is said to have, on occasion, impressed and convicted the Lenape while distressing the white colonists...

Brainerd, a somber, intensely devoted man who suffered under an almost continuous sense of melancholy and guilt, preached passionately to the Indians of sin and redemption. He worked remarkable conversions. At Crosswicks, in July 1745, after a year in the field, he had made only about 11 converts, but, preaching to sixty-five Indians on the afternoon of August 8<sup>th</sup>, on a text (Luke 14:16-23) dealing with those who refused to heed the call, he produced a state of mass hysteria very similar to what Whitfield and Wesley were affecting among the White folks. Men, women, and children broke down, wept, and prayed for mercy; many could neither walk nor stand. Even a few White people, who had come to scoff, were caught up by the "swelling deluge," as Brainerd described the phenomenon of religious passion which seized the assembly (Wallace, 1956:5).

The Nanticoke-Lenape of Bridgeton, then commonly referred to by their proximity to the Cohanse River and called "The Indians of Cohanse Bridge" or "Cohansies," were among those who would gather to hear Reverend Brainerd. The ancestors of the Nanticoke-Lenape of Bridgeton also were ministered to by the Presbyterian Churches in the area. The ministry of the Reverend Daniel Elmer of the church, at what was then "New England" town and is now known as the "Old Stone Church of Fairfield Township," most likely impacted the tribal ancestors exposed to his preaching as early as 1729 (Steward & Steward, 1910:140).

#### **2.1.4 A Brief Overview of the Core Historic Tribal Congregations from the 19<sup>th</sup> Century**

During the early federal period of the late 1770s to the early 1800s, Methodist circuit riders began to have an increasing influence over the Nanticoke-Lenape communities of the Delaware Bay (Steward & Steward, 1913:141). Methodist preaching houses were established. Among the early Methodist meeting houses was the Harmony Meeting House, which was organized in Millsboro, Sussex County, Delaware in 1818. The Harmony congregation's first half acre of land was later purchased in 1819 in the area known as Indian River Hundred (Marker, 2004:SC187; Street, 2012). According to Nanticoke Indian Robert Drain (2012), historian for the Harmony Church, the purchase was made from one of the patriarchs of the modern Nanticoke community, Eli Norwood, for twenty dollars. Trustees Purnal Johnson, Burton Johnson, William Hanzor, John Cornish, and Mitchell Johnson who made the purchase (Marker,

2004:SC187) were all members of the Nanticoke community and all have descendants among the current enrolled members of the modern tribe. The Harmony meeting house was incorporated officially as the Harmony Methodist Episcopal Church on April 21, 1875. Interestingly, many of the current elders of the community continue to use an older pronunciation for the name of the church that is slowly being disregarded by the younger generation (Drain, 2012). The older pronunciation, “Har-MO-ny,” places the stress on the second to last syllable. This may be a holdover from the original pronunciation of the name in the early 1800s, illustrating the tribal linguistic influences still present at that time. While little has been preserved of the ancient Nanticoke language, the linguistic family from which it derives, Algonkian, and the most closely related language, Lenape, which is also viewed as the ancient root of the language family, tend to typically place the stress on the second to last syllable of words with more than two syllables.

Considered to be the mother congregation for the continuing churches within the extended Nanticoke tribal community, Harmony United Methodist Church is the oldest officially organized congregation, although it was not incorporated until 1875. Some of the history around the origins of the other congregations remains unclear even within the annals of the United Methodist Church (it should be noted that the modern United Methodist Church in America formed from several smaller Methodist groups, including the Methodist Episcopal and Methodist Protestant denominations.). This lack of clarity is partly because regular gatherings for worship were not considered formal congregations within the Methodist society until after its break with the Anglican Church. This early time period, now referred to as “Old Methodism,” held to the view that sacraments should be administered by ordained Anglican priests and not unordained Methodist preachers (Williams, 2009:49). It is stated that, while “Other denominations might wait for people to organize themselves into a congregation, build a place of worship, and call a pastor ...” circuit preachers would travel to provide the proclamation of the gospel “...wherever people could gather together—in a house, in a barn, even in a tavern—a traveling Methodist preacher would come on a dependable schedule to lead weekly worship” (Duffin & Lawton, 2000:16). Differentiating the official beginnings of a congregation from the unofficial regular gatherings to hear circuit preachers is a task for another study. However, as organized congregations with formally appointed pastors go, Harmony United Methodist Church is the earliest within the Nanticoke community of Millsboro Delaware. In an undated church history for the

Harmony congregation, provided by Robert Drain, the deed for the land purchased for the construction of the original church building indicates that the trustees,

...shall locate and build or cause to be erected and built a house or place of worship for the use of the members of the Methodist Episcopal Church of the United States of America avowing the rules and disciplines which from time to time may be agreed to and adopted by the ministers and preachers of the said church of the general conferences in the United States of America (Drain, 2012).

In 1840, another congregation, Israel Methodist Episcopal Church, arose with deep Nanticoke tribal roots in the neighboring community of Lewes Delaware. According to the history of the Harmony Methodist Episcopal Church, this congregation is one of its offspring (Drain, 2012; Street, 2012). There is no indication as to the reason the second congregation formed, other than distance from the site of the Harmony Church and the Methodist practice of establishing congregations where the people gather, which was confirmed by John Burton (2012), a Nanticoke Indian and trustee of Israel Church. Like Harmony Methodist Episcopal Church, Israel Methodist Episcopal Church's history is strongly identified with the Nanticoke Indian tribal heritage. The names in the cemetery emphasized this fact, as the most ancient of the grave markers are exclusively tribal surnames, such as Burton, Norwood, Street, Jackson, Johnson, Morris, and Drain. Like the Harmony Methodist Church, Israel Methodist Church has a history of being accepting of African-American pastors. In fact, according to Nanticoke Indian elder John Burton (2012), an Israel Church trustee, there was a sense of pride in the history of never having had a white pastor. Both Harmony Methodist Episcopal Church and Israel Methodist Episcopal Church remained strongly identified with their tribal roots, but also were less guarded about partial assimilation into African-American society than their separatist cousins (Department of the Interior, 2008; Speck, 1915:9).

Early records demonstrate that the membership and lay leadership of the Harmony Methodist Episcopal Church was consistently Nanticoke (Department of the Interior, 2008; Drain, 2012; Hall 2012). However, it appears that the earliest pastors were white. According to Bonnie Wright Hall, Nanticoke tribal councilwoman and Harmony Church treasurer, Harmony Methodist Episcopal Church has remained a congregation accepting of congregants who were not part of the Nanticoke tribal community and were also accepting of African-American pastors (Hall, 2012).

Tribal community control and identity issues were sparked by a tax that was placed upon “people of color” for the support of the local public schools. Those within the Nanticoke community who wished to protect their separate identity as American Indians and not merely be grouped under the non-distinct rubric of “colored” protested being identified with African-Americans and losing control over their identity and the education of their children (Porter, 1987:65). In 1881 a group of Nanticoke leaders petitioned the Delaware State Legislature for relief of this matter (Delaware, 1881). In that same year, controversy arose around the appointment of an African-American pastor to the Harmony Methodist Episcopal Church (Department of the Interior, 2008). In the midst of this climate of protecting tribal identity, there were those who separated from the Harmony Methodist Episcopal Church to formally organize what became the Indian Mission Methodist Protestant Church (Department of the Interior, 2008).

The separatist group which left the Harmony Methodist Episcopal Church established a new congregation that would serve as the hub for tribal governance and the preservation of a tribal identity (Department of the Interior, 2008; Street, 2012). They began to meet at what had been a location for the preaching of a circuit rider. United Methodist denominational records indicate that this preaching mission dated all the way back to the days of Bishop Francis Asbury, who was said to have begun “a mission among ‘The Forgotten People of Delaware,’ the Nanticoke Indians of Sussex County... The first building was a simple frame structure called Johnson’s Chapel” (Duffin & Lawton, 2000:61). While the congregation was established in 1881, amid the political actions affirming tribal identity, land was conveyed to trustees Samuel B. Norwood, Whittington Johnson, David P. Street, James H. Clark, Elisha Wright, William A. Johnson, and John W. Harmon, in 1884 (Marker, 2002: SC 122; Street, 2012). As with both the establishment of the Harmony Methodist Episcopal Church and the Israel Methodist Episcopal Church, all of the trustees for Johnson’s Chapel were Nanticoke Indians. Each of the trustees of the new tribal congregation is also listed in the 1881 act of the Delaware legislature providing a school tax exemption for the Nanticoke community (Delaware, 1881). Much of the political activity within, and on behalf of, the tribal community would be centered in the congregation of Johnson’s Chapel, which became known as Indian Mission Methodist Protestant Church as a new building was constructed in 1921. The historical marker in front of the current church facility indicates that “the Nanticoke people continue to hold their religious services here, and

the church continues to provide cohesiveness for the Nanticoke to retain their Native heritage and culture” (Marker, 2002: SC 122).

In 1830 Methodist preaching also inspired the formation of Manship Methodist Church in what would eventually be known as the Town of Cheswold, Kent County, Delaware. Lenape Indian Richard Durham, trustee board secretary and treasurer of the Immanuel Union United Methodist Church, indicates that oral tradition states the church was formed after tribal members grew weary of being made to worship in a separate section of the local white Methodist Episcopal Church (2012). Oral history also indicates that it was named after a woman donor from Philadelphia (Durham, 2012). The name Manship may be associated with a Methodist preacher, the Rev. Andrew Manship, who was a member of the Philadelphia Methodist conference. It is possible that the name is related to him or a family member. The church was made up of members of the local Lenape Indian community that was known to have settled in the area as early as 1710 (Scharf, 1888:1124). People with tribal surnames such as Sammons, Ridgeway, Counsealor, and Durham formed the membership of the congregation. Through the 1970s, some old Methodist practices were still observed, with men sitting on one side of the sanctuary and women on the other (Durham, 2012).

In 1850, in the area known as Fork Branch, another small congregation formed, calling itself “Little Union Church,” but also commonly called the Fork Branch Church (Durham, 2012). According to the Fork Branch Church Trustee Record Book (1918-1930) and the Fork Branch Church Sunday School Secretary’s Record (1914-1924), the congregation included people with tribal surnames including Morris, Carney, Durham, Hanzer, Mosley, and Coker.

Similar to the situation in Sussex County, one congregation remained exclusively to tribal members while the other was open to members of all races. According to tribal elder John Sanders (b. 1811), in an 1892 interview with the Times of Philadelphia,

Little Union Church, near here, has members of all races and colors, but our own Manship Chapel doesn’t admit any but our own people. Others may come as often as they choose and are quite welcome and a good many do come, but no strangers are admitted to membership or can have any voice in the management. A number of years ago the Methodist [Episcopal] Conference succeeded in taking one of our churches from us, down in Sussex, but our people immediately built another for themselves and connected themselves with the Methodist Protestants. That is why

we want no strangers to join our church here; that occurrence was a lesson to us. A few years ago the conference cited us for trial because we refuse to admit the black people to membership, but we proved to them that it had always been the custom for whites and blacks to have separate places of worship, and that we, not being either, had always had our own churches, though in the old days we always had white men to preach to us... They quietly dropped the whole thing and didn't allow it to really come to trial. Ever since then we have gone on our own way quietly, and nobody has said a word of trouble to us... (Anon., 1892)

While the racial restrictions on church membership do not exemplify the cross-cultural and multi-racial unity of the Body of Christ, John Sanders' comment does clearly illustrate a fierce protection of tribal identity and the association between the local tribal congregation and tribal governance. Control over the tribal church was equated with control over the tribal community. In 1948 Little Union, by that time only attended by tribal members, merged with Manship Church to form "Immanuel Union Methodist Episcopal Church." The merger was overseen by church leaders who were all part of the Lenape tribal community based upon the names listed on the "Resolution on Merging," dated April 7, 1947.

Like their cousins on the Delaware state side of the bay, New Jersey's Nanticoke-Lenape community in the area of Bridgeton, Cumberland County, was also experiencing the fiery preaching of Methodist circuit riders. In 1799, the Reverend Michael Swing, a Methodist pioneer of the area, drew the attention of quite a few of the ancestors of the Nanticoke-Lenape community (Steward & Steward, 1910:141). The tribal congregation of the "Gouldtown Church" came together between 1816 and 1820 and conducted religious meetings in the barn of tribal ancestor Benjamin Gould II, later moving their worship services to the Westcott schoolhouse, while being preached to by another tribal ancestor, the Rev. Ruben Cuff (Steward & Steward, 1910:143). By 1834, the local tribal congregation began meeting at the Lummis Schoolhouse (Steward & Steward, 1910:144). With the completion of a church building in 1860/1861, the congregation took the name "Trinity Church" in favor over the previous moniker, "Gouldtown Church," which referenced the neighborhood in which it was located. Controversy arose in 1841, splitting the congregation. There remains some dispute over the reasons behind the split. One suggestion is that there was controversy over the pastor (Steward & Steward, 1910:145). Another perspective is that it was over the designation "African Methodist Episcopal" being formally attached to the congregation (Gould, 2012). Whatever the truth, the result is quite telling in that many, but not all, of the Indian

families left Trinity African Methodist Episcopal Church to form a separate congregation in the nearby neighborhood of Fordville. The members of the congregations remained warm and cordial, but the new church was formed under a different denomination, the Methodist Episcopal Church. By 1865 the new tribal congregation, St. John Methodist Episcopal Church, had a new facility in Fordville, built by tribal members Jacob and Arian Pierce.

While Trinity African Methodist Episcopal Church remained open to members of all races, the St. John's Methodist Church continued to be squarely within the control of the tribal community through to the 1970s (Gould, 2012). Like Indian Mission Church and Immanuel Union Church, St. John United Methodist Church is considered a historic tribal church by the United Methodists.

The Nanticoke-Lenape people who remained in the area of their ancient homeland were largely Christianized by the end of the eighteenth century. The core tribal congregations serve as the seat of tribal governance and are a catalyst to continued interaction between the three communities. Each of the three interrelated Nanticoke-Lenape tribal communities has been zealously protective of community control over their local congregations, to the extent that any demographic shift in the congregation to include non-community members has historically provoked church splits (Porter, 1979:341-342).

## **2.2 Historical Overview of the Lenape from the Colonial Period**

The Lenape are viewed by tribes across North America as particularly ancient. They are called the “ancient ones” or “grandfathers” by the tribes of the Algonkian language group, as they are believed to be the origin for those tribes (Mooney & Thomas, 1911:385). The oral tradition of the Lenape indicates that they came from the northwest through an arduous route, thousands of years ago, leaving some factions along the way. These different groups that separated during the great journey eventually became other tribes of the Algonkian (or Algic) language family (Mooney & Thomas, 1911:385). The Lenape eventually made their home in all of New Jersey (referred to in Lenape as “Scheyichbi”), southeastern New York, southwestern Connecticut, eastern Pennsylvania, and northern Delaware (Kraft, 2001:2, 5, 438). Their confederation is

said to have extended from the headwaters of the Hudson to the headwaters of the Potomac and included the Mohican and Nanticoke tribes (Heckewelder, 1876:xxvi).

Three main dialect groups were divided by geography. The Munsee dwelled in the northern part of the homeland and the closely related Unami and Unalachtigo in the central and southern regions (Kraft, 2001:4-5). The Lenape were dispersed into various related subtribes and bands that made up numerous self-sufficient villages along the waterways. Each community was independent, but acknowledged the close relationship with other communities/villages of the tribal nation (Kraft, 2001:6). Village and regional names also were applied to the various communities on the basis of geography and time period. A village may have the name of the river or stream it was near, and the people could also be known by that name (Kraft, 2001:6). A region could have closely allied villages, interrelated familial leadership, and be known by a regional name in addition to the local village reference (Kraft, 2001:2, 6).

The principal Lenape forebears of the three contemporary communities remaining along the Delaware Bay, which was referred to as “Poutaxat” in Lenape, were known regionally as Siconese (also called Chiconese), with the Great Siconese being on the southern part of the bay and the Little Siconese being on the northern part (Kraft, 2001:2). The terms “great” and “little” probably referred to the size of the territory rather than being political or physiological descriptions. Smaller villages with regional names were connected by footpaths that would often converge at a “hub” where a larger village was. With the encroachment of European settlers, these hubs became places where Lenape from various villages and areas would coalesce. The contemporary tribal community in Bridgeton, New Jersey, remains in what had been such a hub, known as Cohanzick (with various spellings including “Gohansik” and “Kohansik” and probably derived from “Conahockink”). During early contact and through the disruption of the colonial period, this area took in Lenape from all over southern New Jersey seeking to stay in Scheyichbi, most likely including those from such regional groups as the Narraticons, Sewapois, Alloways, and Kechomeches. The Lenape ancestors that coalesced in the area now known as Cheswold in Kent County, Delaware, occupied the area formerly referred to as Mitsawokett (Heite, 1997?). The relationships between the chiefs of southern New Jersey down through central Delaware demonstrate close kinship ties among the groups. The Cohanzik Chief, Mahoksett [Mehoxett], who had authority to grant lands in the area of what is today New Castle County, Delaware, was

the brother of the two Siconese chiefs Peticquewan (or Petequoque, also called “Christian the Indian”) and Sackerockett on the Delaware side of the bay in what is today Kent County (Blume, 2010). Land grants were negotiated by the three brothers with European settlers during the 1680s (Blume, 2010; Valinger, 1941:629).

Individual freedom was a part of tribal culture. Lenape chiefs, properly called “sakima,” often rendered “sachem” by the English, did not rule as tyrants, but were considered the first among equals (Kraft, 2001:250). Their status was one that required that they be the first to assume responsibility for their people and to make personal sacrifices on behalf of the community. Their families were not considered to be “royalty,” which was a foreign concept misapplied by European colonists. When discussing the manner in which a sakima would share his resources, Governor William Penn reported that,

[The] King sub-divideth it in like manner among his dependents, they hardly leaving themselves an equal share with one of their subjects: and be it on such occasions, at festivals, or at their common meals, the Kings distribute, and to themselves last. They care for little, because they want but little; and the reason is, a little contents them: in this they are sufficiently revenged on us; if they are ignorant of our pleasures, they are also free from our pains (Penn, 1970:31).

Chiefs maintained their status in direct relationship to how they maintained the esteem of their people. Typically selected from the matrilineal line, a father did not necessarily pass leadership to his son, but it would commonly be based upon the mother’s kinship ties to determine who would be eligible to lead the people in times of peace.

Their government is by Kings, which they call Sachema, and those by succession, but always of the mother’s side; for instance, the children of him that is now King, will not succeed, but his brother by the mother, or the children of his sister, whose sons and after them the children of her daughters, will reign; for no woman inherits; the reason they render for this way of descent, is, that their issue may not be spurious (Penn, 1970:35-36).

In time of war, when the community was threatened, the most capable warrior would be selected to serve as a commander or war chief. In the absence of hostilities, leadership would return to the hereditary peace chief (Kraft, 2001:251). Chiefs would lead with the consent of the governed and with the advice and blessing of a tribal council which would be supplemented by the wisdom of tribal elders. William Penn observed:

Every king hath his counsel, and that consists of all the old and wise men of his nation, which perhaps is 200 people; nothing of moment is undertaken, be it war, peace, selling of land or traffic, without advising

with them; and which is more, with the young men too. 'Tis admirable to consider, how powerful the Kings are, and yet how they move by the breath of their people (Penn, 1970:36).

When necessary, leaders from many villages and regional subtribes would come together to hold counsel. Often during the colonial era, spokesmen were selected to speak on behalf of the council of chiefs. Sometimes these spokesmen would be leading chiefs themselves, and would erroneously be considered as “rulers” or “kings” by European colonists, who viewed their position through the “cultural lens” of European society. In fact, the spokespersons could only communicate the consensus of the chiefs they were representing.

### **2.2.1 Lenape Identity, Lifeways, Worldview, and Placement Among Other Tribes**

“Lenape” means “the people” or “the men.” The common reduplication applied within the native tongue was “Lenni-Lenape,” which means “the real people” or “really real men” or “original people.” In their own self-identification, the Lenape view themselves as ancient and are considered as such by many other tribes who refer to the Lenape as “grandfathers” (Adams, 1899:20). Within their own oral tradition, they were the parent tribe of the Mohican (Mahicon) and Nanticoke, both of whom split off from the main body of Lenape toward the end of their ancient migration east, as they settled in the areas around the Delaware River and Bay (Heckewelder, 1876:53). The Lenape were once one of the most powerful tribes of North America and the head of the Algonkian nations (Adams, 1899:19).

Matrilineal in their social organization, women had a liberated and readily affirmed position within tribal society when compared with their European counterparts (Fur, 2009:11). A man became a part of his wife’s family in that he would initially move into their dwelling, but was never viewed as close in kinship as a father, brother, or son, because the husband was not of the wife’s bloodline or clan, as the children of the marriage were (Fur, 2009:105; Kraft, 2001:249). Marriages were maintained so long as each spouse was content. Women were no more bound to their husbands than their husbands were bound to them (Heckewelder, 1876:154). If a wife did not feel her husband was fulfilling his responsibilities, she could divorce him by simply putting his belongings out of their dwelling. Because of their ability to give birth, women were seen as having special spiritual powers. The women formed the core of the community

which the men were charged to protect. Their procreative role was also closely related in the interaction that women had with nature (Fur, 2009:20-21). They were the planters and the primary gatherers (Fur, 2009:19). While men would assist if the situation required it, farming was considered to be primarily women's work because it was related to fertility. The men would hunt and fish. They would make tools, ritual objects, and craft dugout canoes (Fur, 2009:19).

The ancient Lenape were not fully nomadic like the tribal people of the great American plains. Typical for Northeastern Woodland tribal people, the Lenape did not migrate following large herds of prey animals. Communities often had a winter and a summer village location in the same general region, between which they would migrate according to the season (Kraft, 2001:228). The harshest months of winter would be spent warmly sheltered indoors (Lindstrom, 1928:211), otherwise most of the day was spent outside. They had a farming method that incorporated the use of corn, beans, and squash in a planting system that intertwined the three so that they would support one another as they grew (Kraft, 2001:280). Villages were made up of rounded wigwams or rectangular longhouse style dwellings which consisted of a frame of bent saplings with either bark or woven grasses serving as the outer shell (Kraft, 2001:226). A hole for smoke from the interior fire would be left in the roofline of the dwelling. Interior frames would allow for benches or bunks to be attached to the sidewalls for sleeping. Shelves would be above the bunks, and an open area below, for storage.

Given their status as an "ancient people," and because of their prowess at war, the Lenape were called upon to arbitrate disputes between tribes. Such mediatorial work was considered a "feminine" characteristic, bringing harmony, balance, and preserving life (Fur). The role of "peace makers" increased to the point that the Lenape were also known as a "nation of women," which within its original context was a role voluntarily taken.

...the women by this honorable function of peace-makers, were placed in a situation by no means undignified. It would not be a disgrace, therefore; on the contrary, it would be an honour to a powerful nation, who could not be suspected of wanting either strength or courage, to assume that station by which they would be the means, and the only means, and preserving the general peace and saving the Indian race from outer extirpation... It could not be given to a weak or contemptible tribe, such would not be listened to; but the Lenape and their allies would at once possess influence and command respect. As men they had been dreaded; as women they would be respected and honored, none would be so daring or so base as to

attack or insult them; as women they would have a right to interfere in all of the quarrels of other nations, and to stop or prevent the effusion of Indian blood. They entreated them, therefore, to become the woman in name and, in fact, to lay down their arms and all the insignia of warriors, to devote themselves to agriculture and other pacific employments, and thus become the means of preserving peace and harmony among the nations (Heckewelder, 1876:58).

Diplomacy was bound to ritual. The use of prayer pipes and the exchange of strands or belts of wampum would often seal agreements (Milano, 2009:14). The ancient Lenape did not use intoxicants or hallucinogens. The pipe would commonly contain tobacco (Harrington, 1921:29, 126; Kraft, 2001:463), often mixed with sumac or other non-hallucinogenic plant material (Speck, 1931:127) regarded for certain spiritual properties. Pipes would be puffed with the exhaled smoke being viewed as prayers ascending to the Creator (Adams, 1899:7). The sharing of the pipe was an act of fellowship, with the mixing of the prayers of the partakers (Speck, 1931:127). Wampum was shell beads, white from the whelk and purple from the clam. These conical and hollow beads were prepared in strands or woven into belts with various designs that were often used as a personal adornment, but more importantly had significance as spiritual symbols and were used in religious and healing ceremonies and referred to as “our heart” signifying spiritual purity (Speck, 1931:63-65). Strands and belts of wampum also served as intentional mnemonic devices in which individuals were given the responsibility to read the message or tell the story contained in the design (Holmes, 1883:240). According to Nehnalohmat (2013), acknowledged by the Nanticoke-Lenape as a Lenape historian and linguist, who is also known as Brett Paddles Upstream, wampum is referred to grammatically as “animate” or “living,” possibly both because the bead was taken from a living creature and because, more importantly, it is used to represent a “living word,” “living story,” or “living covenant,” and is viewed as having a living spirit.

The ancient Lenape were not warlike, but were known to be capable at war. Their individual subtribes had lived peaceably with one another with no tradition of internal hostility. Their pre-contact status among the tribes of the eastern seaboard was one of high regard and political strength. The Moravian missionary John Heckewelder recounts the tradition that the Lenape had at one time been the mightiest tribe of the East (1876:56; Adams, 1899:19).

While many spirits were acknowledged and respected by the ancient Lenape, they were not worshiped, nor were they considered to be deities (Heckewelder, 1876:212). The Lenape were monotheistic prior to European contact. In fact there is no indication that at any time in their history they had been anything but monotheistic. Jasper Danckaerts, a Labadist Minister, in 1680 recorded the comment of “Hans, the Indian” regarding this:

We acknowledge, he said, a supreme first power, some cause of all things... this Supreme Being, the first and great beginning of all things... who is the origin of all, who has not only once produced or made all things, but produces every day. All that we see daily that is good, is from him; and every thing he makes and does is good. He governs all things, and nothing is done without his aid and direction... (Danckaerts, 1941:174-175).

William Penn, the colonial governor of Pennsylvania, reaffirms the view of Danckaerts in regard to the Lenape, which were also called “Delaware Indians” by the British because of their proximity to the River and Bay, called by the Lenape the Lenapei Wihittock or Lenapei Sipu (for the river) and Poutaxat (for the bay), but renamed by the British after Lord De La Warr. “They believe [in] a God and Immortality... they say, there is a great King that made them, who dwells in a glorious Country to the Southward of them, and that the Souls of the good shall go thither, where they shall live again” (Penn, 1970:33).

The Lenape references for God were more a description than a proper name, and they provide an insight into their view of God. There was the belief that there is but one God who creates and sustains all things (Harrington, 1921:18). The concept of creation was not considered to be something only in the past, but also continuing into the present and future (Harrington, 1921:20). In the historic dialect of the Lenape ancestors of the Nanticoke-Lenape communities, the Creator was called “Kishelemienkw,” which means “One who Creates us with his thoughts.” This form of reference for God was used when addressing him in prayer and worship. When speaking about the Creator the form is rendered “Kishelemukonk” (Nehnalhamat, 2013; Lenape Talking Dictionary, 2013). The Creator was considered to have the power to think things into existence, hence another divine reference is “Pemawsuhaluwet,” also rendered “Pehpemawsuhalewet,” which means “He who gives life” (Nehnalhamat, 2013; Lenape Talking Dictionary, 2013).

The ancient Lenape view of the nature of God is also illustrated in another common reference for the divine. God is also called “Ketanetuwit,” which means “He who is the Great Spirit” (Nehnalahamat, 2013; Lenape Talking Dictionary, 2013). In this instance, the descriptive for the Creator stresses a nonphysical, or metaphysical, existence.

The ancient Lenape believed that this Creator who is the greatest Spirit, who thinks all things into existence, sustains all things by the power of his thoughts, and who is the origin of all life, may also be addressed in prayer. “[T]he supreme Manitto, the creator and preserver of heaven and earth, is the great object of their adoration. On him they rest their hopes, to him they address their prayers and make their solemn sacrifices” (Heckewelder, 1876:213).

The ancient use of the divine reference “Patamawat,” meaning “He who is prayed to” (Nehnalahamat, 2013), clearly illustrates the belief that the Creator may be addressed in prayer (Harrington, 1921:90). There is a sense of relationship between the people and the Creator. There is also a sense of hierarchy within the created order of earthly beings, with people being the first in the hierarchy.

[The Lenape] consider themselves superior to all other animals and are very proud of that superiority; although they believe that the beasts of the forest, the birds of the air, and the fishes of the waters, were created by the Almighty Being for the use of man... All beings endowed by the Creator with the power of volition and self-motivation, they view in a manner as a great society of which they are the head, whom they are appointed, indeed, to govern, but between whom and themselves intimate ties of connection and relationship may exist, or at least did exist in the beginning of time. They are, in fact, according to their opinions, only the first among equals, the legitimate hereditary sovereigns of the whole animated race, of which they are themselves a constituent part (Heckewelder, 1876:254).

While there is the sense that humans occupy a privileged place within the natural order, there is also the sense that they are not disconnected from the natural order. The ancient Lenape saw themselves as part of nature and in relationship to the natural world, which included everything on the earth, and above the earth.

The Lenape did not know why Kishelemukong created the world, human beings, and nature; why he made the world as he did; or how long this act of creation took. In his complex master plan, the Creator is said to have conceived a twelve-tiered universe in which the firmament, celestial bodies, plants, animals, and all other things had prescribed places and ranks: The earth at the bottom, and the realm of the Creator in the twelfth and highest heaven, where he lives today (Kraft, 1986:162).

This sense of orderliness in their cosmological view of the twelve levels of the universe all rely on the patterns and balances established by the Creator. The Creator's dwelling in the highest heaven, or the twelfth level, was believed to be particularly glorious. According to Kraft, "No sun shines in this 12th heaven, for a brilliance much brighter than the sun emanates from the Kishelemukong himself" (Kraft, 1986:162).

Inherent in the perfection of the Creator's world were sacred balances evident throughout the natural order. There was a balance in the duties of men and women, which were not the same, but complemented one another and were needed by one another (Fur, 2009:18). There was a sacred balance in the hunting of game, which were never to be over-hunted and were always to be respected (Kraft, 2001:263). This balance and respect for nature is demonstrated even in the use of plants. When harvesting medicinal plants or taking a portion of bark from a tree to prepare for medicinal or ceremonial or even a craft usage, some prayer and offering would be given, acknowledging the spirit of the plant and demonstrating a gratitude to the Creator for the ability to use it (Harrington, 1921:51; Kraft, 2001:339). No more than what was needed would be taken (Kraft, 2001:263; Nehnalhamat, 2013).

This balance could be seen in the fact that a hunter would offer a prayer, often with an offering of tobacco, after the killing of game. This was to acknowledge the sacredness of life that was taken, to mourn and show gratitude for its spirit, and to demonstrate respect for the Creator's provision (Vogel, 1990:15). Likewise, in order not to disrespect the life, all parts of the game animal would be utilized in some fashion. Nothing would be wasted.

While such actions and offerings served to help maintain the ceremonial balance in accordance with the will of the Creator, non-Native eyes misinterpreted it as a form of pagan worship of trees and beasts (Kraft, 1986:161). Traditionally, the ancient Lenape only worshiped and prayed to the Creator (Harrington, 1921:18, 90). However, as part of maintaining the balance in accordance with the Creator's will, the various spirits within the natural order also had to be respected and honored, and even viewed as "mediating" between themselves and the Creator (Harrington, 1921:18-19), or on behalf of the Creator, but were not worshiped as the Creator was worshiped (Heckewelder, 1876:213). "[I]n times past they brought sacrifices and still do this making their offerings, not directly to the deity but things of his creation... No one has ever heard

that they have sacrificed to the devil, whom together with all evil spirits they deplore, believing that all evil comes from them, even as all good comes from God" (Hubert & Schwarze, 1910:129).

Certain ceremonies and seasonal celebrations would be done in order to worship the Creator and honor his many "helping spirits," known as "manetuwak." The faithful performance of such ceremonies was crucial in maintaining the balance and demonstrating appropriate respect for the spirit world and will of the Creator (Harrington, 1921:89). Striving to honor that balance with one's life and through ceremony was not done merely for the individual or singular community, but the ancient Lenape believed that they were doing it on behalf of the whole earth (Adams, 1904:10; Harrington, 1921:112-113; Nehnalohamat, 2013). "From his lofty and exalted place in the twelfth heaven, Kishelemukong watched over the work of all his creation... having delegated certain day to day functions to the many spirit helpers, known as manetuwak" (Kraft, 1986:163).

[John Heckewelder records that] it is a part of their religious belief, that there are inferior Manetus, to whom the great good Being has given the will and command over the elements; that being so great, he, like their chiefs, must have his attendants to execute his supreme behest... these subordinate spirits (sometimes in their nature between God and man) see and report to him what is doing upon earth; they look down particularly upon the Indians, to see whether they are in need of assistance, and are ready at their call to assist and protect them against danger (Kraft, 1986:163).

Walking in a "good way" meant demonstrating spiritual respect through life, honoring the various roles of all of the creatures and spirits of creation. Acknowledging the heavenly spirits of the Sun, called "kishux," and Moon, called "night sun" or "piskewëni kishux," the thunder spirits of the sky, called "Pethakhuweyok," the guardian of the game, called "Mesingw," the guardian of the crops, called "Our Mother Corn" or "Kahesena Xaskwim," or any number of other spirits was the responsibility of the people to the Creator (Harrington, 1921:89-90; Nehnalohamat, 2013).

The ancient Lenape believed that people were made up of a body and two types of souls or spirits (Hultkrantz, 1953:75). The first called the "real soul" or "Lenapeokan," lives in the heart and bears the consciousness and conscience of the person. Others who have documented this concept have rendered it as "Wtellenapewoagan" and as "Lennapekkan" (Hultkrantz, 1953:75-76); the alternate imposed spellings are misunderstood by

non-Natives as different words, but are actually various grammatical forms for the same concept and refer to the substance of a human being or “real soul.” On death, the Lenapeokan of one who has lived in a “good way” travels to the Creator. This journey is completed over a period of time, some say twelve months, as the Lenapeokan travels southward, or more precisely southwestward, to “Chipayhaki” or “spirit land” (Harrington, 1921:91; Nehnalahamat, 2013). “They consider the soul to be an invisible being and a spirit... they believe also in the immortality of the soul” (Burton & Schwarze, 1910:131).

There is the suggestion that this southward journey is walking the “Opitemakan” or “white path” across the sky, known in modern times as the “Milky Way” (Harrington, 1921:58; Hubert & Schwarze, 1910:148). This journey southward to be received finally by the embrace of the Creator is depicted in one of the ceremonies still practiced into the early twentieth century by some traditional spiritual practitioners among the Lenape emigrants in Oklahoma.

On the twelfth day of the meeting, just before you do disband, all shall march in single file, to the eastward from the door, and when are all well outside, to the south must you look forth, and while standing thus in line, twelve times then with reverence bow, to acknowledge your dependence, on the Spirit who is the greatest, who, we’re promised, yet will greet us, with the best of all greetings, “Welcome here, you are my people...” (Adams, 1904:22-23).

It was also believed that during the journey to the Creator, the Lenapeokan can be disrupted if there is some disrespect or imbalance prior to reaching the Creator (Harrington, 1921:54). Nehnalahamat, when asked to clarify what was meant by “disrespect or imbalance,” stated that it could be as simple as someone calling out the decedent’s name during this spiritual journey, or the absence of appropriate ceremony relating to their demise. The Lenapeokan may be distracted and delayed in an effort to correct the imbalance and then return on their journey (Nehnalahamat, 2013).

The Lenapeokan of those who did not live in a good way was not deemed worthy of joining the ancestors with the Creator (Harrington, 1921:53). This one would roam around aimlessly, possibly being caused to embody mosquitoes, gnats, and the like, in some tortured fashion. “[The] departed souls all went southward, and the difference between the good and the bad, was this: that the former were admitted into a beautiful

town with spiritual walls; and the latter would forever hover around these walls, in a vain attempt to get in" (Brainerd, 1822: 238).

The other soul is referred to as the "Hmukw," or "blood soul," which is associated with the life force of the physical blood itself. At death the Hmukw leaves the body and roams the earth, sometimes taking on the form of a luminous ball (Harrington, 1921:53; Nehnalahamat, 2013). At best it is viewed as an echo of the person who has died. In this sense the ancients believed that the ancestors were both with the creator and, in some sense, still with them in the community (Speck, 1931:25). The Hmukw was honored and revered, but not worshiped. The ancestors were always viewed as only human and did not take on divine attributes even at death.

The Hmukw of a dead person was believed to have the ability to touch a newborn, who may be endowed with their knowledge and abilities. One of the signs that would be looked for by the elders was if the child had dents in the earlobes, denoting that they had previously been pierced. The Moravian missionary David Zeisberger claimed that there was a belief in the transmigration of the soul among some Lenape (Hubert & Schwarze, 1910:131). When questioned about this, Nehnalahamat indicated that this should not be confused with reincarnation, for the blessed child is not the actual reborn ancestor, but rather the bearer of their skills and characteristics (2013). Zeisberger's possible confusion may be attributed to a misunderstanding of the distinction between the "real soul," or Lenapeokan, of the good person which goes to abide with the Creator, and the "blood soul," or Hmukw, which may linger as a type of "spiritual echo" remaining with the community on earth (Speck, 1931:25).

The Hmukw would generally have the temperament of the decedent when he or she was still alive. It could still interact with people on earth, guiding, joking, tricking, or even become an angry or negative force (Hubert & Schwarze, 1910:131). Even the Hmukw of those who had lived in a good way could have angry interactions if the people were not maintaining the spiritual balance in accordance with the will of the Creator (Nehnalahamat, 2013).

It should be noted that after the introduction of Christianity, there became an acceptance of a third soul, which had been mentioned in pre-Christian times, but was not readily embraced by non-Christian Lenape. Among the Lenape Christian converts, this third

soul was called the “Chichankw” or “mirror” (Speck, 1931:25) and is understood as an image without substance or reflection (Nehnalahamat, 2013; Speck, 1931:25). This same concept is rendered as “Wtschitschank,” and is interpreted by some, including Zeisberger, to have replaced the concept of the Lenapeokan: “Formerly, they used the word Wtellanapewoagan [Lenapeokan] to describe it, meaning ‘Substance of a Human Being’. Savages use this word to the present day. Now they have accepted the word Wtschitschank [Chichankw], that is, ‘Spirit’” (Hubert & Schwarze, 1910:131).

However, the Chichankw did not replace the Lenapeokan and the distinction between the two is retained in the Unami dialect of Lenape (Lenape Talking Dictionary, 2013). It was not one of the individual’s souls, but was viewed as the presence, or reflection, of the Creator. Used mostly by Lenape Christians (Speck, 1931:25), it is that Spirit of the Creator working within the life of those who are living in a good way, carrying out appropriate ceremony and maintaining the balance of nature in his name. It neither went to the Creator at death, like the Lenapeokan, nor did it abide with the community, like the Hmukw. It was present only during the physical life of the one who was trying to live in a good way (Nehnalahamat, 2013).

There was a high sense of moral conduct encouraged among the ancient Lenape. This was in keeping with the spiritual sense of maintaining “balance.” Living in a “good way” was encouraged by the spiritual leaders. Moravian missionary David Zeisberger states, “...they have never had regularly appointed priests, the oldest man having usually performed the sacrifices, admonished people to good life and conduct, warned them against immorality, murder and violence, if they would be happy, attain to great age and after death get to the good place...” (Hubert & Schwarze, 1910:130).

For some, this sense of high moral conduct could be reflected in an appreciation for the teachings of Jesus Christ. Paul A. Wallace cites the colonial era reflection of Conrad Weiser:

The teachings of Jesus Christ were more congenial to the Indians than to many nominal Christians, for when it is said, “Owe no man anything save to love one another” Rom. 13:8, “Be not anxious for the morrow” Matth. 6:34, “He that is greatest among you shall be your servant” Matth. 23:11... that is what they actually practice without calling themselves Christian, while many who bear the name never give such things a thought (Wallace, 1996:80).

Early accounts suggest that the interaction between the Lenape and European settlers did not bring a sense of spiritual uplift for the indigenous population. With the word “Christian” being associated with “European,” William Penn makes the following observation in about 1683:

The worst is, that they [the Lenape] are the worse for the Christians, who have propagated their vices, and yielded them tradition for ill, and not for good things... I beseech God to incline the hearts of all that come into these parts, to out-live the knowledge of the natives, by a fixed obedience to fair greater knowledge of the will of God; for it were miserable indeed for us to fall under the just censure of the poor Indian conscience while we make profession of things so far transcending (Penn, 1970:40-41).

Interestingly, the concept of living “in a good way” came to be viewed by some Lenape as incompatible with the way some Christians of European descent practiced their faith and lived their lives. This view is clearly illustrated in the comments of one Lenape elder and spiritual leader speaking at the turn of the twentieth century in Bartlesville, Oklahoma, as recorded by Richard C. Adams:

Our people are becoming too much like the white men now; interested in making money, so much so, that even brothers and sisters today do not take as much interest in each other as members of different clans did years ago. This is the result of the teaching of the white man, which appeals more to the selfish interests of the individual, and suits many of our young people better. In following the white man’s faith you can do as you please until you are ready to die, then, by repenting, can escape all responsibility for your acts, and go to Heaven without any efforts of your own. According to our faith you must follow the dictates of your guardian spirit, or conscience, which is the connecting link with the Great Spirit, and thus improve yourself in each sphere you pass through until you have finally reached the Happy Hunting Ground, and have in some manner merited a reward yourself (Adams, 1904:6-7).

During the latter colonial and early federal period of American history, the missionary David Brainerd, whose ministry focused on the Lenape of New Jersey, asserted that the behavior of nominal Christians of European descent was the greatest barrier to the promulgation of the gospel among the Indians (albeit while he also would occasionally display a personal prejudice against the Indians).

The only way I have to take in order to surmount this difficulty, is to distinguish between nominal and real Christians; and to shew them, that the ill conduct of many of the former proceeds not from their being Christians, but from their being Christians only in name, not in heart. To this it has sometimes been objected, that, if all those who will cheat the Indians are Christians only in name, there are but few left in the country to be Christians in heart. This, and many other of the remarks they pass upon the white people, and their miscarriages, I am forced to own, and cannot

but grant, that many nominal Christians are more abominably wicked than the Indians (Edward & Dwight, 1822:343).

Gunlog Fur cites the observation of Erik Biorck, a pastor during the era of the New Sweden colony around the Delaware Bay in the seventeenth century, demonstrating the same issue during this very early period of contact:

...when asked why they [the Lenape] would not convert [to Christianity], the Indians answered: “If the Christians lived better than we according to their religion, then we would become Christians. But we cannot find that they do, because we see and hear them drink, fight, whore, murder, steal, lie, cheat, etc. Such things we have never known. Thus we are better off as we are” (Fur, 2009:43).

Heckewelder, writing about a century later, also cites a similar frustration resulting from the behavior of nominal Christians:

It is true, they confess, that when they first saw the whites, they took them for beings of a superior kind. They did not know but that they had been sent to them from the abode of the Great Spirit for some great and important purpose. They therefore, welcomed them, hoping to be made happier by their company. It was not long, however, before they discovered their mistake, having found them an ungrateful, insatiable people, who, though the Indians had given them as much land as was necessary to raise provisions for themselves and their families, and pasture for their cattle, wanted still to have more, and at last would not be contented with less than the whole country. “And yet,” say those injured people, “these white men would always be telling us of their great Book which God had given to them, they would persuade us that every man was good who believed in what the Book said, and every man was bad who did not believe in it. They told us a great many things, which they said were written in the good Book, and wanted us to believe it all. We would probably have done so, if we had seen them practice what they pretended to believe, and act according to the good words which they told us. But no! While they held their big Book in one hand, in the other they had murderous weapons, guns and swords, wherewith to kill us, poor Indians! Ah! And they did so too, they killed those who believed in their Book, as well as those who did not. They made no distinction!” (Heckewelder, 1876:187-188).

### **2.2.2 Analysis of Traditional Lenape Spiritual Beliefs**

While there is no formally established systematic theology or formal “doctrine” within traditional Lenape spirituality, there are consistent spiritual values and views that form a coherent faith. The evidence cited above demonstrates that the Lenape have been monotheistic from historic times. In spite of the reports of some Europeans who misinterpreted aspects of the beliefs and spiritual practices of the ancient Lenape

(Harrington, 1921:31), there appears to be no evidence to demonstrate widespread pantheism among the ancient Lenape and certainly no evidence to suggest that there is any element of pantheism among the modern Lenape. The occasional erroneous conclusions asserting a pantheon of gods within Lenape spiritual beliefs may be attributed to the differences in language, culture, and worldview between the observer and the observed. It is also difficult to overstate the impact of racial bias in the interpretation of some European colonial observers when evaluating those whom the observer's larger society deemed to be "savages," "pagans," and "heathens"—a bias which is seen even in the references used by the noted missionary David Brainerd (Edwards & Dwight, 1822:344-345). Daniel Brinton critiques both David Brainerd and David Zeisberger as, in his view, they displayed bias in their evaluation of the moral and mental character of those they were attempting to evangelize:

The missionaries are severe upon them. Brainerd described them as "unspeakably indolent and slothful. They have little or no ambition or resolution; not one in one thousand of them that has the spirit of a man." No more favorable was the opinion of Zeisberger. He speaks of their alleged bravery with the utmost contempt, and morally he puts them down as "the most ordinary and the vilest of savages." Perhaps these worthy missionaries measured them by the standard of the Christian ideal, by which, alas, we all fall woefully short (Brinton, 1885: 62).

Brinton highlights the reports of Thomas Young and John Heckwelder, who seemed less biased in their estimation of the Lenape:

Certainly, other competent observers report much more cheerfully. One of the first explorers of the Delaware, Captain Thomas Young (1634), describes them as "very well proportioned, well featured, gentle, tractable and docile." Of their domestic affections, Mr. Heckwelder writes: "I do not believe that there are any people on earth who are more attached to their relatives and offspring than these Indians are" (Brinton, 1885: 62-63).

The assessments of Young and Heckwelder are further supported by the report of Peter Lindstrom in the latter seventeenth century:

They are so simple, that they cannot simulate, nor do they know of any deceit, but do not imagine that anything could pass from a man's tongue, without coming from the heart... [They] are a trustworthy and good-hearted folk, when they are not angered, and even brave-hearted [enough] to risk death for their good friends, to whom they have professed their friendship and faithfulness (Lindstrom, 1928:235).

While David Brainerd's devotion to mission work among the Lenape from the mid to latter 18<sup>th</sup> century is well documented, his own memoirs display misunderstandings and

misassessments of traditional Lenape spiritual perspectives that betray an unfortunate, and potentially biased, perspective. He labels the objects of his evangelistic efforts as “brutishly stupid and ignorant of divine things” (Edward & Dwight, 1822:342). Brainerd’s evaluation of Lenape beliefs, worship, and ceremonies is that they are one of the reasons for a “spring of aversion to Christianity” (Edward & Dwight, 1822:344). He writes,

[The Lenape have a] strong attachment to their own religious notions, if they may be called religious, and the early prejudices which they have imbibed in favor of their own frantic and ridiculous kind of worship. What their notions of God are, in their Pagan state, is hard precisely to determine... Their notions in that state were so prodigiously dark and confused, that they seemed not to know what they thought themselves. But so far as I can learn, they had a notion of a plurality of invisible deities, and paid some kind of homage to them promiscuously under a great variety of forms and shapes (Edward & Dwight, 1822:344).

Brainerd displays frustration at not being able to obtain a unified body of specific doctrinal details from his Lenape converts regarding their former notion of the divine, and presumes that they were not only pantheistic, as demonstrated above, but also held to a form of panentheism.

After the strictest inquiry respecting their notions of Deity, I find, that in ancient times, before the coming of the white people, some supposed that there were four invisible powers, who presided over the four corners of the earth. Others imagined the sun to be the only deity, and that all things were made by him. Others, at the same time, have a confused notion of a certain body or fountain of deity, somewhat like the *anima mundi*, so frequently mentioned by the more learned ancient Heathens, diffusing itself to various animals, and even to inanimate things, making them the immediate authors of good to certain persons, as before observed, with respect to various supposed deities. But after the coming of the white people, they seemed to suppose that there were three deities, and three only, because they saw people of three different kinds of complexion, viz. English, Negroes, and Indians (Edward & Dwight, 1822:345).

Brainerd’s conclusions of Lenape pantheism and panentheism may have been influenced by his misguided assumption of the general wickedness of the race (Edward & Dwight, 1822:343), but may also be due, in part, to his own difficulty with the Lenape language.

I labored under a very great disadvantage for want of an Interpreter, who had a good degree of doctrinal as well as experimental knowledge of divine things: in both which respects my present interpreter was very defective when I first employed him... I could not make him understand what I designed to communicate (Edward & Dwight, 1822:351).

Erroneous conclusions regarding Lenape spiritual understandings are evidence from the earliest points of contact with European settlers. During his time in the New Sweden colony from 1654-1655, Peter Lindstrom, a Swedish military engineer, documents such misunderstandings in his own observations of the Lenape. He concludes that they are idol worshippers, adopting a personal “god” at about 15 years old, wearing some token of their deity around their necks (Lindstrom, 1928:207). Lindstrom also asserts that “Manitto” is the devil, to which the Lenape make offerings at the conclusion of a successful hunt or in order to obtain good luck (Lindstrom, 1928:208).

Unlike David Brainerd or Peter Lindstrom, John Heckwelder (born 1743) has a different estimation of the traditional beliefs of the Lenape, asserting their monotheism (Heckwelder, 1876:213). This may, in part, have been influenced by Heckwelder’s in-depth learning of the Lenape language and exposure to the culture.

The sure way to obtain correct ideas, and the true knowledge of the characters, customs, manners, &c. [sic], of the Indians, and to learn their history, is to dwell among them for some time, and having acquired their language, the information wished for will be obtained in the common way; that is, by paying attention to their discourses with each other on different subjects, and occasionally asking them questions; always watching for the proper opportunity, when they do not suspect your motives, and are disposed to be free and open with you (Heckwelder, 1876:xvii).

Heckwelder critiqued those who had drawn conclusions and spread assertions about the Lenape when having not abided among them, learned their language, or gained an understanding of their customs, beliefs, and lifeways in a non-intrusive or non-interrogational manner, which could produce erroneous information.

Foreseeing the difficulties I should labor under, in writing the history of a people, of whom so many had already written, I could not but consider the undertaking both as unpleasant and hazardous; being aware, that it would be impossible for me in all respects to coincide with those who have written before me; among whom there are not a few, who, although their good intentions cannot be doubted, yet from their too short residence in the country of the Indians, have not had sufficient opportunities to acquire the knowledge which they undertake to communicate. Ignorant of the language, or being but superficially acquainted with it, they have relied on ignorant or careless interpreters, by whom they have been most frequently led astray (Heckwelder, 1876:xvii).

The Lenape language reveals that the various Lenape references to the Deity provide insight into the view of the nature, character, and power of the Lenape divine Being. The belief in a single Deity includes the understanding that the Deity is a spirit, revealed

by one of the divine names, “Ketanetuwit,” which means “He who is the Great Spirit,” to distinguish the Deity from other lesser spirits, or “manetuwak.” The divine reference “Great Manitu” provides the same distinction. The name “Kishelemukonk,” which means “He who creates us with his thoughts,” is indicative of the belief that the Deity is the source of all creation and is “essential,” while other created beings are “derivative.” The grammatical form of the name indicates continuous action, demonstrating an understanding that existence is contingent upon the continued thoughts of the Deity. This also indicates that, according to the predominant historical spiritual view among the Lenape, Kishelemukonk has the characteristic of omniscience and omnipotence, in that all that exists is a result of the Deity’s thinking it into existence and sustaining its existence. How Kishelemukonk thinks is how time unfolds. What Kishelemukonk thinks about is what occurs; therefore, the Deity’s omniscience is axiomatic. So long as the Deity has the capacity to think as he wills, omnipotence over creation is also axiomatic (Heckewelder, 1876:212; Butler & Schwarze, 1910:9). While Brainerd suggested a pantheistic belief among the Lenape, “Hans the Indian” is recorded in 1680 by Labadists minister Jasper Danckaerts as testifying that the one Creator “is the origin of all, who has not only once produced or made all things, but produces every day. All that we see daily that is good, is from him; and every thing [sic] he makes and does is good. He governs all things, and nothing is done without his aid and direction” (Danckaerts, 1941:174).

When referring to the belief in the one Creator and Sustainer of all things, “Hans the Indian” used the term “Kickeron” (Danckaerts, 1941:174), which is not a Lenape title of God, but a generic trade jargon or regional jargon similar in meaning to “Great Spirit,” and more accurately rendered “one that is above” or “one greater than” possibly influenced by the Munsee dialect. The fact that this term is a generic jargon is demonstrated by the statement of “Hans the Indian” that the concept is believed by divergent tribes such as “Mahatans, Sinnekes, Maquaas, Miquaas, southern or northern Indians” (Danckaerts, 1941:174), a list which included different eastern woodland language groups (Algonkian and Siouan), each having differing terms for the Deity. While some modern cultural enthusiasts have erroneously reported “Kickeron” to be an ancient “name” of God in the Lenape language, it is evident in his use of the term “Kickeron,” that “Hans the Indian” was attempting to communicate a concept, in a regional jargon, shared by many differing tribes of the area to foreign ears, from a foreign culture, and in a foreign tongue. Additionally, references to “Kickeron” in the

journal of Danckaerts stand out as unique in the ancient sources, with subsequent uses of the term attributable to this singular original source.

While Brainerd assumed that the Lenape believed that different deities created different races of humans, Danckaerts suggests, above, that there was a belief in but one Creator and source of all. Danckaerts' observation is supported by Heckwelder:

They will not admit that the whites are superior beings. They say that the hair of their heads, their features, the various colors of their eyes, convinced that they are not like themselves Lenni Lenape, an ORIGINAL PEOPLE, a race of men that has existed unchanged from the beginning of time; but they are a mixed race, and therefore a troublesome one; wherever they may be, the Great Spirit, knowing the wickedness of their disposition, found it necessary to give them a great Book, and taught them how to read it, that they might know and observe what he wished them to do and to abstain from. But they, the Indians, have no need of any such book to let them know the will of their Maker; they find it engraved on their own hearts; they have sufficient discernment given to them to distinguish good from evil, and by following that guide, they are sure not to err (Heckwelder, 1876:187).

The ancient Lenape believed in one divine Creator as the source of all existence and the only deity (Hubert & Schwarze, 1910:128). Kischelemukonk, the divine sovereign Creator, delegates authority over various aspects of creation to subordinate spirits, which are also "thought into being" by the Deity (Hubert & Schwarze, 1910:130). These subordinate spirits, collectively referred to as "manetuwak," govern various realms, or "levels," of creation (Heckwelder, 1876:212). The cosmos is presented as having order instead of chaos. Kischelemukonk, as the supreme sovereign, provides that order both directly, through thought, and indirectly, through subordinate manetuwak (Harrington, 1921:18). The Deity is compared to a great "sakima," or grand "sachem," who rules over subordinate sakima of various levels of the Deity's creation (Danckaerts, 1941:77; Heckwelder, 1876:212).

The ancient Lenape held that the cosmos was filled with various spirits, all of which were subordinate to Kischelemukonk (Harrington, 1921:17). Such spirits, with varied levels of authority or influence, could impact the lives of the people. While most spirits tended to be benevolent, some had malevolent tendencies, and none were viewed as "omnibenevolent" as was Kishelomukonk (Harrington, 1921:17, 23-24). These spirits were to be acknowledged, respected, and honored. As tribal elders and leaders were given honor and respect (Heckwelder, 1876:163), so too were the various manetuwak.

Sometimes this honoring took on ceremonial attributes. However, the Lenape focus was the adoration of the Creator (Heckewelder, 1876:213-214) to whom they prayed (Harrington, 1921:18, 89).

Contrary to Brainerd's assumption that the sun had been regarded as the deity (Edward & Dwight, 1822:345), the influence of which is even evident in Brinton's writings about the Lenape (Brinton, 1885:65), Kishilemukonk is viewed as the source of light and goodness (Harrington, 1921:23-24), so much so that light emanates from the deity by his own power (Harrington, 1821:91; Kraft, 1986:162) as it does from the sun. Similarly, Brainerd's assertion that the cardinal directions of East, West, North, and South were considered "gods" and worshiped is also shown to be a misinterpretation of the acknowledgment, or honoring, of spirits appointed by the one Creator to govern the directions and the blessings they brought to the people. While describing the annual Lenape "Gamwing," or "Big House Ceremony," an integrative ritual marking the "conjunction of men and women, hunt and crops, and Creator and creation as a world renewal ceremony of universal thanksgiving" (Miller, 1997:113), Harrington quotes Lenape Chief Elkhair's customary opening comments:

When we come into this house of ours we are glad, and thankful that we are well, and for everything that makes us feel good which the Creator has placed here for our use. We come here to pray Him to have mercy on us for the year to come and to give us everything to make us happy; may we have good crops, and no dangerous storms, floods nor earthquakes. We all realize what He has put before us all through life, and that He has given us a way to pray to Him and thank Him. We are thankful to the East because everyone feels good in the morning when they awake, and see the bright light coming from the East, and when the sun goes down in the West we feel good and glad we are well; then we are thankful to the West. And we are thankful to the North, because when the cold winds come we are glad to have lived to see the leaves fall again; and to the South, for when the South wind blows and everything is coming up in the spring we are glad to live to see the grass growing and everything green again (Harrington, 1921:88-89).

While Brainerd concluded that the Lenape belief incorporated the concept of "anima mundi" (Edward & Dwight, 1822:345), the differentiation between Kishilemukonk and the creation indicates that from ancient times, the Lenape have not been panentheistic. Created things were considered the "stuff" of the Creator's thoughts, but were not endowed with the Creator's own Spirit. Creatures have their own spirits, derived from the thoughts of the Creator, Kishilemukonk, but are distinct from the Creator. Not only were the manetuwak designated by the Creator to rule over the various levels of

creation considered “spirits,” but all living things, and items of spiritual significance, were thought to also have their own spirit or “manetu.” Yet, unlike Brainerd who asserted that the Lenape debased themselves to all manner of animals for fear of the spirits working through them (Edwards & Dwight, 1822:345), Heckewelder asserts that these subordinate spirits all around them were not considered to have power over them, but were viewed as helpers and “guardians” over their lives (Heckewelder, 1876:212). Harrington’s record of Chief Elkhair’s comments provides additional insight into this:

We thank the Thunders, for they are the mani’towuk [manetuwak] that bring the rain, which the Creator has given them power to rule over. And we thank our mother, the Earth, whom we claim as mother because the Earth carries us and everything we need. When we eat and drink and look around, we know it is Gicelemu’kaong [Kishelemukong] that makes us feel good that way. He gives us the purest thoughts that can be had. We should pray to Him every morning (Harrington, 1921:89-90).

The immanence of Kishelemukonk is evident in the ways that the Lenape would focus their worship and prayers upon him, demonstrating that in some sense the Creator was lovingly disposed to their petitions and keenly aware of their condition (Heckewelder, 1876:211). However, there is also an aspect in which this immanent Creator is also transcendent, so high and holy in the twelfth level of the cosmos that common petitions are addressed through various manetuwak toward the Creator’s benevolence (Harrington, 1921:31). In this sense, the manetuwak are viewed as mediators and helpers between individual people and Kishelemukonk, and are entitled to tokens of gratitude and respect (Heckewelder, 1876:212), which could take the form of an offering of tobacco, a song, or dance.

Personal guardian or guiding spirits were perceived through visions and dreams. Such a personal guide, also called “manetu,” conferred a sense of spiritual power and insight to the human recipient (Speck, 1931:51-52). However, this personal manetu was not the object of worship or the ultimate source of the power, which was “ultimately derived from the Delaware Creator” (Miller, 1997:114). A personal manetu could be perceived in the form of a particular animal or other earthly creature (Hubert & Schwarze, 1910:132; Speck, 1931:53), a representation of which would, at times, be used to serve as a spiritual token or talisman. Similar to the modern popular wearing of jewelry with images of angels or saints by some Christians, the Lenape personal manetuwak have not historically been viewed as deities by the Lenape.

Thus, it has been shown that there has been an historic differentiation among the Lenape between the Creator and the creation, and a distinction between the Creator and subservient spirits. The Creator has the attributes of divinity, being a spirit, the one “essential being” from which all else is derived, all powerful and all knowing, being both immanent and transcendent. However, the lesser spirits do not share in these divine attributes. Moreover, prayers and worship are formally directed to the Creator. The evidence shows that this may have been done either directly, from the petitioner to the Creator, or indirectly, through mediating spirits in the various levels of creation who would carry the petition to the Creator in the highest heaven. The power to answer prayer belongs to the Creator, while the divine reaction and answer to prayers and care for the people may be designated by the Creator to be carried out by subordinate spirits.

It is established that there has been an historic belief among the Lenape in the immortality of the soul (Burton & Schwarze, 1910:131). The “essential,” “true,” or “real” soul, called the “Lenapeokan,” may obtain a joyful eternal existence with the Creator or may experience the Creator’s rebuke and rejection contingent upon the manner of life lived, either good or bad (Harrington, 1921:53). Upon initial review, this demonstrates an apparent reliance on a merit-based or works-based understanding of eternal salvation. However, the potential of at least a partial acceptance of grace-based salvation may be in view with the understanding of the “Chichankw” or “mirror” soul or spirit (Speck, 1931:25), which is an image without substance or reflection (Nehnalahamat, 2013; Speck, 1931:25) and is viewed as the presence of the Creator working in the life of those living in a “good way.” While this may be a development after contact with Christianity (Hubert & Schwarze, 1910:131; Speck, 1931:25), it has been evidenced at least since the latter eighteenth century and may incorporate the notion that the Creator enables living in a “good way.” Chief Elkhair’s testimony hints at this thought as he states, “He [Kishelemukong] gives us the purest thoughts that can be had” (Harrington, 1921:90).

There is also a “blood” soul, called “Hmukw,” which may linger as a type of “spiritual echo” that remains with the living community and could interact with it (Speck, 1931:25). In this sense, while the ancestors who had lived a good life were believed to abide eternally with the Creator, they were also—in another, lesser, sense—able to abide among the people. It is possible that Zeisberger’s contention that the Lenape believed both in an eternal reward and punishment, and also transmigration of the soul (Hubert &

Schwarze, 1910:131) may point to a misunderstanding of the Lenapeokan versus the Hmukw. It may then be said that the Lenape have traditionally had a dualistic view of the soul, with one being the spirit and essence of the individual, the Lenapeokan, and the other connected more with the physical body and a type of “life force” that lingers after death, the Hmukw. The continuing presence of the ancestor’s Hmukw with the living community, and the manner in which the Lenape would honor their ancestors, may have led to the misunderstanding of ancestor worship reported by non-Native observers.

In regard to human origins, while the thoughts of the Creator are the cause, the method of creation and mode of the appearance of humans upon the land are addressed by various myths. Loskiel’s account of the testimony of the Delaware tribes states that they descended from heaven, with the common ancestor being a woman divorced by her husband and descending to the earth. The woman gave birth to twins, from which the whole earth was populated (1794: Part 1.24).

However, a common reference to North America by many indigenous tribal people today is “Turtle Island,” with the turtle or tortoise being a commonly revered creature and symbol. Interestingly, we see the concept of the land resting upon the back of a great turtle in the October 1679 entry in the journal of Jasper Danckaerts, in which he describes the response of “Tantaque” (also known as “Jasper” by Danckaerts and his party), an Indian about eighty years old, regarding the question of human origins:

We asked him, where he believed he came from? He answered from his father. “And where did your father come from?” we said, “and your grandfather and great-grandfather, and so on to the first of the race?” He was silent for a little while, either as if unable to climb up at once so high with his thoughts, or to express them without help, and then took a piece of coal out of the fire where he sat, and began to write upon the floor. He first drew a circle, a little oval, to which he made four paws or feet, a head and a tail. “This,” said he, “is a tortoise, lying in the water around it,” and he moved his hand round the figure, continuing, “This was or is all water, and so at first was the world or the earth, when the tortoise gradually raised its round back up high, and the water ran off of it, and thus the earth became dry.” He then took a little straw and placed it on end in the middle of the figure, and proceeded, “The earth was now dry, and there grew a tree in the middle of the earth, and the root of this tree sent forth a sprout beside it and there grew upon it a man, who was the first male. This man was then alone, and would have remained alone; but the tree bent over until its top touched the earth, and there shot therein another root, from which came forth another sprout, and there grew upon it the woman, and from these two are all men produced” (Danckaerts, 1941:77-78).

The concept of the land resting on the back of a tortoise or turtle is further confirmed to Danckaerts in March of 1680 by “Hans the Indian”:

I told him I had conversed with Jasper or Tantaque, another old Indian on the subject, from whence all things had come, and he had told me they came from a tortoise; that this tortoise had brought forth the world, or that all things had come from it; that from the middle of the tortoise there had sprung up a tree, upon whose branches men had grown. That was true, he replied, but Kickeron made the tortoise, and the tortoise had a power and a nature to produce all things, such as earth, trees, and the like, which God wished through it to produce, or have produced (Danckaerts, 1941:175).

Heckewelder confirms that the tortoise for the Lenape is comparable to “Atlas” of Greek mythology, bearing “this great island upon its back” (Heckewelder, 1876:253). However, Heckewelder also records another myth that claims that humans were originally inside of the earth, which the Lenape assert to be the universal “mother,” comparing it with the womb of a woman (Heckewelder, 1876:249). He cites various opinions as to whether the ancestors were completely in human form at that time, or were in the forms of animals. This was a subterranean preparatory state until “they were permitted to come out and take their station on this island as the Lords of the rest of the Creation” (Heckewelder, 1876:250).

The impact of the equation of the land with a tortoise is significant in that it reinforces the notion that even the land itself has a “spirit” and that the Lenape viewed themselves as having their origin linked with the land. This notion remains evident in principle among the contemporary Nanticoke-Lenape tribal communities.

### **2.2.3 Lenape Interaction with European Explorers, the Swedes, and the Dutch**

The history retained by the Lenape and other tribes of the region indicates that the population prior to European contact was numerous. As early as 1524 the European explorer Giovanni D. Verrazano remarked that the shores of the land of the Lenape were densely populated (Dowd, 2001:68). The memoirs of the Quaker minister James Daniels included the observation that at the end of the seventeenth century in Salem County, the area of the modern Nanticoke Lenni-Lenape of New Jersey, “the white people were few, and the natives [sic] a multitude” (Elmer, 1869:6).

In the early 1600s the establishment of “New Netherland” by Dutch commercial interests was swiftly followed by the establishment of the colony of the Swedes, known as “New Sweden,” along the Delaware Bay. Early contact was met with the cultural understanding of obligatory hospitality by the Lenape (Fur, 2009:15; Lindstrom, 1928:233).

Early interaction with European settlers led to much misunderstanding. The Lenape had no concept of private land ownership. The view of the ancients was that land was owned by the Creator and was used by the community (Kraft, 2001:427). The Creator had given use of the land to the Lenape who were to share it among themselves and with the other creatures living upon it. The Lenape lived in relationship to the land the Creator had given them. The thought that they, or anyone, had the right to sell the Creator’s land in a “fee simple” European fashion was a completely foreign concept (Kraft, 2001:426-427). The primary possessors of the land held by a Lenape community were the women (Fur, 2009:84), while the men were charged with defending the land. In all likelihood the early land purchases, which in a European view had been the transfer of all rights and usage in perpetuity, were viewed by the Lenape as the granting of permission to share a portion of the land that would still remain ultimately under tribal control (Kraft, 2001:426-427) with hunting, fishing, and farming rights intact. The Lenape requirement for regular tribute as an acknowledgment of this relationship was misinterpreted by many European settlers who had presumed that the transaction had taken place in the European manner, being unaware or dismissive of the Lenape perspective (Kraft, 2001:426).

Frustration over Dutch intimidation and encroachment overcame the Lenape tradition of hospitality, trade, and tolerance. Frustration between the Lenape and Dutch settlers in the southern portion of the Lenape homeland resulted in the 1632 attack and burning of the small Dutch colony of Zwaanendael in what is today Sussex County, Delaware. By 1639 such tensions culminated in a war between the Lenape and the Dutch.

New Netherland Governor Kieft lamented underestimating Lenape military might and stated that, “These heathens are strong in might; they have formed an alliance with seven other nations; [and] are well provided with guns, powder and lead.” It is also reported that the Lenape killed every man they could get their hands on, but one

observer noted that he never heard that they did any harm to the women and children, unlike Europeans (Dowd, 2001:39).

The Lenape relationship with the colonists of New Sweden was less hostile than with the Dutch, but was by no means “cozy.” New Sweden governor Johan Printz wrote in 1644, “nothing would be better than that a couple of hundred soldiers should be sent here and kept here until we broke the necks of all of them” (Dowd, 2001:41). The governor’s hostile intentions toward the Lenape were made clear as he stated, “I would perceive a couple of hundred good soldiers and in addition necessary means and good officers, then with the help of God not a single Savage would be allowed to live in this river” (Dowd, 2001:42). Even with this tension, the relationship between the Swedes and the Lenape is remembered in modern times as being generally friendly, though there are some who have suggested that this was because the kingdom of Sweden was not prepared to resupply or provide military support to their colony in the way that other colonial governments were attempting to do.

#### **2.2.4 Lenape Interaction with the English**

In 1655 the southern Lenape were dealing primarily with the Dutch who had conquered New Sweden. This political shift would not last long, as the Dutch could not resist the intent of the English to colonize the eastern seaboard. By 1664, New Netherland had fallen and the English laid claim to most of the eastern part of North America.

In the midst of this colonization and war, the Lenape were most catastrophically impacted by European diseases for which the Lenape had no immunities (Fur, 2009:203; Grumet, 1995:239). Prior to this, it was noted that most of the Indians were in remarkably good health and that there had been many thousand around the area of New Sweden (Fur, 2009:73). The population declined by as much as 90 percent between 1620 and 1640 (Dowd, 2001:43). A letter from Swedish pastors to the consistory at Uppsala Archdiocese in 1697 indicated that the “heathens are now very few... God has caused them to die through infectious diseases and Civil War, etc.” (Fur, 2009:73). With constant encroachment of European colonists and the devastation of disease, only small remnant communities of Lenape remained in New Jersey, with the main body of the Lenape people migrating westward, beyond the Delaware River, between 1664 and 1740. Those who remained on the eastern side of the Delaware River

and Bay sought ways to stay on the land by living among the English colonists (Weslager, 2003:277). This marked the beginning of a historical and cultural divide between those who remained in the homeland and those who would begin a westward migration that, over the next century, would lead some Lenape as far north as Ontario, Canada, and others as far west as Oklahoma.

### **2.2.5 The Lenape and British Colonies of New Jersey and Pennsylvania**

The ancestors of the modern Nanticoke-Lenape community in southern New Jersey were among the first to have dealings with the Society of Friends, commonly known as “Quakers” (Weslager, 2003:147). The Quakers’ top agenda appeared not to be to convert the Indians, but rather to befriend them, trade with them, and live in harmony with them (Weslager, 2003:156). Lenape Chief Ockanickon was buried at the base of a large sycamore tree in 1681 near the Friends Meeting House in Burlington, New Jersey, which was founded as a Quaker settlement. His marker, placed there in 1910, reads, “Near this spot lies the body of the Indian Chief Ockanickon, friend of the white man, whose last words were ‘Be plain and fair to all Both Indian and Christian As I have been’” (Sarapin, 2002:154). This sentiment reflected his position in dealing with the early Quaker settlers, who continued to celebrate him for his gracious and noble ways. The words are reportedly what he stated to his hand-picked successor, his own nephew, as he lay on his deathbed (Stevens, 2006:186-188.)

The impact of the Quakers cannot be overstated; their approach to land acquisition and religious and racial tolerance provided a “safe haven” for Lenape people choosing to remain around the region of the Delaware Bay.

William Penn came, with his train of pacific followers. Never will the Delawares forget their elder brother Miquon, as they affectionately and respectfully called him. From his first arrival in their country, a friendship was formed between them which was to last as long as the sun should shine, and the rivers flow with water. That friendship would undoubtedly have continued to the end of time, had their good brother always remained among them, but in his absence, mischievous people, say they, got into power, who, not content with the land which had been given to them, contrived to get all that they wanted (Heckewelder, 1876:66).

Even upon the departure of William Penn and the subsequent betrayal of the Lenape by his son, Governor Thomas Penn, who orchestrated the infamous “Walking Purchase” of 1737, swindling thousands of acres of Lenape land and pushing those already west of

the Delaware River even further west (Weslager, 2003:188-191), there were those who remained in small “Indian towns” (Grumet, 1995:239), often in proximity to Quaker communities. The remaining small remnant communities of mostly Christianized Indians refused to depart from their homeland (Weslager, 2003:277). They had survived European encroachment, disease, violence, and cultural insensitivities. They continued by slowly assimilating into the larger society of European settlers, while maintaining their ethnic identity and community cohesion. In 1758 an effort was made to provide a safe haven for the remaining Lenape of New Jersey by establishing a reservation, under the direction of the Rev. John Brainerd, in Burlington County known as “Brotherton” (Kraft, 2003:468). However, when New Jersey formed the Brotherton reservation for its remaining Indians, the majority of New Jersey Lenape Indian families refused to give up their independence and take up permanent residence within the reservation’s boundaries (Kraft, 2003:470). By the time the Brotherton reservation was disbanded in 1801, there were only approximately sixty to seventy individuals residing within its boundaries. Until its disbanding, individual Indians and families would visit the reservation and its few permanent inhabitants, but rejected becoming wards of the state at Brotherton (Fleming, 2005:63), and eventually became largely ignored by the colonial government, overlooked in official records, and even mostly forgotten by the descendants of those in the westward migration of the main body of Lenape people. However, Rev. Brainerd records their existence in his journals into the early 1760s (Fleming, 2005:55-58; Dowd, 2001:58). In 1823, about a century after the main body of Lenape left New Jersey, the treaty signed on 23 September 1823 in Vernon, New York, between the Muhheconnuck Tribe (which became the Stockbridge Nation of Wisconsin) and the Brotherton Indians who took refuge among them, makes specific reference to the benefits of that agreement being bestowed upon them and any of their “scattered brethren in the state of New Jersey, to them and to their offspring stock and kindred forever” (Kraft, 2003:472).

### **2.3 Historical Overview of the Nanticoke from the Colonial Period**

Around the area of the eastern Chesapeake Bay, between the western and eastern shores of Virginia and Maryland, the major European colonial influence in the seventeenth century was the British. The Jamestown Colony, established in the land of the Powhatan Confederacy on the mainland of what would be called “Virginia” by the colonists, also impacted the indigenous people of the eastern side of the Chesapeake Bay. Among the

individually named and governed villages on the peninsula between the eastern shore of the Chesapeake Bay and the southwestern shore of the Poutaxat Bay, which came to be known as the Delaware Bay, were those collectively known as the “Wenetko” by the Lenape to the north, who called themselves the “Nentego” (Heckewelder, 1876:92), and were called the “Nanticoke” by the British (Grumet, 1995:244). A darker pigmentation distinguishes the Nanticoke from the other tribes of their region (Howard, 1975:1). They were respected among the neighboring nations.

### **2.3.1 Nanticoke Identity, Lifeways, Worldview, and Placement among Other Tribes**

The ancient Nanticoke, meaning the “Tidewater People” (Heckewelder, 1876:92), lived along the tributaries to the eastern shore of Chesapeake Bay on the central Delmarva Peninsula. They viewed themselves as having originated from among the Lenape, with whom they are of common stock, and whom they referred to as “grandfathers” (Heckewelder, 1876:90; Scharf, 1888:89). The common tradition among the Lenape and Nanticoke is that the latter, along with the Shawnee, divided from the main body of Lenape in ancient times (Heckewelder, 1876:90). The Nanticoke migrated south on to the banks of the tributaries of Chesapeake Bay. After settling there, they were joined by many Lenape, adding to their number (Heckewelder, 1876:90). Nanticoke tradition also holds that the Conoy Indians, also known as “Piscataway,” originated from among them, settling on the shores of the Potomac and Susquehanna rivers (Heckewelder, 1876:90).

The Nanticoke were the most numerous of all the Delmarva tribes and dominant over the peninsula. The Nanticoke were known for their skill at basket making and for possessing a great number of furs. They are also known for having an abundance of roenoke, a form of oyster and clamshell wampum shaped into beads and used in a similar manner as the clamshell and quahog shell wampum of the tribes north of them (Weslager, 1943:42). Closely related to the Lenape historically, culturally, linguistically, and spiritually (Weslager, 1983:37, 41, 44), in 1653 the Nanticoke, called “cousins” by the tribes of the Iroquois Confederacy (Porter, 1979:331), also became a political subordinate or tributary to the Iroquois Confederacy, the influence of which was encroaching southward into their region during the early colonial period (Weslager, 1983:126).

Many of their lifeways were very similar to their Lenape forebears. The Nanticoke dwelled in wigwam style homes (Porter, 1987:27; Weslager, 1983:39) and also in longhouses (Norwood, 1650:35). Early accounts include depictions of their hospitality (Norwood, 1650:34), as long as they did not feel threatened. A 1650 account of desperate and starving English immigrants marooned by their shipmates in Nanticoke territory resulted in the Nanticoke warmly greeting them, rescuing them, providing them shelter in their village, and arranging for their eventual transport to their destination (Norwood, 1650:29).

Unlike the Lenape, the Nanticoke had a more structured and centralized form of government. A paramount chief, grand sachem or “tallak” (Vans Murray, 1893:13) was vested with the authority to speak for the entire tribe. This paramount, later to be called “Emperor” by the English, rose to office by heredity but was confirmed by a vote of the people. Lesser village chiefs, or “werowances,” were under the authority of the paramount chief (Rountree & Davidson, 1977:95; Porter, 1987:31). Like the Lenape, a war chief or captain would be selected to lead in times of war (Porter, 1987:31). The centralized national government under a Nanticoke paramount chief was reported to have continued through at least thirteen generations by 1660, and extended beyond the Nanticoke proper to include the Conoy and all of the tribes of what would become the Maryland colonial province (Mooney, 1910:25).

As with their Lenape cousins, the Nanticoke women had primary responsibility for tending to the crops. Men would hunt and trap game. Fish would be caught by spear, bow and arrow, nets, and even through a method wherein they would be driven by man-made barriers into fenced in areas or large baskets (Porter, 1987: 26).

Time was calculated according to the position of the sun during the day. Pointing to the sky in the direction and elevation of the sun would provide an approximation for when a certain event was intended to occur (Norwood, 1650: 28-29).

The Nanticoke were viewed by their sister tribes as particularly industrious and possessing special skills. They were known as bridge builders, constructing bridge works over the creeks and rivers of their territory (Heckewelder, 1876:92). They were also greatly feared for their knowledge of herbal poisons. It was thought that the Nanticoke poisons were so potent that they could destroy an entire settlement of people

(Heckewelder, 1876:92). However, the intrigue around the Nanticoke also extended into presumed supernatural powers.

... it is certain that they are very much dreaded on this account; I have known Indians who firmly believe that they had people among them who could, if they pleased, destroy a whole army, by merely blowing their breath towards them. Those of the Lenape and other tribes, who pretend to witchcraft, say that they learned the science from the Nanticoke; they are not unwilling to be taxed with being wizards, as it makes them feared by their neighbors (Heckewelder, 1876:92).

Not much has been recorded about the ancient spiritual beliefs and practices of the Nanticoke. Most accounts indicate that they were similar to the Lenape in regard to their cosmology and religious practices. However, among the accounts of the ancient Nanticoke beliefs there are those which stand out as differing from the Lenape, with the focus being on their regard for, and treatment of, the remains of the deceased. The burial custom of the ancient Nanticoke was a three stage process. A special wigwam, called a "quiackeson" or "chiacason," was reserved for the placement of the remains. In some cases bodies were mummified and in others a priest would scrape the flesh from the bones. After a time in this structure, the remains were put in the pit for up to seven years. Afterward, the bones would be ceremonially gathered and buried again in a common grave or ossuary (Porter, 1987: 32-33).

The Nanticoke had great deference for the bones of their ancestors and loved ones. They had the custom of exhuming the bones from their burial place to bring with them as they migrated. This was a practice so well embedded in their culture that those who undertook the long trek away from the eastern shore to Pennsylvania and New York brought not only ancient bones, but even those that had not been dead long enough to have decayed to mere skeletons.

In earlier times when they were known to go from Wyoming and Chemenk, to fetch the bones of their dead from the Eastern shore of Maryland, even when the bodies were in a putrid state, so that they had to take off the flesh and scrape the bones clean, before they could carry them along [sic]. I well remember having seen them between the years 1750 and 1760, loaded with such bones, which, being fresh, caused a disagreeable stench, as they passed through the town of Bethlehem (Heckewelder, 1876:92).

The unique ceremony conducted by the Nanticoke included the use of the actual bones of their ancestors, which they would use in a type of "spirit dance," which came to be known as the Nanticoke Ghost-Dance or Nanticoke Skeleton Dance (Harrington,

1921:183; Howard, 1975:8). The ceremony was a way of honoring and communing with their beloved dead. It is thought that the ceremony also allowed for a certain sense of “closure” for mourners (Nehnalhamat, 2013). Following the ceremony, the bones would be wrapped and reinterred. This dance would later be incorporated into the ceremonies of the Lenape–Delaware tribe of Oklahoma, into which many Nanticoke families merged through the long migration westward (Howard, 1975:8).

The ancient Nanticoke referred to God as “Mannitt” (Vans Murray, 1893:11) or “Manito” (Porter, 1987:31), which was related to the Lenape word “Manetu” for “spirit.” The Nanticoke offered “first fruits of the harvest, hunt, or fishing to the Great Spirit, whom they viewed as the source of all good things” (Porter, 1987:31). While there are some who have suggested that the Nanticoke had a concept of the devil, which they called “Mattantote” (Vans Murray 1893:9), other sources have indicated that the concept of a personal devil is something that was derived only after European contact and Christian influence (Hubert & Schwarze, 1910:130).

Other than their rituals dealing with the dead and their notorious knowledge of herbal poisons and potions, ancient Nanticoke traditions appear to be a version of Lenape traditions (Brinton, 1885:139), with few specific details being reported by observers. Like their Lenape “grandfathers,” the Nanticoke held that the Great Spirit had designated subordinate spirits governing various forces and elements in nature, which were worthy of respect and acknowledgement (Porter, 1987:31). A regional reference to these lesser spirits was “quiocosock,” which was anglicized to “okee” or “okeus” (Roundtree & Davidson, 1977:42). Similar to the misunderstanding of the Lenape “manetuwak,” “okee” came to be viewed as either the devil or referring to demons from a European colonial perspective (Porter, 1987:31), leaving a legacy of misrepresentation and error. Sacred seasonal ceremonies were held in special wigwams set aside for that purpose, and incorporated the use of songs, dances, prayers, and tobacco (Porter, 1987:31; Weslager, 1983:41).

While also demonstrating deference for the tortoise as a symbol, the ancient Nanticoke are noted for the additional story of their origins called “The Six Nanticokes” although some sources render it “The Seven Nanticokes.” The essence of the story is that six (or seven) Indian men found themselves sitting upon a sea coast, but “knew not how they came there, whether they were created on the spot, or came from some other place

beyond the seas, and that by these the country was peopled” (Loskiel, 1794:Part I. 24). While the story is of ancient origin, when viewing it as a story of human origins it should be stated that this allegory is not a singular or absolute view of the creation of humans, which is told in other ways. Also, the perspective in the story that the six (or seven) Nanticokes were the first of men is contradicted by the historical view of the Nanticoke that they originated from among the Lenape, whom they called “Grandfathers.” It is possible that this story recalls the origin of the Nanticoke as a people separate from the Lenape, with the six (or seven) progenitors being memorialized in the tale. The sudden appearance on the shore need not be “super-spiritualized” but could possibly refer to the eastern shore of the Chesapeake Bay, which is the western border of the Nanticoke homeland. The lack of understanding as to how they arrived could possibly refer to finding themselves upon land after being in the midst of the bay in their canoes without sight of land for a time.

### **2.3.2 Nanticoke Interaction with European Explorers**

Early contact included an initial hostile interchange with Captain John Smith of the Jamestown colony. In 1608, during his expedition of the Chesapeake tributaries, his ship was attacked by a Kuskarwoak band of Nanticoke warriors, whose arrows either could not reach the deck of the ship or who were intentionally seeking to merely frighten off its captain and crew. The hostility may have been due to previous negative encounters with European explorers (Weslager, 1983:97). Captain Smith’s ship remained in the middle of the river overnight, to the frustration of the Nanticoke warriors. Further exploration on the opposite side of the river revealed an empty village, where Captain Smith left tribute of glass beads, bells, pieces of copper, and a looking glass in token of friendship. His hope was that they would be accepted by the Nanticoke upon their return. After being convinced that Smith did not have hostile intentions, it was determined that hospitality would be extended to Smith and his crew. His tokens of friendship had been well received, and the Nanticoke responded with men, women, and children bringing food, water, and furs. The relationship between Captain Smith and the Nanticoke grew as tribesmen served as guides for Smith’s further exploration of what would become called the Nanticoke River. Captain Smith would later remark that the Nanticoke were the best merchants of all (Porter, 1987:15-16).

### **2.3.3 The Nanticoke and British Colonies of Maryland and Delaware**

In 1642 the Nanticoke, Wiccomiss, and Susquehannock tribes were declared enemies of the Maryland colony. This declaration of war against the Nanticoke and Wiccomiss was rescinded, but by 1667 all-out war with the Wiccomiss resulted in the tribe being defeated by the English and sold into slavery in Barbados (Marye, 1939:51-52). On May 1, 1668, the first of five treaties between the Nanticoke and the colony of Maryland was signed by Paramount Chief Unnacokasimmon. At the time, the Nanticoke were described as the head of the Confederation of tribes on the Delmarva and had absorbed the surviving Wiccomiss (Marye, 1939:53-54).

In 1698 the Chicone reservation was established for Nanticoke Indian tribal activity by the colony of Maryland (Porter, 1987:42). Several Indian towns, including Puckhamee, were occupied by the tribe. However, with the establishment of the reservation, white colonists took over the Indian town of Puckhamee (Weslager, 1983:115). In 1711 the Broad Creek reservation was also set aside by the Maryland legislature for the Nanticoke Indians (Porter, 1987:42). By the mid-1700s the Nanticoke had also occupied the Indian River reservation, also known as "Askekesky," absorbing families from the dispersed Delmarva bands of various tribes of Algonkian Indians already living there since its establishment in 1711 (Roundtree & Davidson, 1977:129-130).

A 1742 incident involving the gathering of representatives of several remaining tribal communities on the Delmarva, at a place known as Winnasocum Swamp, caused panic among colonists (Porter, 1987:46). The presumption was that a rebellion was being planned. Some stories have even suggested that the old Nanticoke skill in preparing poisons was intended to be used to attack the colonists. While it was never proven that this was the intention, Nanticoke leaders, and ancestors of the modern Nanticoke-Lenape communities, John and Dixon Coursey, along with Lenape leader George Puckham, were listed among those who signed a treaty of peace with the colonists prior to any hostilities (Weslager, 1943:40-58).

The treaty of peace between the colonists and the Nanticoke was honored by the Nanticoke. In 1758 Nanticoke tribal ancestors Nathan Norwood and Daniel Norwood were listed on the May 22<sup>nd</sup> muster roll for service in the French and Indian War (Heite & Heite, 1982?). Even with this demonstration of loyalty to the colonial government, by

1768 the Chicone reservation was declared vacated by non-tribal authorities, and the land was allowed to be sold to colonists. The Nanticoke, however, ensured that a woman and two children remained at the Broad Creek Reservation, continuing the Indian occupation, so that it could not be declared vacant under Maryland law (Weslager, 1983:131). Occupation was required in order to maintain the reservation land, even though it had been traditional for the Nanticoke to migrate between at least two villages seasonally (Porter, 1979:329; Weslager, 1983:131).

By the end of the American Revolution, with the continuing encroachment upon traditional tribal land and even the disbanding of the reservations, the few remaining Nanticoke who had not migrated away from the Delmarva Peninsula were mostly clustered around the area of Indian River Hundred, the area of the old Indian River Reservation, with a few individuals also holding on in the area of what had been the Broad Creek reservation.

## **2.4 Historical Overview of the Nanticoke-Lenape of the Delaware Bay**

While the Nanticoke and Lenape were related tribes, with their own history indicating intermingling on the Delmarva Peninsula prior to European contact, it was European encroachment that caused the remaining Indians and coalescing villages of tribal people around the Delaware Bay to have a unique new identity as an extended family that was the result of a merger between the two tribes into three continuing tribal communities. Interconnected bloodlines between the continuing communities in southern New Jersey and Delaware led researcher Edward Heite, while commenting on his report “Mitsawokett to Bloomsbury” (Heite & Blume, 2008), to state that,

The Nanticoke, the New Jersey Lenape, and the Cheswold community of today are genealogically indistinguishable. If you were to list the three communities in 1750, you would find their descendants today are about equally distributed among the three communities. Indeed, they are one and the same extended family. This is important to the argument that the Indians became a self-selecting isolate, and that an infrastructure survived during the period of invisibility (Heite, 1998).

### **2.4.1 The Breakup of Lenape and Nanticoke National Life around the Delaware Bay and the Coalescing of the Remnant Tribal Communities**

The power of the Lenape Confederacy to the north was in decline around the Delaware Bay as the main body of Lenape people began moving west out of New Jersey and northern Delaware. Remnant tribal communities began to hold a balance between ancient tribalism and adapting new European ways of living as a survival strategy. There is some indication that during the latter half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century the authority of the Nanticoke chiefs was at least passively acknowledged within the Cheswold community (Anon., 1892).

For most of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the three communities of Nanticoke-Lenape people around the Delaware Bay functioned within an informal non-matriarchal “family clan” type of governance without formal chieftaincies (Gilbert, 1948:414-416). When asked about the form of governance during this period, Chief Mark Gould of the Nanticoke-Lenape responded that respected members of each of the three tribal communities would guide and defend the families and reinforce values. It was governance by consensus following moral leadership (Gould, 2012). Tribal congregations grew in their importance as they helped to maintain tribal identity and cohesion.

Survival as a tribal community also meant enforcing the practice of endogamy between the three tribal communities, creating close kinship ties (Weslager, 1943:140-142; 1983:252). When asked about the push for intermarriage between the three tribal communities, Chief Mark Gould stated that banishment from the community was a consequence for unapproved marriages to non-tribal people, which is also cited by the anthropologist C. A. Weslager (1943:41). Tribal elders would conduct various activities to bring young adults of marrying age to the sister communities so that they could meet one another for the purpose of courtship. Young adults were told that they had to marry among “our people” (Gould, 2012).

The community was defended from external harassment through community policing. Firearm-wielding men would patrol the streets, chasing away unapproved “outsiders” lingering too late into the evening (Hearth, 2008:103). Chief Mark Gould remarked that if a tribal community member felt there was a danger, they would go outside of their

home and fire two shotgun blasts into the air, summoning the community's assistance. Within moments, a posse of armed tribal men would come to their aid (Gould, 2012).

Tribally established schools came to be in the latter 1800s. As early as 1834 the Bridgeton tribal community in Cumberland County, New Jersey, established their own school, with the Cheswold tribal community in Kent County, Delaware, doing the same in 1877. The Millsboro tribal community, in Sussex County, Delaware, sent representatives to the Delaware state legislature in 1881 in order to gain an exemption from a school tax and maintain tribal control over their local community school (Delaware, 1881). They were successful in doing so, and continued to zealously defend the right to have schools exclusively for Nanticoke children.

#### **2.4.2 The Adoption of New Lifeways and Nanticoke-Lenape Interactions during the Early Federal Period**

Nanticoke-Lenape in each of the three communities had to adapt to a European American way of life in order to survive and remain in their homeland around the Delaware Bay. No longer would they be primarily matriarchal, but would adopt the European patriarchal ways, passing down surnames from their father's line. The role of women began to shift in order to accommodate non-Native expectations. Property was now primarily owned by men (Fur, 2009:84). Within the tribal communities, however, the role of women remained quietly powerful, echoing ancient tribal ways.

There was a new understanding of deeded land ownership (Porter, 1979:325). Prominent community members ensured that as much land as possible remained under tribal control by purchasing large tracts and securing deeds. The people were primarily farmers, tradesmen, and a few were merchants (Porter, 1979:336). They continued subsistence hunting and fishing well into the twentieth century. Farming was a departure from the traditional role of men, as it had been viewed as related to female procreative power in ancient times.

## **2.5 Traditional Spiritual Foundations and Adapting Christian Spiritual Formation during the Era of Initial Nanticoke and Lenape Conversion to Christianity**

Tribal regalia was replaced with European-style clothing (Weslager, 1983:16, 19). This is significant because many elements of traditional regalia had great spiritual significance. Some items could be badges of honor. Others could be religious talismans symbolizing spiritual strength or protection from evil spirits. The change in dress indicated a shift in social and spiritual customs.

The traditional tribal languages faded away. The Lenape language, though well recorded by Moravian missionaries, remained intact only with those who migrated westward and, by the late 1900s, would subsequently fade to only a handful of born speakers (Lenape Talking Dictionary, 2013). At least two Lenape dialects, Northern Unami and Unalachtigo, would fade from use completely, with one, Unalachtigo, practically becoming extinct for lack of record. Nanticoke would become extinct in the mid-1800s (Weslager, 1983:224), with only a handful of vocabulary words being recorded, the most notable effort completed at the request of Thomas Jefferson in 1792 (Vans Murray, 1893:1). The loss of language would equate to a breach in the transmission of cultural perspectives in many areas of life. Words carry more than their definition, they carry a worldview. Now long forgotten or misinterpreted, the meanings of ancient place names resulted in a diminished understanding of the depth of the ancient connection with tribal spaces. Spiritual perspectives were impacted as the nuances of meaning of traditional names for some items were lost as they were replaced by English words. Words that traditionally related a sense of an item being “animate,” such as wampum, no longer carried the sense of living spiritual significance.

### **2.5.1 Ancient Spiritual Traditions among the Nanticoke and Lenape during the Rise of the “Praying Indians” and “Praying Indian Towns” and the Impact of Colonial Era Missionaries**

The preparation of the dead began to change with the onset of embalming; the sacred blood would be separated from the body, its significance lost to the coming generations. The old burial practices of the Nanticoke faded away in favor of Christian style burials. Graves came to be marked with a log stuck in the ground. This practice was transformed into traditional gravestones by the mid-1800s.

Outward displays of tribal spirituality were impacted by the fear of being viewed as a threat by European American neighbors. The seasonal ceremonies that would be filled with dance, drumming, and use of the prayer pipe were transformed into seasonal gatherings of the core Christian congregations, with the three communities coming together for special worship and festivals (Gould, 2012; Drain, 2012). In ancient times, inducing sweat while praying in an enclosed steam filled hut as water was ritually poured upon hot stones was a common communal hygienic and spiritual ceremonial practice. However, during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the open practice of utilizing this “sweat lodge” ceremony was becoming only a distant memory passed down in stories from one generation to the next. Individual prayers were no longer sung with the rhythm being kept by a drum, rattle, or the beating of sticks. The practice of smudging, using the smoke of burning tobacco or cedar to bless and spiritually cleanse, or equating the rising smoke from the smudge pot or offering tobacco in the fire with the rising of prayers to the Creator was condemned by the instruction of non-tribal preachers and missionaries. Such practices were not only condemned by denominational leaders, but were even illegal until the United States Congress passed the American Indian Religious Freedom Act of 1978. The open use of the prayer pipe was almost completely abandoned and the significance of wampum almost lost. While some of these practices would continue in certain families, they were not openly shared or discussed.

The fear of openly practicing ancient ways was well founded. Many preachers and missionaries that came to the community were convinced that such ways were associated with the worship of the devil (Lindstrom, 1928:208). Anything that was not done from a Western Christian perspective was discounted as savage and evil. Moreover, the 1830 Federal Indian Removal Act essentially made it illegal to be Indian east of the Mississippi River. Many tribes that openly identified themselves as such and had formally maintained government affairs with the United States found themselves forced further west into constantly shrinking reservations on what would be called “Indian territory.” In some states, individuals identified as Indian could not own land, and other tribal people who did not have European surnames could not own land. The fear of removal, loss of property, religious persecution, and even loss of life were all strong motivators for the tribal community not to be too overt in pronouncing their tribal identity and continuing ancient tribal traditions.

One's dream life was rarely discussed as having the same level of importance, which used to be almost as significant as one's awakened state. Dreams and visions had been viewed as a way that messages would often be received from the Creator or lesser spirits (Harrington, 1921: 61). The importance of dreams was frowned upon by the non-tribal religious leaders.

The concept of time began to change. Time, for the ancient Nanticoke and Lenape, was cyclical (Fur, 2009:24). There was a repetitious and rhythmic nature in all things. Now, time became measured by mechanical devices. It was no longer matched with the rhythms of nature, and was no longer based upon approximation; it was now linear and precise within Western culture.

The sense of balance and harmony with nature in the strict spiritual taboos against exploitation of the environment and animals was now being undermined in favor of profit motives. The old stories and ceremonies that reminded the tribal community of those ancient balances were forbidden.

### **2.5.2 Racial Misidentification, Reclassification, and the Consequences of Conversion When a Common Perspective Was That one Could Not Be Both Indian and Christian.**

Racial reassignment became racial misidentification institutionalized as a form of administrative genocide by erasure in public records. This began early on as the concept of a Christian Indian was not readily accepted by some colonists. One could either be Christian or Indian, but not both at the same time. Baptized Indians, who were then expected to adopt certain European lifestyles and to accept European names, would be reclassified in public records as "mulattos," "free people of color," or "colored." In some instances individual tribal members were not racially identified at all, or their race would switch with their economic status, sometimes being considered "colored," sometimes not identified, and even sometimes being called "white." In one well documented case, an ancestor of the Kent County Lenape community, John Puckham, who had been identified as an Indian prior to baptism, was reclassified after baptism and his racial designation was changed to "mulatto" in 1682 (Heite & Heite, 1982?).

Edward “Ned” Heite, a noted archaeologist and anthropologist for the State of Delaware, states that even in colonial times, according to the 1740 law labelled 13 George II Chapter LXXIV, the government took steps to define an “Indian” as a non-Christian living in the woods and eating primarily deer meat. This definition was later modified in 1770 in the Minutes of the Delaware Legislature 270 to refer exclusively to those living far away from the state (Heite, 1997?).

Errors in identification were further perpetuated as some Indians were enslaved in both states. White racial bias and stereotyping eventually viewed all mixed race Indians remaining in the eastern part of the country as “mulatto,” which they would eventually equate with being negro, regardless of the individual genealogy or ethnic identity; this is an error continued by some researchers even today.

Non-tribal community appellations and ambiguous descriptions confused the matter of identity even further. A common term used for Nanticoke–Lenape men in colonial era military records was “brown” in the same manner that “negro” would be used to designate someone of African heritage. Interestingly, the physical appearance of the Indians of the Delaware Bay region was also characterized as “black” as early as the 1680s by Pennsylvania governor, William Penn (Penn, 1970:21), and was even a self-description used by the Indians (Edwards & Dwight, 1822:348). Additionally, beginning in the Kent County community and spreading both south to Sussex and north to southern New Jersey was the designation “Moor.” Some have suggested that this was because the Cheswold community was once called, “Moortown,” after a prominent white landholder, with the indigenous people being called “original Moors” (Scharf, 1888:1124). There is also the romanticized legend that Spanish or Portuguese Moorish sailors had come among the Nanticoke and intermarried with them in pre-colonial times, and were the source of this designation (Weslager, 1943:27-28).

Further illustrating the issue of racial misidentification is the 1855 case of Levin Sockum and Isaac Harmon, which took place in Delaware. A recent law disallowing “Negroes” to own firearms was applied in the prosecution of the two Nanticoke tribal members, as one had sold a firearm to the other. Lydia Norwood Clark, a native speaking respected tribal elder frequently visited by Indians from outside of Delaware, was called a “Nanticoke Indian,” by the state prosecutor in the case. Non-Natives, who maintained a racial bias against the tribal community, dedicated a modest monument to

Lydia Clark in 1927, remembering her as an authentic “aborigine” (Weslager, 1943:38). They were probably recalling the physical description of Lydia Norwood Clark recorded by those present during her court testimony, which referred to her as a “perfect Indian type.” It is worth noting that the witness had retained many of the old traditions, was dressed in tribal regalia, and reportedly lived in a relatively traditional style dwelling in her elder years. She was viewed as authentic, while her siblings, who had adopted European American clothing, housing, and some lifeways, were not viewed in the same fashion. Lydia Clark testified that there were some who had believed the romantic tale that prior to the American Revolution the marriage of an African prince to an Irish woman had produced offspring that subsequently intermarried with some Nanticoke families. Even though the witness would later indicate that she did not personally hold this belief, testimony was used to focus in on the possible small percentage of African blood which Sockum and Harmon may have had, which in spite of their Nanticoke ancestry and ethnicity, rendered them in the eyes of the white population as “Negro.” The defendants were found guilty (Fisher, 1895).

Further racial reclassification appears in public records, as some individuals previously described as “Indian” on muster rolls, suddenly become “free persons of color” in the census records and “mulattos” in other records. Additionally, Indians with some amount of non-Indian ancestry would often be reclassified and no longer acknowledged as Indian in public records (Tayac & Schupman, 2006:18-19). The term “mulatto,” which in the United States came to mean exclusively a person of African and European admixture, was originally also used of American Indians who were baptized as Christian converts, or those who were of American Indian and any other racial admixture (Hubert & Schwarze, 1999:124).

The issue of maintaining tribal identity became extremely important because of the outside pressure of those who would deny the tribal identity and heritage. This struggle was held in tension with the fact that being openly identified as Indian could result in legal persecution, economic subjugation, social alienation, and religious condemnation.

### **2.5.3 The Rise of Church-Based Tribal Governance among the Nanticoke-Lenape**

Maintaining an internal tribal identity in a fashion that was safe and socially acceptable increased the role of the tribal congregations. Christian Indians were considered to be

“civilized” by European American standards. The tribal identity would merge with the congregational identity, which would not be viewed as a threat, or questioned, or challenged. Tribal governance could take place within the confines of the church, which was a safe place for regular meetings, gatherings, and celebrations. Such events were not only essential for the cohesion of the individual tribal community, but were vital for maintaining a safe and acceptable connection with each of the other two sister tribal communities around the Delaware Bay.

## **2.6 Conclusion**

European contact and colonization had a devastating effect on the Nanticoke and Lenape. They suffered a drastic reduction in their population from epidemics, hostile engagements, and forced migration. This loss of population and territory, together with the imposition of colonial authority, resulted in the destabilizing of tribal autonomy. The approach to missions by the colonizers often misunderstood and demeaned tribal traditional beliefs, culture, and lifeways, while requiring colonial cultural assimilation. Tribal destabilization gave rise to the coalescing of the remaining Nanticoke and Lenape tribal people into three tribally integrated communities of “Praying Indian” converts to Christianity who adapted to life among the colonists. Christian conversion among the remaining tribal people resulted in a redefining and reclassifying of racial identity in public records by non-Native authorities. The rise of tribal churches at the center of the three Nanticoke-Lenape communities determined to stay in their ancient homeland, was a zealously protected means for the survival of some sense of tribal identity, governance, and cohesion within, and between, the communities. While the Nanticoke-Lenape have reasserted formal non-church-based tribal governance in the modern era, the historic tribal churches in each community remain venues for tribal community interaction.

### **3.0 DISCOVERY DOCTRINES AND THE ASSAULT ON NANTICOKE-LENAPE TRIBAL SURVIVAL**

#### **3.1 European Formal and Informal Discovery Doctrines Influence on Early Contact with American Indians**

When Christian Europeans came to the lands of the Nanticoke and Lenape, they came with a backdrop of cultural perspectives and presumptions that impacted their view of the rights, dignity, and humanity of the indigenous people they would encounter. Shawnee/Lenape scholar and activist Steven T. Newcomb states that, “The Christian Europeans experienced our ancestors through the prism of their own conceptual systems and categories. Unfortunately, they understood our ancestors to be *literally* heathens, pagans, infidels, uncivilized, barbarians, subhuman, and so forth” (Newcomb, 2008: xvii). While not every individual interaction would be tainted by the presumption of Christian European primacy, the perspective would become the foundational doctrine of colonialism. From early European exploration of North America through to the establishment of Federal Indian Law and Policy in the United States, the presumed right to claim dominion over the lands and lives of the indigenous peoples has been guided by the Doctrine of Discovery, which was primarily developed in the fifteenth century for the purpose of justifying European-Christian land claims in non-European / non-Christian lands (Miller, 2010:51). What average Americans typically hold as the history of their nation is a romanticized story of the triumph of western culture in North America, which is typically viewed as a tragedy by the indigenous people of the continent (Tinker, 2010:pt. 1, ch.1).

The influence of the principles of the Doctrine of Discovery can be seen, in varying degrees, in the approaches, perspectives, and impact of European-American Christian mission initiatives among the American Indian tribes from the time of early contact. While remaining the prevailing influence in its various forms and presentations through the periods of contact, colonization, federalism, and western expansion, there still exist examples of mission efforts that are contrary to the presumptions of the Doctrine of Discovery. These examples of a more egalitarian and culturally sensitive missionary character, which serve as paradigms for the contextualization of the gospel and a missiology based in *agape* and *shalom*, are worthy of note and will be explored in greater depth in a later chapter.

The purpose of this chapter is to briefly present the Doctrine of Discovery and consider the evolution of its continuing impact on the spiritual, cultural, and political existence of the Nanticoke-Lenape people, which permeates the setting for ministry among them. While not often viewed as an important consideration in contemporary ministry among the Nanticoke-Lenape people, the far-reaching impact of the Doctrine of Discovery continues to affect tribal survival, perceptions of Christianity, and even interactions with non-Natives.

### **3.1.1 The Doctrine of Discovery**

In the thirteenth century (c. 1240) Pope Innocent IV's defense of the Christian Crusades, which was an invasion of lands held by those deemed to be pagans and infidels, was based upon the claim that Christians had the authority to dispossess pagans of their sovereignty and property by divine mandate (Miller, 2010:53). The continuing effect of the papal charge over the "Flock of Christ" necessitated intervention into all human affairs, both spiritual and secular, which was linked to the expansion of the domain, or dominion, of Roman Catholicism; "thus, the future Crusades, discoveries, and conquests of heathens would have to proceed under Innocent's legal rule that pagans had natural rights, but that they had to comply with European concepts of natural law and religion or risk subjugation" (Miller, 2010:53). Two papal bulls from Pope Nicholas V, *Dum Diversas* and *Romanus Pontifex*, in the mid-fifteenth century, furthered the justification of claims by discovery or conquest by granting King Alfonso V of Portugal the right to vanquish the enemies of Christendom, put them in perpetual slavery, and seize their possessions and property (Newcomb, 2008:84).

The presumed superiority of the European views of natural law and religion, combined with the charge to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ by expanding the land claims of European kingdoms, was a critical issue in 1492 after Christopher Columbus landed in what would be known as North America, with the royal declaration from King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella of Spain that he would have authority as Admiral, Viceroy, and Governor over any lands he discovered and acquired (Williams, 1990:78). Pope Alexander VI, the Spaniard Rodrigo Borgia, affirmed Spanish title under the presupposition that the Americas were newly discovered, principally because no European Christian had previously laid claim to the continents. Indigenous rights to the

land did not weigh heavily into the thinking of the Spanish Crown or the Papacy. *Inter caetera divinai*, a bull issued in May 1493, placed previously undiscovered people, considered by the “discoverers” to be “well disposed” to the missionary efforts of the Roman Catholic Church, under the power of the Christian monarch credited for their “discovery” with their lands also to be placed under that monarch’s control (Williams, 1990:80). Furthering Spanish claims, Pope Alexander issued *Inter caetera II*, establishing a line from the northernmost to the southernmost points on the globe granting Spain all lands it discovered 100 leagues west of the Azores while granting Portugal rights east of the line (Miller, 2010:55). By 1493 the Doctrine of Discovery had formed to the point that it established the Church’s authority to grant Christian monarchs control of the lands of “infidels.” Thus, in the conquest of the Americas, “European” and “Christian” became terms of political status and dominance over indigenous identity, rights, and lands. King Ferdinand viewed, or at least promoted, his role in taking dominion over the people and lands of the Spanish claims in the Americas as a form of service to the Roman Catholic Church, referring to himself as the “perpetual administrator by apostolic authority” (Williams, 1990:89). In 1513, in furtherance of his “right of conquest,” King Ferdinand assembled theologians and scholars to produce a policy called the “Requerimiento,” which was to be read aloud to any indigenous people in the Americas “discovered” by Spanish conquerors, informing them that they could “either accept Christian missionaries and Spanish imperial hegemony or be annihilated” (Williams, 1990:91). Robert Williams, a member of the Lumbee Tribe of North Carolina and Professor of Law and American Indian Studies at the University of Arizona, summarized the *Requerimiento* in this way:

The *Requerimiento* had to be read aloud to any group of Indians newly discovered by Spanish conquistadores before hostilities could legally be commenced against them. The text of the royal order informing the natives of their natural-law obligation to hear the gospel began with a Christian version of the history of the world, along with an extended discussion of the establishment and Petrine foundations of the Roman Pontiff. God had given charge of all the nations of the world to St. Peter, the first pope. He was lord and superior to all humankind, and all should obey him wherever they may live, under whatever law, sect, or belief, for God had given him and his successors the entire “world for his kingdom and jurisdiction.” The Indians were informed that the pope was an “Admirable Great Father and Governor of all Men,” Christians, Moors, Jews, and Gentiles. The *Requerimiento* next told the Indians that Pope Alexander, one of the great pontiffs who had succeeded St. Peter as lord of the world, had made a “donation” of their territories to the king and queen of Spain. The natives could of course inspect the writings “which passed upon the subject ... if you wish.” The Indians were then politely

asked to take a few moments to ponder this new set of facts. They were also told that they were nonetheless required (hence the title of the document, the *Requerimiento*) “to acknowledge the Church as the ruler and superior of the whole world, and the high priest called Pope, and in his name the king and queen ... in his place, as superiors and lords and kings” of their countries by virtue of the Pope’s donation. If the Indians did not consent and permit the missionary fathers accompanying the conquistadors to preach to them, or if they “maliciously” delayed in doing so, the Spaniards, “with the help of God,” would invade their country and make war against them. They were further threatened with subjection to the “yoke and obedience of the church and of their highnesses” ... The natives were also warned that any “deaths and losses which shall accrue” from the Spaniard’s attack on them would be their own fault for failing to heed the *Requerimiento*’s directives (Williams, 1990:91-92).

Franciscus de Victoria, a priest and advisor to the Spanish king, provided alternative justification for the domination of the indigenous peoples in the Americas by proposing his “Law of Nations” in 1532. While upholding that the “Indians” of the Americas had inherent rights, Victoria insisted that those rights were surrendered when the Indians violated “natural-law” principles, as defined by European Christians. Such “natural-law” included the Eurocentric notion of the right of Spaniards to travel, trade, and profit from the native’s land and to send missionaries to preach the gospel to them. Violating any of these rights would justify Spain’s defense of its rights in carrying out a “just war” against the infidels of the Americas (Miller, 2010:56). European Christian perspectives and privileges, called “natural-law” in Victoria’s “Law of Nations,” were viewed as supreme over the rights and interests of the Indians of the Americas. By 1556, the Spanish Crown formally abolished the *Requerimiento*, declaring their colonial enterprise a missionary effort instead of a military one, and in 1573 referred to their colonial efforts as “pacification” instead of “conquest” (Williams, 1990:106). However, by that time, the “die was cast” in regard to the fortunes of the indigenous peoples of the Americas and the European Christian legal tools and theological defense used to justify their subjugation.

New interpretations of the Doctrine of Discovery by the French and English opened the way for their own claims in what was being referred to as the “New World” of the Americas. King Henry VII of England required that English explorers only claim lands not yet “discovered” by any other Christian monarch. In order not to run afoul of the 1493 papal bulls, while still expanding their empires in competition with the Spanish and Portuguese, both England and France justified their claims by the principle of “terra

nullius,” which allowed lands not possessed or occupied by Europeans to be considered “vacant” and open to be claimed by right of “discovery” regardless of native claim or occupancy (Miller, 2010:58). Queen Elizabeth I expanded the Doctrine of Discovery to provide rights of discovery to any “heathen and barbarous lands” not actually possessed or occupied by any Christian monarch or people. England’s King James I further expanded the doctrine, ordering colonists to convert American Indians to Christianity, calling them infidels, savages, and uncivilized (Miller, 2010:58-59).

The Doctrine of Discovery was the basis for land claims not only by European monarchs, but also by the colonial governments established under their jurisdictions. For the thirteen British colonies in what would become the United States, differences in religion and culture between the European colonists and the American Indians were used as justification for demonstrating a lack of “civilization” among the natives. Being “uncivilized” and “savage” was reason enough to grant the right of the colonists to presume sovereign power over indigenous populations and tribes (Miller, 2010:62).

### **3.1.2 The Doctrine of Discovery’s Influence on Early European Colonial Interactions with American Indians**

As it was applied in the colonies that became the United States of America, the Doctrine of Discovery is the fundamental principle underlying the denial of the inherent rights of American Indians. The doctrine upholds the superiority of the “discoverer” or “conqueror” over and against the inferiority of the “discovered” or “conquered.” Steven Newcomb asserts that the conqueror’s worldview affirms the conqueror as “being most virtuous, morally sound, and obedient to God when he uses the tools of coercion, terror, fear, and dread to fulfill ‘God’s will’ by conquering and subduing new lands and new peoples not yet conquered” (2008:653-654). In other words, the rights of the discovered or conquered non-European and non-Christian indigenous people to their own lands, life ways, governments, and traditions were invalidated by the superior claim of the conqueror, and were justified by the conqueror’s “favored status” as their deity’s divine instruments. The subjugating of the conquered is viewed as being either in their best interest, or simply an aspect of the divine intention in favor of the conqueror. What is determined to be part of the conqueror’s destiny justifies the disregarding of any rights of the conquered. Newcomb asserts:

No one is completely free except the conqueror, and *freedom* in this context refers to the conqueror being absolutely free to conquer, subdue, and establish and maintain a reign or state of domination. Those who live under his reign or within his “state of domination” are free to do so, but are not free to liberate themselves (2008:648)... “Barbarous” nations, which were non-European and non-Christian peoples, were considered to be divinely destined to be subdued (2008:663).

A 1755 proclamation recorded by the Secretary of the Council in Boston, Massachusetts, sums up the sentiment that subdued people had no right to assert their own will. In the name of “King George the Second,” who is stated to reign by the “Grace of God” and is referred to as the “Defender of the Faith,” the General Court of the province required the “pursuing, captivating, killing and destroying all and every” Penobscot Indian because they dared to have “repeatedly and in a perfidious manner acted contrary to their solemn submission unto his Majesty.” A bounty was placed on all Penobscot, with male scalps being worth forty pounds, female scalps or males under twelve years old being worth twenty pounds (Deloria, 1988:6). The scalps of the Indians of the Maryland Colony, which included the Nanticoke and Lenape, were considered even more valuable, as a 1763 act of the Maryland General Assembly determined that scalps of hostile Indians within the province of the colony were worth fifty pounds and only required a sworn statement that the scalp was taken from an “enemy Indian” in order for the bounty to be paid (Maryland, 2009a:417-418). No distinction was made between male or female, adult or child in the act. Interestingly, a previous law passed in 1687, based upon a treaty of 1678, made it clear that an “enemy Indian” could be any who did not call aloud within three hundred paces of an “Englishman’s cleared ground,” or if they came across any English person in the “woods,” or who were “painted,” and did not immediately voluntarily call out and lay down their weapons. The Nanticoke Emperor Unnacocassimon was informed that any of his people neglecting to call out and make their sign of surrender by laying down anything deemed to be a weapon by an English colonist, could be killed by any of the English colonists. There was no requirement for any similar demonstration of intent by an Englishman toward an Indian (Maryland, 2009b:558-559). The ironic name of this treaty and subsequent law, which allowed any colonist to deem any Indian as an “enemy” if they did not immediately call out and disarm themselves, even in a wooded area, and even if the Indian felt threatened by the colonist, was “Articles of Peace and Amity.” The interpretation of hostile intent lay solely under the judgment of the

Anglo/European colonist, who was then allowed to collect a bounty for the slain Indian's scalp.

The cognitive framework that allowed for the notion that English dominion was supreme over the indigenous population was influenced by the concept that such was the privilege of the crown and Christian monarchs under European medieval thinking (Watson, 2006:528). The rights of non-Christian indigenous people, even to life itself, were subject to the divine right of the Christian princes. Even the Englishman William Penn, the Quaker proprietor of Pennsylvania, who is known for his efforts in seeking treaties of amity and land grants from the tribes of the Delaware River Valley region, still announced to the Indians of what the English called "Pennsylvania" (which was actually Lenape and Susquehanna tribal territory) that "the king of the Countrey [sic] where I live, *hath given unto me a great Province* therein, but I desire to enjoy it with your Love and Consent, that we may always live together as Neighbours and friends" (Watson, 2006:529). Thus even the "enlightened" William Penn operated under the presumption that his authority in the "New World" was ultimately established by the British crown and not because of the grants of the indigenous sovereign tribes (it should be noted that the royal decree also granted Penn certain authority over parts of New Jersey and Delaware). Penn chose to find the "path of least resistance" in his dealings with the Indians, preferring amicable relations, but still had presumed to sell tracts of land to Europeans prior to purchasing the land from the indigenous population (Watson, 2006:529). The Pennsylvania Charter of 1681 cited the desire of William Penn to "reduce the Savage Nations by gentle and just manners to the love of civill Socetie [sic] and Christian Religion" (Watson, 2006:528), demonstrating the presumption that the indigenous people were "uncivilized savages" in need of being subdued. The charter continued to designate Penn and his heirs and assigns as the "true and absolute Proprietors of this Countrey [sic]" with "full and absolute power" over the land (Watson, 2006:528).

Professor Blake A. Watson, of the Dayton University of Law, contends that the Dutch and Swedish concepts of land claims were based neither on the "right of discovery" nor on papal bulls or royal grants, but on the purchase of native lands from Native People. This is significant as, prior to British dominance in the region, the New Netherland and New Sweden colonies were in the lands of the Nanticoke and Lenape in what is now

Delaware, New Jersey, and New York City. Watson quotes Hugo Grotius' anonymously published work "Mare Liberum" (Freedom of the Seas), which argued for the right of the Dutch to sail to the "East Indies" but rejected claims based upon royal or papal grants and rights based upon discovery.

[D]iscovery *per se* gives no legal rights over things unless before the alleged discovery they were *res nullius*... The Spanish writer Victoria ... has the most certain warrant for his conclusion that Christians, whether of the laity or of the clergy, cannot deprive infidels of their civil power and sovereignty merely on the ground that they are infidels... Surely it is a heresy to believe that infidels are not masters of their own property; consequently, to take from them their possessions on account of their religious belief is no less theft and robbery than it would be in the case of Christians (2006:517).

Watson asserts that Grotius' position, which served as the theory of land acquisition for the Dutch and Swedes, agreed with Franciscus de Victoria that the right of discovery could apply to vacant land, but not to land occupied by Indians, acknowledging that the indigenous people had their own "kings ... governments ... lands ... and legal systems" (2006:517-518). As Protestants, both the Dutch and Swedes were careful not to base their claims in North America after the Spanish model of papal donation. Their position was that they could gain land grants from the Indians as the original owners of lands they occupied. The Dutch held that title to such occupied lands could be rightly obtained by "conquest, or by gift or purchase" (Watson, 2006:518-519). The Swedish policy, articulated in the 1642 document "Instructions to Governor Johan Printz," insisted that the colonists "bear in mind that the wild inhabitants of the country" were its rightful owners (Watson, 2006:520). Land was to be acquired with the agreement of the tribal Sachems.

While the Dutch and Swedish position appears to be more enlightened in regard to indigenous land rights, the fact is that the description of the indigenous population still belittled their status, rendering them as "lesser" than the European, in that they are referred to as "wild," suggesting an uncivilized and bestial identity. Additionally, there was no submission to the indigenous concept of land usage. European concepts of land ownership and land title were absolute and in perpetuity, while the Nanticoke and Lenape had no concept of private land ownership, only of rights to land usage and sharing. From the indigenous perspective, the sharing relationship was to be reaffirmed by regular gift-giving or tribute rendered by the colonists to the tribe. The Native perspective did not include restrictions on their own land usage because of a land grant.

Tribal people would casually cross newly established colonial land boundaries to hunt or travel, without understanding that the European notion was that they had surrendered such rights. For the Lenape, Nanticoke, and many other northeastern tribal cultures, sharing was an expression of hospitality, a spiritual obligation. Allowing land to be used did not surrender their rights to their territories. Professor of Religion Henry Warner Bowden of Rutgers University, when writing of this dynamic between the Wampanoag and the Puritan colonists of Massachusetts, observed that,

... when [the Indians] discovered that the Puritans wanted to keep these tracts exclusively for themselves, without title ever reverting to those who had originally loaned it, the Indians grew bitter. They were unable to understand the European pattern of land ownership because their experience envisaged nothing like it. Land was part of the sacred universe, an aspect of the divine order of things held in trust for posterity. It was inconceivable to them that anyone would dare restrict a part of that universe for his exclusive use (Bowden, 1981:104).

Moreover, the concept of what was vacant or unoccupied land was different between the two populations. What the European would claim to be undeveloped or vacant may have actually been the location of Nanticoke and Lenape-style gardens, hunting and fishing and gathering areas, ceremonial areas, or seasonal villages. The theory of land acquisition for the Dutch and the Swedes may not have been simply based upon “discovery,” but it would impact the indigenous population in many of the same ways because of the colonists’ presumption that the terms of any agreement over land would be based in a European worldview and legal perspective instead of the worldview and traditional terms of those who were the original owners of the territory. Thus the attitudes of superiority that resulted in the Doctrine of Discovery still influenced the interactions of the Dutch and the Swedes in their colonial endeavors.

Whether formally operating under the Doctrine of Discovery, or informally influenced by the perspectives from which it was derived, the imposition of European “norms” of land use and ownership, religion and civilization, guided the interactions between the colonizers and the indigenous people. Franciscus de Victoria’s “Law of Nations” summarizes the discoverer / conqueror / colonizer perspective in that “European civilizers” saw themselves as owing “a duty of guardianship ... including bringing the message of Christianity to [the Indians], and if ‘Indian princes’ stood in the way of the message of missionaries ... [they] would be justified in ‘seizing the land and territory of

the natives and ... setting up new lords ... with an intent directed more to the welfare of the aborigines than to their own gain” (Blumm, 2004:720).

The Doctrine of Discovery, either formally or informally applied, resulted in the dehumanization of indigenous people by those that invaded their territories. The invaders presumed the right of lordship or dominance over the existence of the indigenous population, imposing systems of governance that institutionalized the invader’s right to seize, grant, or dispose of indigenous lands, territories, or resources without the informed permission or consent of the indigenous people (Frichner, 2010:340) and without respect for indigenous understandings, while also, in the case of the United States, regulating their lives and redefining their identities (Deloria, 1988:169).

### **3.1.3 Mission Efforts Misused Instruments of Conquest and Domination**

Historian Edward L. Bond observes that while the expansion of empire and pursuit of wealth and fame played the major role in the English colonial efforts in the region of the Chesapeake Bay, one should not underestimate the desire to spread the gospel and win converts to Christianity. In 1610, William Crashaw, the English cleric and poet, called for “linking the Great Commission to the efforts of those who had first converted the English to Christianity,” declaring that the duty of all who have come to “taste the love” of Christ are obliged to labor in bringing others to the same blessing (Bond, 2010:pt. 1, ch. 4). This reflected the Reverend Robert Gray’s desire to expand the kingdom of God by converting the natives of America (Bond, 2010: pt. 1, ch. 4). In 1609, Gray called on Protestants to engage in self-sacrificing mission efforts at their own expense in order to bring Christianity to the American Indians. Gray’s sincere devotion to mission efforts were, however, joined with the intention to bring Native “savages” to a civil form of Christian government so that they might live holy, justly and soberly (Bond, 2010: pt. 1, ch. 4). Crashaw’s desire to bring mass conversions to unconverted America was also mixed with the perspective that denied any inherent dignity to the Natives, but referred to them as poor, miserable and abiding in “invincible ignorance” (Bond, 2010: pt. 1, ch. 4).

Historian Henry Warner Bowden agrees that the motives of many of the missionaries were genuine and focused on bringing glory to the kingdom of Christ, but he also

asserts that the poor understanding of cultural differences and spiritual perspectives, when combined with the underlying prejudices of the era, led to conflicts that proved painful for the European missionaries and that were destructive to the tribal communities. He states,

Nearly 500 years of American history show that interaction between Indians and Christian spokesmen produced tragic results. White clergy who tried to convert natives may have been prompted by altruistic ideals, but their daily activities helped destroy the cultures of people they wanted to aid. Contrasts between what may have been positive motivations and obviously disastrous results point to an irony... Missionary activity was not characterized by the pattern of greed and malice that was usual in most intercultural dealings. The fact that the missions were in any case a general failure makes it even more important to investigate the complicated nature of religious dialogue (Bowden, 1981:xv).

While any effort to convert American Indians to Christianity was necessarily based on an acceptance of their humanity and ability to become Christians, there appears to have been an undercurrent of cultural and racial prejudice that invaded the imaginations of many who supported Christianizing the American Indians. This may have been due, at least in part, to early descriptions of the indigenous population that colored the minds of those heading to American shores. Edward L. Bond reports that Captain John Smith, of the Jamestown Colony in Virginia, referred to paramount Chief Wahunsenacawh, known as “Powhatan” of the Virginia tribes, as being “more like a devil than a man [,] with some two hundred more as blacke [sic] as himselfe [sic]” (2010:1609).

While Christianity had its genesis in the holy land of the southeastern Mediterranean area connecting Africa with Asia, it was a western European culturally rebranded Christianity that arrived on American shores, empowered by the principles of the Doctrine of Discovery and certain of European superiority. Activist and scholar Vine Deloria Jr., a Hunkpapa Lakota of the Standing Rock Sioux, commented that “Missionaries approached the Indian tribes in an effort to bring them into western European religious life. Their primary message sought to invalidate the totality of Indian life” (1988:105). Euro-American life ways were recast into what it meant to be “Christian” and “civilized.” Indians living in their traditional ways, practicing their traditional spiritual rituals, were considered “uncivilized heathen savages.” The imposition of European cultural traits was linked with missionary efforts, which assaulted tribal ways and identities.

Religion was a major aspect of the justification for, and the application of the Doctrine [of Discovery] and Manifest Destiny. Non-Christian peoples were deemed not to have the same rights to land, sovereignty, and self-determination as Christians. As a result, Indian nations and indigenous people not only lost fundamental rights, but they also experienced pressure to convert to Christianity in an attempt to recover them... Euro-Americans argued that god [sic] had directed them to bring civilized ways, education, and religion to indigenous peoples and to exercise paternalistic and guardianship powers over them (Miller, 2011:335).

The colonization of a people is not merely military conquest and political subjugation, it is often also cultural and spiritual suppression. European mission efforts toward the American Indians played a significant role in the “colonization of the mind” through the cultural and political imposition of a distinctly European form of Christianity (Tinker, 2010:pt. 1, ch.1). Christian Indians were not merely those who had accepted Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior, they also had to change their mode of dress, take a European name in baptism to be their “Christian name,” and favor European style farming over traditional gardens and domesticated farm animals over wild game. Being “civilized” and “Christian” also required changing the type of shelter in which one lived, for the wigwams and longhouses of the Nanticoke and Lenape were deemed to be too reminiscent of their prior “pagan and wild” identities; European style dwellings were what was considered suitable for converts. Moravian missionary David Zeisberger remarked that “Christian Indians generally build proper and comfortable houses and the savages who seek to follow their example in work and household arrangement learn much from them” (Hubert & Schwarze, 1910:18). While Jesuit mission efforts in the early days of the Maryland Colony involved a method of approach in which members of the order would live among the tribes, travel with them, and adopt some of their life ways in order to gain converts, the Protestant approach to missions was often along a model of cultural conformity (Bond, 2010: pt. 1, ch. 4). This approach, which Edward Bond calls “cultural evangelism,” in its least aggressive form sought to display the benefits of a Anglo/Euro Christian lifestyle in the hope that the Natives would “forsake their own culture and ask to become both English and Christian” (Bond, 2010: pt. 1, ch. 4).

By immersion in English culture ... Native children could become civil, then move on and complete the transformation of their natures by becoming Christians ... English Protestants in Virginia tended to associate Christianity with English culture, positing a hostile relationship between Christian and “heathen” ways. Religion to them did not seem to shape culture as much as culture shaped religion, and English culture provided

the setting in which true Christianity might take root (Bond, 2010: pt. 1, ch. 4).

Tink Tinker states that no matter how pure the intention, when “Euro-western” missionaries entered an Indian community, they introduced division into the community with “devastating effect” and the final outcome, regardless of intention, was the destruction of indigenous culture and value systems (2010:447). The “civilized” Christian Indians were discouraged from having regular contact with those yet unconverted and, therefore, deemed to still be “wild” and “savage.” This divided communities and families along religious acculturation lines. The anthropologist C. A. Weslager notes that the Moravian missionaries upheld this theory of imposed division:

Both Zeisberger and Heckewelder were responsible for insisting that Christian Indians continue to live separately from non-Christians... There was also a matter of conformity, because the converts not only observed church disciplines but were obligated to work in one of the crafts or in the fields as their contribution to the Christian community (Weslager, 2003:289).

While not all missionaries looked upon the Indians as less than fully human, many had little respect for their heritage or sense of tribal identity (Sindima, 2008:151). Among the Nanticoke and Lenape remaining in the area of the Delaware Bay, the notion that one was either “Christian *or* Indian” instead of “Christian *and* Indian” took hold in the dominant Euro-American culture. According to the record 13 George II Chapter LXXIV, the government took steps in 1740 to define an “Indian” as a non-Christian living in the woods and eating primarily deer meat (Heite, 1997?). The diminishing term “Praying Indian,” which had once been used to refer to Christian converts among the indigenous population, was being increasingly replaced with the term “Free Person of Color” or “Mulatto” in public records (Forbes, 1993:89, 220, 259-61; Heite & Heite, 1982?). Thus, “civilizing” and Christianizing resulted in an imposed racial reclassification.

The cause of civilizing by way of Christian conversion, or converting by way of civilizing, which necessitated the adoption of the Euro-American culture of the “discoverers” and “conquerors,” was driven by the principles related to the Doctrine of Discovery. The divine “manifest” destiny of the discoverers was to continue their conquest, subduing indigenous peoples, laying claim to their lands, and eventually spreading their view of civilization and republican democracy across the continent and

the world. This was the principle behind the continental expansion of the United States and the displacement of the indigenous nations of the land, as the principles of the discovery doctrine inspired the concept of American manifest destiny in the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Miller, 2011:332). This principle of destined expansion can be traced to the first European settlements on the continent. In examining the history of the Jamestown colony, the first permanent English settlement in Virginia, Tink Tinker, a Lutheran theologian from the Osage Nation, argues that,

... by 1609, early in the Jamestown history, preachers in England were ascribing “chosen people” language from the Hebrew Bible to their own english [sic] people and particularly in support of those adventurers who were participating in the invasion of another continent—at Jamestown. This chosen people metaphor, of course, was famously appropriated a couple of decades later by the Puritans in Massachusetts Bay colony as they established their “cittie on a hill” (Tinker, 2010:pt. 1, ch.1).

Tinker goes on to assert that the romanticized narrative of conquest was given a sense of legitimacy by being intertwined with missiology (2010:326). This sense of Christian mission was too often mixed with traces of the mentality of superiority and conquest among even the most committed and celebrated missionaries to the Indians, such as John Eliot in Massachusetts, who Tinker states was “committed to the colonization of the Indian mind” (2010:326). Henry Warner Bowden is a bit more generous toward Eliot and his colleagues, stating that, “They did not instigate native decline and never self-consciously based their evangelism on a policy of eradicating all pre-contact customs; but, despite whatever altruism they possessed, they depended upon, and probably accelerated, the pace of Indian cultural disintegration” (1981:123). Bowden cites that the increase in Christian conversions among the tribal population may be attributed to the weakening of pre-contact culture by rampant disease, the loss of the land and population, and the rise of the dependence on gaining trade goods from the colonists. He suggests that many of the new converts may have been making a decision out of a fear for their very survival, as their situation revealed “the impossibility of maintaining their traditional life-style under English domination—politically, economically, and now religiously” (1981:123). Cotton Mather, John Eliot’s biographer and contemporary, provides insight into the acculturation of Indian converts as he describes how “some of the Indians quickly built for themselves good and large meeting houses, after the English mode, in which also after the English mode they attended the things of the kingdom of heaven” (Mather, 1694: 124). The condescending approach is further emphasized when examining Mather’s contention that the devil himself brought

the Indians to the land and that only with the arrival of the Europeans could any light of truth or industry shine:

The Natives of the country now possessed by the New-Englanders, had been forlorn and wretched Even [sic] ever since their first herding here; and tho [sic] we know not when or how those Indians first became inhabitants of this mighty Continent [sic], yet we may guess, that probably the Devil decoy'd [sic] those miserable savages hither, in hopes that the Gospel of the Lord Jesus would never come here to destroy or disturb his Absolute Empire over them (1694:78)... What an hard master the Devil is to the most devoted of his Vassals! These abject creatures live in a Country full of mines; we have already made entrance upon our iron; and in the very surface of the ground among us there is copper enough to supply all this world; besides other mines hereafter to be explored; but our shiftless Indians were never owners of so much as a knife, till [sic] we came among them (1694:82-83).

Mather's own words demonstrate the presumption that cultural assimilation must precede (or at least accompany) conversion, as he states, "they must be civilized ere they could be Christianized" (1694:88). More than half a century later in the colony of New Jersey, Presbyterian missionary John Brainerd, the younger brother and successor to David Brainerd, remained dedicated to ministry among the Lenape in southern New Jersey. While having a passion for winning converts to Christianity from among the native population, there is within his writings the continuing mixture of altruism and cultural bias: "We do not despise them for their color, but for their heathenish temper and practices ... When they become Christians, and behave as becomes such, they shall have the same treatment as white people" (Bowden, 1981:155). A century after John Brainerd's statement, the sentiment that tribal society should perish in order to elevate Native people to a civilized Christian status is reiterated by missionary Stephen Riggs who, in 1846, asserted that, "As tribes and nations the Indians must perish and live only as men" (Berkhoffer, 1972:7). Because Christian missionaries had a difficult time separating their cultural concept of civilization from their adherence to the Christian faith, anything that did not conform to their culture could not be considered as Christian. In the minds of many who sincerely attempted to propagate the gospel among the tribes, "the only good Indian was a carbon copy of a good white man" (Berkhoffer, 1972:10).

### **3.2 The Codification of the Doctrine of Discovery in American Indian Law and Policy**

The concept of “Christian civilization” as being perfectly expressed in Anglo/European American culture and destiny became enshrined in American law and federal Indian policy, to the perpetual detriment of the cultural and physical survival of the original indigenous Americans. The new nation’s inception and legal structures were shaped by, benefitted from, and would in turn shape and benefit, the religious notions governing the “managing” of Indian affairs by non-Indians. The influence of the Doctrine of Discovery reverberates in the fabric of the government of the United States, the shared culture of the American people, and the interaction between Christian institutions and the indigenous people and their tribal governments.

Americans celebrate “Independence Day” every July 4<sup>th</sup>, commemorating the 1776 declaration of the Congress that the United States was an independent sovereign nation, no longer owing any allegiance to the British Crown. The instrument memorializing that moment is the famous “Declaration of Independence,” signed by the representatives from each of the colonies, affirming their nation’s sovereign status. Penned by the future president, Thomas Jefferson, the language is powerful, poetic, and often recited. Its opening sentences are lofty and reflect a philosophy of liberty and divinely established individual rights:

When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation. We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights; that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness; that to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed; that whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness (United States, 1776).

The Declaration is reverently enshrined in temple-like splendor in the National Archives of the United States in Washington, DC. People from all over the world enter the

hallowed hall to view the faded document. Three words in the Declaration are typically overlooked, but reflect the attitude of the signers and reveal the underlying view of the indigenous people of the land: “merciless Indian Savages” As the charges against King George III, who is referred to as the “present King of Great Britain,” are listed, the Congress also included the statement, “He has excited domestic insurrections amongst us, and has endeavoured [sic] to bring on the inhabitants of our frontiers, the merciless Indian Savages, whose known rule of warfare, is an undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes and conditions” (United States, 1776). The Declaration’s lofty language is marred by the fact that many of the signers, including its author, owned slaves, and by the fact that the indigenous people whose lands had been invaded are memorialized, by the unanimous consent of the Congress, as “merciless savages” in this principal document of American history. The attitude among many of that day toward both those bound by the American system of chattel slavery and toward those who were deemed savages was influenced by the principles of the Doctrine of Discovery.

Once a principle of the so-called “age of discovery,” the Doctrine of Discovery became part of American Law. Regarding the Supreme Court of the United States 1823 decision in the case of *Johnson v. M’Intosh*, Miller writes:

Discovery meant that when European Christian nations encountered new lands that the discovering country automatically gained property rights over non-Christian nations even though the Native people already owned, occupied, and were using their lands. In addition, the discovering country also gained governmental rights over the Native people and their governments which restricted tribal international political relationships and trade... Natives still held a right to occupy and use their lands but [quoting from the decision] ‘their 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’ (Miller, 2010:59).

Religion provided invented rationales, mollifying any sense of guilt over the “momentary ruptures in religious coherence” (Tinker 2010:341). A sense of cultural and racial superiority was mixed with the themes of Christian mission and Anglo/Euro-American destiny. United States Supreme Court Chief Justice John Marshall upheld a paternalistic view which presumed that Indians did not have full rights under natural law:

...the tribes of Indians inhabiting this country were 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 as high-spirited as they were fierce, and were ready to repel by arms every attempt on their independence (Love *et al.*, 2008:108).

It is difficult to overstate the influential connection between Christian mission, European views of civilization, and the codification of the Doctrine of Discovery in American law and policy. Because of the Supreme Court decision in the *Johnson v. M'Intosh* ruling, the presumed right of Christian discovery became a guiding principle in United States federal Indian law and policy, which is certainly not a system based in any indigenous tradition or custom—it is distinctly non-Indian in nature and could often be viewed as anti-indigenous. Underlying the court's view in this landmark decision was the belief that European Christians had rights that prevailed over those of non-Christian indigenous people. Americans of English or European descent, or Anglo/Euro-Americans, had adopted a view of being the “new chosen people” after the example of the ancient Hebrews who had a divine mandate to take possession of Canaan as God's chosen ones (Newcomb, 2008:37, 42). The quasi-biblical framework for the perspective provided a foundation for continuing subjugation of tribal people and an increasing disregard for their rights, while at the same time promoting aspirations of administering cultural conversion in order to transform tribal people into mirror images of Anglo/Euro-American Christians.

The second of three pivotal decisions by the Marshall Court in regard to the Doctrine of Discovery and tribal rights was the 1831 decision in *Cherokee Nation v. Georgia*, in which the relationship between the federal government and that of the Indian nations was changed from the Indian nations being viewed as having a similar status as foreign nations to that of being deemed “domestic dependent nations.” The ruling depicted the relationship as being that of a “ward to his guardian.” In this relationship, the once free and sovereign Indian nations no longer had full sovereignty as independent foreign states, but the United States was determined to have “sole and exclusive right of regulating the trade with them, and managing all of their affairs as they think proper” (Love *et al.*, 2008:110). The dissenting opinions were even far less “liberal” than that of Chief Justice Marshall, arguing that the Indian nations had little or no rights as nations at all (Love *et al.*, 2008:110-111).

The third pivotal Marshall Court ruling in regard to Indian rights and the Doctrine of Discovery was in the 1832 *Worcester v. Georgia* decision. In determining the supremacy of state law over tribal lands, Chief Justice Marshall asserted that tribes had willingly subjected themselves to European powers and had, therefore, surrendered full sovereignty to those powers which were succeeded by the United States government. The ruling denied the supremacy of state law over tribal lands and those Indians living on them and affirmed the power of the federal government as supreme over tribal lands and tribal people (Love *et al.*, 2008:113).

The three decisions of the Marshall Court, called the “Marshall Trilogy,” formally established the right of the United States to claim the benefits of Christian European discovery in its territory, forged the domestic dependent relationship between Indian tribes and the federal government, and placed tribal lands and people under the sole control of federal authority. The language of the decisions revealed the presumption of European-American privilege while vesting the federal government with the responsibility of guardianship over indigenous people and nations. The rulings were an expression of an underlying presumption that the European-American cultural understanding of civilization excluded dissimilar indigenous cultures and political systems, assigning them little or no value and determining them to be savage, heathen, and uncivilized. The Marshall Trilogy both expressed the underlying sentiments and provided a legal structure to further impose the collective will of the “new chosen people’s” federal government upon their indigenous wards, who no longer had any right of self-determination but would be the subjects of governmental policies, social movements, and mission agendas that all too often resulted in ultimatums forcing a choice between subjugation and assimilation or extermination. Charles Crowe, in his article “Indians and Blacks in White America,” cites a toast rendered in an officer’s mess during the 1779 mission to burn Iroquois villages in upstate New York, which celebrated the phrase “Civilization or death to all American savages” (Hudson, 1975: 154). The extreme view was not relegated to the pre-battle cries of soldiers, but Crowe also reminds his readers that the American writer and jurist, Hugh Henry Brackenridge (1748-1816), referred to America’s tribal people as “the animals vulgarly called Indians’ and described their most useful function as providing fertilizer: ‘The Indians’ bones must enrich the soil before the plough of civilized man can open it” (Hudson, 1975:154). The famous Benjamin Franklin (1706-1790), who at times would demonstrate a certain regard and deference for the Indians, still held to the view that it

was “the design of Providence to extirpate these savages in order to make room for the cultivators of the earth” (Hudson, 1975:155).

The phrase “Manifest Destiny” may have been coined in an 1845 editorial espousing the annexation of Texas, but the concept that the United States was ordained by providence to stretch across the continent of North America goes back to at least the latter eighteenth century (Miller, 2001:337). The view from which “Manifest Destiny” sprang was grounded in the principle that the European-Americans of the new United States were now the “new chosen people” for whom the divine hand had created the continent and who were duty-bound to claim it from “sea to shining sea.” The rights and plight of tribal nations were overshadowed by the presumed dominion of the “new chosen people.” In the words of celebrated American painter, Thomas Hart Benton (1889-1975), “The white race alone received the divine command to subdue and replenish the earth... [and] civilization or extinction has been the fate of all people who have found themselves to be in the path of advancing whites” (Hudson, 1975:154).

The progress of Christian European/Anglo-American civilization was now justified by the Doctrine of Discovery and the principle of Manifest Destiny. In America, civilization was viewed in a singular manner and had its roots in the Anglo/European colonial culture that evolved into Christian Anglo/Euro-American civilization. To be considered “civilized” meant that one reflected this perspective—so much so that the appellation “civilized” became formally attached to five southeastern tribes, which were subsequently forced to migrate west into the “Indian Territory” that became the State of Oklahoma. Designated the “Five Civilized Tribes,” the Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Creek, and Seminole distinguished themselves because they “adopted many of the cultural patterns and social institutions of the white man” (Hudson, 1975:2). To be “civilized” was to embrace white American ways of governance and lifestyle. These tribes were distinguished from the so-called “wild” Indians who held to traditional forms of tribal governance and life ways. To date, the designation “five civilized tribes” is still proudly used by these tribal nations, with seemingly little or no understanding of the historical insult against indigenous civilization continued by the designation.

Whether deemed “civilized” or “wild” by Anglo/Euro-America, the official effort of the federal government was to clear the land east of the Mississippi River of all of its Indians. The Indian Removal Act of 1830 was President Andrew Jackson’s effort to

open all land for white settlement in states that were east of the Mississippi River by removing tribes from such lands and sending them into western territories. While specifically targeting southern states, the Act further constrained many eastern tribal communities even in northern states from feeling free to openly continue their tribalism in public ways.

The perspective that tied civilization and Christianity with Anglo/Euro-American life ways also provided theological “cover” for the abuse of tribal people and the abrogation of treaties and covenants at the whim of federal policy makers. These principles are woven into contemporary federal law and policy affecting the daily lives and perspectives of American Indians and the context of ministry in their communities.

### **3.2.1 The Doctrine of Discovery, Nanticoke and Lenape Reservations, and the Loss of Traditional Homelands**

The Nanticoke and Lenape people of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries who chose to remain in their homelands around the Delaware Bay and refused to be removed west or north because of the encroachment of Anglo/European colonists, found their territories and freedoms drastically diminished by the presumed authority granted under the Doctrine of Discovery. By the end of the seventeenth century, any new Nanticoke paramount chief, called “emperor” by the English, was expected to reaffirm the 1678 peace treaty with the Maryland colonial government, despite any protest regarding the violation of the treaty by the English (Rountree & Davidson, 1977:116). When Ashquash ascended to the role of Nanticoke paramount chief and refused to be coerced into reaffirming the treaty, the Maryland colonial government refused to recognize him as the Nanticoke leader and instead attempted to install two Choptank Indians to assume the role of co-regents over the Nanticoke. When the Choptank refused because they acknowledged Ashquash as the legitimate leader, the colonial government then selected two Nanticokes, Panquash and Annatoughquan, naming them as leaders instead of the rightful heir, Ashquash. Favorable to their English patrons, Panquash and Annatoughquan reaffirmed the treaty, but were never accepted by the Nanticoke, who instead continued to acknowledge Ashquash (Rountree & Davidson, 1977:117). In 1693, the legitimate Nanticoke leader was declared a “felon” and “enemy of the crown” by the English, who arbitrarily presumed authority over tribal affairs. The English continued to acknowledge solely the “puppet” leaders they had installed over the

Nanticoke until 1705, when Ashquash finally consented to affirm the 1678 treaty and was then finally “recognized” by the Maryland government as the Nanticoke paramount chief (Rountree & Davidson, 1977:118).

In the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, the presumptions of the Doctrine of Discovery not only impacted tribal government, but also the loss of lands. Both official and unofficial reservation systems were established on both sides of the Delaware Bay. The loss of tribal territory was a point of great frustration for the Nanticoke, who were unable to peacefully prevent the continued encroachment of colonial settlers who disregarded ancient boundaries and territorial traditions. Exasperated, they were reduced to requesting relief from the colonial government. The Maryland Assembly established the Chicone reservation for the Nanticoke in 1698, which was followed by the establishment of the Broad Creek reservation in 1711 (Porter, 1987:42). The terms of the reservation system were ill-conceived, in that it required permanent residence, disrupting the balance of the Nanticoke’s ecosystem, resulting in the depletion of the land, rendering it insufficient for their usage (Porter, 1979:327). The tribe was not even granted true ownership over its own territory, in that the colonial government denied them the right to sell or lease their own land (Porter, 1979:329). The Nanticoke had the right to occupy the reservations, but they had no real control over the land. The tribe was also “plagued with repeated and excessive trespass” by white settlers (Porter, 1979:329), which would often entail the burning of Nanticoke homes and villages, leaving the tribal people destitute and without shelter (Porter, 1979:329). Retreating from the abuse would leave the reservation open to be declared vacant by the very people who had burned the Indians out of their villages. Such “abandoned” reservation lands were then declared open for claim and occupancy by the land hungry colonists.

Informal “Indian towns” and “Indian fields” were designated areas where tribal people continued to live in relatively traditional communities while colonists set up farms, villages, and towns all around them. Such was the case for the Nanticoke-Lenape of Bridgeton, New Jersey, and the Lenape of Cheswold, Delaware. These areas were slowly absorbed into the growing dominant culture, often with the Indian families remaining through the generations while adopting new life ways and partially assimilating into the colonial society over time, while trading or selling crafts to their white neighbors in order to survive (Porter, 1979:333). The partial assimilation typically included conversion to Christianity, followed by the adoption of

Anglo/European names and a patrilineal form of inheritance. An awareness of the concept of private property through deeded land also grew within the communities (Porter, 1979:335). A sense of tribalism remained in the practice of endogamy and clannish reclusiveness in social connections, which continued into the modern era (Hearth, 2008:xiii). The communities continued in locations that would afford them minimal contact with the outside world (Porter, 1979:334).

While most of the Nanticoke and Lenape had migrated away from their homelands by the middle of the eighteenth century, the prospects of those who were removed eventually proved no better than the challenges confronting those who remained in their homeland (Porter, 1979:333). The Nanticoke-Lenape self-isolation was a survival tactic developed in response to a larger society that was hostile to the lifting of a tribal identity. Tribalism was discussed in hushed tones and only among other tribal people.

### **3.2.2 Treaty Breaking**

While actively using mnemonic techniques through symbols to record their history and covenants, neither the ancient Nanticoke nor Lenape had a written language. Treaties forged between tribes and communities were based upon honoring one's word. A record of such bonds was kept through strands or belts of wampum beads. Because of its spiritual significance, wampum was referred to as though it was living. The living nature of the beads bore witness to the living nature of the covenant that a strand or belt symbolized (Nehnalhamat, 2013). The strength or "truth value" of a treaty was grounded in the heart of the ones who would live according to its terms. Treaty belts and strands were held sacred because of the sacred nature of the truth they represented.

While Nanticoke and Lenape covenants and treaties were living agreements recorded with living symbols, Anglo/Euro-American colonial and federal treaties were written documents sealed with signatures or the marks of those agreeing to its terms. Yet of the over four hundred treaties made with Indian nations, not one has been kept by non-indigenous governments (Deloria, 1988:28). Disregarded agreements with colonial powers were a foreshadowing of the treaty-breaking trend of the federal government.

A lack of regard for promise-keeping may be directly related to the promise breaker's view of the inherent value of the one to whom the promise was made, or at least their

inherent value in comparison to the primacy of the immediate desires of the promise breaker. In the light of the Doctrine of Discovery and the concept of Manifest Destiny, treaties with indigenous people could be altered or abrogated when they were no longer considered to be in the best interest of the discovering/conquering entity. When a treaty became inconvenient for the federal government, the terms were reinterpreted to favor the federal agenda or they were completely ignored and overridden by subsequent legislation or executive action (Deloria, 1988:43, 48-49).

Tribal people realized that treaties were mere words on a page that had no life or power, as they were often forged by convenience and forgotten once the situation changed. Treaties with Indians were treated by the United States as temporary arrangements, and could not be relied upon. For many Indians, this translated into a suspicion toward any written word presented by white people, whether a contract, historical record, or even Scripture. This suspicion was based in years of being lied to and having their trust undermined. Christian Indians even today still deal with the vestiges of this attitude when discussing the biblical faith, and non-Christian Indians will often suggest that Scripture is a written word brought by the “white man” and cannot be trusted any more than the many broken treaties.

### **3.3 Perspectives Impacting Tribal Cultural and Spiritual Survival**

The development of postcolonial American culture and society remains influenced by the Doctrine of Discovery and the principle of Manifest Destiny through to the modern era. In spite of some romanticized views of Native America, non-Native America’s awareness of, and interaction with, tribal people was “colored” by the policies derived from conquest and stereotypes. From early colonial times there was a prevailing presumption among white Christians that tribal people had been dominated by the superstitious pretensions of conjurers who were determined to retain their devotees by any and all measures, including the threat of violence (Bond, 2010: pt. 1, ch. 4). Henry Warner Bowden finds that little effort was made in searching for compatibility between native spiritual values and expressions and those of European Christians.

They did not emphasize common ideas or encourage Indians to use them as bridges for crossing over into Christianity. They chose rather to heighten the contrast between Indian religiosity and their own by denouncing all pre-contact activity as devil worship. With few exceptions they censured Indian practices as “barbarous,” “heathen,” and

“uncivilized.” They shared the Englishman’s general sense of cultural superiority, but they added moral indignation to it... The handful of ministers who visited the native villages may have been moved by compassion for the depravity they saw, but their message was primarily one of condemnation, a warning of God’s wrath, and a prediction of eternal torment for those who continually flouted the Almighty’s law of righteousness as found in Scripture (Bowden, 1981: 122),

Vine Deloria states,

The clergy accused the natives of being in league with the devil... The literary world saw Indians primarily as bloodthirsty savages ... [suggesting] that they should be driven westward from the Eastern lands... The American education institutions promoted the idea that intellectually Indians were the mental equivalent of the eight-year-old white person (Deloria, 2006:98).

The negative stereotypes associated with American Indians, in addition to a history of federal policies designed to remove them from their lands, left many tribal people in the east keeping their tribal identities and tribal ways hidden from non-Native eyes. “Most Eastern Indians ... simply did not admit to an Indian identity to avoid being singled out for discriminatory treatment. They kept most of their traditions to themselves and were highly suspicious of outsiders. But their history was beyond dispute in most instances” (Deloria, 2003:4).

Through to the mid-twentieth century, the Nanticoke-Lenape, like many other Indians of the eastern United States, would pass on tribal identity and traditions behind closed doors and only among themselves and in communication with other tribal people. Declarations of tribal identity can be found in some scant records allowing for segregated schools or laws allowing for Nanticokes to “migrate” in Delaware records, but often the larger society simply labeled them as it saw fit and in accordance with their bias; rarely was it in accordance with their true heritage and ethnicity. Of the period from the early to mid-1900s, one tribal elder remarked, “It was hard enough when they thought you were black. God help you if they knew you were Indian.” Some Nanticoke-Lenape tribal elders, as recently as the last decade, remained afraid to have their names officially placed on a tribal roll for fear that the United States government would find a way to take their homes from them and place them on a western reservation (Gould, 2012). While the survival of a tribal identity is proof of the value placed upon it, the fear of the consequences for openly expressing it reflects the impact of generations of discrimination.

In some instances, tribal identity was quietly borne with a sense of shame imposed by popular stereotypes and historical misconceptions. Not wanting to be a “heathen savage” caused a break with misunderstood ancestral beliefs and practices, especially among some conservative Christian Nanticoke and Lenape people. For some, tribal identity would be admitted with the regret of descending from presumed uncivilized ancestors.

### **3.3.1 Federal and Mission Indian Boarding Schools**

The work of non-Native Christian missionaries among Native people would too often further the destruction of tribal culture. “Missionaries approached the Indian tribes in an effort to bring them into Western European religious life. Their primary message sought to invalidate the totality of Indian life and replace it with Christian values” (Deloria, 1988:105).

...the United States government launched systematic assaults on Indian religions, languages, and customs. Boarding schools were established which taught English as well as shame to the possessors of “the barbarous dialects.” Agents and teachers ridiculed the ancient ways, forbade the children to practice the old rituals, and cut their students’ hair – sometimes at gunpoint. Usually federal employees were assisted by hordes of aggressively competitive Baptist, Methodist, Mormon, and Catholic missionaries (Hudson, 1975:158).

The boarding schools were established from the perspective that American Indians were uncivilized and that they needed to shed their “Indianness” and embrace Christian Anglo/Euro-American culture in order to become “civilized.” The model for the schools was developed by U.S. Army Colonel Richard Pratt, one of the early founders of the Carlisle Indian School in Pennsylvania, the first of the federal Indian boarding schools. Pratt based his program of education on one he developed for Indian prisoners. Pratt stated in 1892 that, “A great general has said that the only good Indian is a dead one... In a sense, I agree with the sentiment, but only in this: that all the Indian there is in the race should be dead. Kill the Indian in him, and save the man” (Bear, 2008). The intention of the schools was not to educate, but to eradicate and transform. Indian children were given Anglo-American names and prevented from using their tribal names or maintaining social connections to other students from their own tribes (Bear,

2008). Children were kept from contact with their relatives who were still considered uncivilized because they kept to traditional perspectives and ways (Marr, 1998?).

The practice of eradicating Indian identity was not restricted to the time period of the Indian Wars of the nineteenth century, but continued into the twentieth century. A 1920 report cited malnourishment, forced labor, cruel punishments, and harsh conditions for students at these schools. A 1969 report indicated that Indian education was a “national tragedy” (Bear, 2008). “In the 1960s, a congressional report found that many teachers still saw their role as civilizing American Indian students, not educating them. The report said the schools still had a ‘major emphasis on discipline and punishment’” (Bear, 2008).

Interestingly, for Indians of the eastern seaboard of the United States, who were not on federal reservations, the Indian boarding school posed one of very few options for higher education while still maintaining an “Indian” racial designation. One example of the difficulty experienced by a Nanticoke in seeking higher education was that of William Davis, a product of the Nanticoke tribal schools who, during the 1930s, distinguished himself with high scores as a math student in the Delaware State boarding school for “colored” students. After serving in the United States Army during World War II, where he further distinguished himself for his ability to do advanced calculations in his head, triangulating enemy targets for bombardment, he was admitted to the Master’s Degree program of the University of Minnesota. Upon arriving at the university, there was an initial attempt to rescind his acceptance because the school had assumed he was white prior to his arrival. William Davis successfully argued for his status as a student, but was not permitted to stay in a dormitory because he was an Indian. Denied campus housing because of his race, he stayed in an unheated attic during the cold Minnesota winters. His previous courses were given no consideration for transfer credit, because they were from a “colored” school, so he took a double load of courses to make up the difference, while also working as a waiter in a white sorority house to meet his expenses. An injury from a fall on ice cut short his time in Minnesota, but he was later invited to complete his studies at the University of Maine because of his impressive score on a scholarship examination. William Davis, who was the first male citizen of the Nanticoke Indian Tribe with a master’s degree, was also awarded an honorary doctorate from the University of Maine, and taught at a local college in Sussex County, Delaware (Davis, 2012).

Acceptance as “Indian” students was not an issue for the Nanticoke youths who attended Haskell Indian Institute (now known as Haskell Indian Nations University) in Kansas from the latter 1940s. In spite of the hardships of separation from home and family, the experience allowed for a connection with other tribal youth, which continued long after their attendance (Lonewolf, 2012). Some of the Nanticoke students stayed in the region of their boarding schools after graduation, taking spouses from other tribes. Others became part of the Bureau of Indian Affairs Relocation Program, which sent Indian children far from their traditional homeland (Lonewolf, 2012). One example of this is that of Nanticoke elder and councilwoman, Pecita Norwood Lonewolf. After her 1955 graduation from the junior college at Haskell Institute, Pecita Norwood was relocated to Los Angeles, California, by the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), where she was the only American Indian placed on a staff serving American Indians of the area who were dislocated from their tribes. She met and married her Kiowa husband, a descendant of the famous Kiowa Chief Lonewolf, becoming Pecita Lonewolf, while working for the BIA in Los Angeles. Pecita Lonewolf finally returned to Sussex County to live among her fellow Nanticoke (Lonewolf, 2012). She, along with her younger sister and fellow Haskell alum Odette Norwood Wright, believe that in spite of the hardships, the experience at Haskell strengthened their determination to celebrate their tribal identity (Lonewolf, 2012; Wright, 2012). For many of the Nanticoke who attended Haskell, the curriculum and social agenda behind the federal Indian boarding school program was unable to undermine their tribal identity and, instead, served as a point of life-long connection with students from other tribes.

While reflecting on her time as a student at Haskell Institute, Odette Wright commented that the students from eastern tribal communities were often in a position of coaching and support for their fellow students from western reservations (Wright, 2012). Eastern tribal communities, like the Nanticoke-Lenape remaining around the Delaware Bay, had adapted to Anglo/Euro-American life ways over a longer period of history than their western counterparts. There was a difference of up to three centuries of additional contact and semi-assimilation for tribes of the eastern seaboard of the United States over many of the tribes of the central and western plains. Some western tribes had only known the absence of war against American forces for less than a century prior to the 1950s. The boarding school experience was less of a culture shock for eastern Indians than for those of the plains and southwestern states. Like many of their eastern tribal

counterparts, the Nanticoke-Lenape people had long learned to live within white American society, navigating their way through the expectations of the dominant culture. Modern tribal people refer to this as “walking on two paths.” It is viewed as a critical life skill, necessary for tribal cultural survival in an environment which is hostile toward tribalism and indigenous activism. Also known as “switching” between two cultures, it is a way to continue a tribal identity while being able to “switch” one’s demeanor and outward interactions to better blend within the non-indigenous society. Learning to walk on two paths undermined the original intention of the boarding school effort to eradicate the “Indianness” of the Indian; when the skill was well learned, the outward appearance of assimilation would belie the continuance of traditional tribal ways. The eastern Indians’ well established ability to walk on two paths proved to be an asset to some of their fellow students who had previously suffered the culture shock of the boarding school’s forced acculturation program. Becoming educated in “white” ways while quietly continuing a tribal identity was, and in many ways still is, a survival strategy.

### **3.3.2 The Denial of Continued Tribal Existence and the Perpetuation of Stereotypes in New Jersey and Delaware Public Education**

Maintaining Indian identity has been a challenge for Nanticoke-Lenape students in public schools in New Jersey and Delaware. A 2007 report on American Indians, issued by New Jersey State, indicates that American Indian students were only able to register their racial category as “Other” as there was no “American Indian” or “Native American” racial category on registrations forms, even from school districts with significant tribal populations (New Jersey, 2007a:50). Past and present American Indian public school students indicated that they were often the targets of racially charged statements by teachers who also provided erroneous information to their classes regarding American Indians. Teachers challenged the racial identity of students in front of their peers, claiming that they were not American Indians and that there were no more Indians in New Jersey (New Jersey, 2007a:53). American Indian students are bullied and racially harassed by their non-Native peers (New Jersey, 2007a:52). There is little information provided in the curriculum which acknowledges American Indian history at all, and even less reference to the particular history of tribes within the state (New Jersey, 2007a:51). While the report reflected contemporary circumstances,

testimony received during its compilation demonstrated that these were long-standing intergenerational issues (New Jersey, 2007a:52).

In 1898 the Delaware State Board of Education reported that the Indians, also called Moors, in Sussex County had established their own schools, which were separate from the “colored people,” referencing African Americans of the day (Delaware, 1899:23). By 1899 the state was funding schools for Indians (Delaware, 1900:48). In 1901 a law was introduced in an apparent attempt to overcome the ambiguity of an 1881 statute which had referred to the Nanticoke of the Millsboro area merely as “a special class of colored people” (Delaware, 1881). The law introduced in 1901 was passed in 1903 and was entitled “An Act to better establish the identity of a race of people known as the offspring of the Nanticoke Indians” (Delaware, 1901:986). The law acknowledged that people of this “race” were present throughout the state and it provided for their ability to acquire proof of their race from a Justice of the Peace or Notary Public in order to be able to “migrate.” This provision permitted Nanticoke-Lenape people to acquire a government certification of American Indian racial identity, thus enabling them to move with greater freedom than African Americans in states that practiced racial segregation.

A 1921 law guaranteed that the Indian schools would be governed by the Indian communities through a selection of trustees and that “No white or colored child shall be permitted to attend such a school without the permission of the Board of Trustees of said school” (Delaware, 1921:503). This policy is repeated in the 1935 Revised Code of the state, providing for three categories of schools, those for “White Children, Colored Children, and Moors” with the reference to “Moors” equated with Indians later in the text (Delaware, 1936:601-602).

Even though previous actions of the Delaware state government separately identified the Nanticoke-Lenape students from either the “white” or “black / colored” populations of the state, a 1923 Delaware report grouped the Nanticoke–Lenape communities together with the black population of the state under the heading “Negro School Attendance in Delaware” and described the Nanticoke-Lenape as both mulattoes and Indian:

Several communities included in the Census as mulattoes are elsewhere described as Moors or as descendants of the Nanticoke Indians. Their children attend the colored schools of the state and provide almost the entire enrollment of three colored schools in and about Cheswold in Kent

County and of two others in the Indian River territory in Sussex County. The attendance and absence records of these schools are treated in this book as part of the colored school statistics of Delaware (Cooper & Cooper, 1923:7).

Even though Delaware had previously repeatedly identified schools for three different races during its generations of legalized racial segregation, a 1974 report done by the Department of Public Instruction no longer mentioned Indian students or schools, even though it did provide a historical overview of the previous colored/negro educational institutions in the state as well as the general history of the white schools (Mowrey, 1974:4, 5). The history of tribally controlled primary schools had been erased along with any memory of the tribal identity of many of the students in the state. Like other remaining tribal communities of American Indians along the eastern seaboard of the United States, the Nanticoke-Lenape were given little thought by the larger society around them (Hudson, 1975:162). A 2012 discussion between tribal leaders of the Confederated Nanticoke and Lenape tribes recounted that one of the chief's sons was not allowed to report on his own tribe for a class project because the instructor refused to acknowledge their continued existence, disregarding the submission of copies of state statutes recognizing the tribe and federal census reports citing the presence of the tribe in the state.

Through to today, Nanticoke-Lenape students in both New Jersey and Delaware are often confronted by teachers who challenge their Indian identity and teach erroneous information regarding their tribal history and continued presence. Transcripts of the testimony from hearings carried out by executive order of the New Jersey Governor in 2007 reveal details of the issue. Nanticoke-Lenape witnesses reveal emotional distress due to the treatment of their heritage, identity, history, and continued presence by the educational systems within the state. One tribal mother stated,

I won't ask you to imagine what that feels like, because I'm sure you can't. Just trust us when we tell you that it is without parallel. To know who you are and you know that your people were here before the very folks who are telling you [that] you are no longer here is indeed beyond your wildest imagination. But in my experience, that deep agonizing feeling pales in the light of your children's tear-filled eyes when that reality becomes their reality. "Mommy, why don't people believe me when I tell them I'm an Indian?" "You're not going to believe this, mom, but today in school a kid asked me if we eat people and make human sacrifices." "Hey, mom, how come no one ever talks about the contributions of Native Americans to American society?" (New Jersey, 2007b:540).

A Nanticoke-Lenape boy in the eighth grade, who had been selected by the elders of the tribe to serve as the youth goodwill ambassador called “Junior Warrior,” remarked about a situation that he underwent as a seventh grader, after his teacher corrected another student’s assertion that even modern American Indians were breechcloth-clad, bare-footed people who lived in teepees:

My teacher responded by saying that, ‘Indians don’t live in teepees anymore; they live on reservations.’ I, being the only Native there, said that I could argue [with] both points because I was wearing socks and I didn’t live on a reservation. My teacher then said, ‘Well, you’re not a real Indian’ ... this was in front of the whole class (New Jersey, 2007b:543).

A Nanticoke-Lenape woman, who is an anthropologist, also provided testimony during one of the hearings. She stated that when she was an elementary school student, her class topic was about the Indians of New Jersey. She attempted to contribute by saying she was one of them, but she was told, “Sit down and be quiet; you’re a liar. You’re not an Indian” (New Jersey, 2007b:566). She recalled that when she was a child the school systems did not have a category for American Indian. The administration simply classified tribal people however they wanted. Her testimony indicated that tribal elders are often afraid to seek social services in non-tribal settings as they are “humiliated” when asked to provide their racial designation on questionnaires and then find that there is no category for American Indian and are told by service workers that they “look” Hispanic, or black, or white (New Jersey 2007b, 573), the suggestion being that they should simply choose the race that others see them as. She indicated that the same racial miscategorization occurred when she recently registered her child in school:

I signed him up as Native American. But there was only a category for Other. And I questioned that, and they said, well, there’s no category for American Indian. I wrote it in anyway. The next year ... I did the same thing. And [the record] showed up [classifying him] as Caucasian... I just challenge people to think what does this do to the young kid’s psyche? (New Jersey, 2007b:574).

Testimony was provided by various Nanticoke-Lenape people, from a cross section of age groups. One young Nanticoke-Lenape woman, who was a nursing student, remarked that her professor commented that all American Indians were poverty stricken alcoholics (New Jersey, 2007b:583). Another woman testified that her son was let go from his job because of his tribal identity (New Jersey, 2007b:608). Another woman, who had attended a southern college that had been established in the years following the

American Civil War as an institution of higher learning for both African-American and American Indian students, indicated that she was alienated for proclaiming her tribal identity, since the school and student body had come to view itself as historically and predominantly for African-Americans (New Jersey, 2007b:622). There was pressure to identify as black and deny Indian heritage.

### **3.3.3 The Efforts of Organized Anti-Tribal Groups and Elements of an Ongoing Push for Detribalization**

The attitudes stemming from, or reflected in, the Doctrine of Discovery and Manifest Destiny are active in modern political movements seeking to deny tribal rights in a push for total destruction of tribal governments. The 1960s and 1970s saw a revival of the assertion of American Indian identity and the strengthening of efforts to affirm the rights of tribal governments. This phenomenon was inspired by the Civil Rights Movement among African Americans (Grossman, 1993?), and came out of a time period in the late 1940s through to the 1950s known as the “termination era” when the United States government sought to dismantle tribal governments and cut off any federal aid or protections (Deloria, 1988:54, 62). Termination of a tribe meant that the government-to-government relationship between that tribe and the federal government would no longer exist, and, therefore, any agreements or protections would no longer have to be honored. It also typically meant the eradication of tribal land, opening it to private ownership and commercial development. Tribes had suffered under such actions before, stemming back to the days of the British colonies. One early example during the federal era of United States history was a tribal termination by the State of Virginia in the 1830s with the selling off of the Gingaskin Reservation. This new push was aimed at forcing many tribal governments into extinction. The official aim was to remove the expense of federal services, some of which were part of the terms of treaties and were meant to be perpetual. Termination violated tribal treaty rights, left tribal populations defenseless against corporations and local governments that were greedy for their lands, and emboldened those who sought to do away with tribal identity under the guise of establishing full citizenship for individual tribal people (Deloria, 1988:75). Termination was the advance of the agenda of conquest (Deloria, 1988:76).

The threat of termination resulted in the organizing of national intertribal initiatives. As the emerging threat of termination was being felt, eighty delegates from fifty tribes

across the United States gathered to establish the National Congress of American Indians, also known as NCAI. The organization states that it “was established in 1944 in response to the termination and assimilation policies the US government forced upon tribal governments in contradiction of their treaty rights and status as sovereign nations” (National Congress of American Indians, 2013). NCAI has grown to be the oldest and largest organization of tribal governments in the United States, with a membership of approximately two hundred tribal nations. Regional organizations of tribal governments rose to further bolster struggling tribes.

The unique issues of tribal people were not comprehended by the larger movements of social change within American society during the civil rights era (Deloria, 1988:169). Individual Indians, emboldened by the achievements of their peers in the Civil Rights Movement and Black Power Movement of the 1960s and 1970s, organized equivalent indigenous initiatives. Perhaps one of the best known, and controversial, of these initiatives was the American Indian Movement, also known as AIM. AIM claims to be an organic movement that existed from the time of the first contact with Europeans, but formally came into being in about 1968 with a patrol in Minneapolis, Minnesota, which was formed in response to police brutality against American Indians (Wittstock & Salinas, 2006?). AIM operated under the assumption that “Indian people were never intended to survive the settlement of Europeans in the Western Hemisphere, our Turtle Island” (Wittstock & Salinas, 2006?). The movement, energized by local chapters across the country and allies across the hemisphere, claims its “first mandate is to ensure the fulfillment of treaties made with the United States” (Wittstock & Salinas, 2006?). While the primary strategy of NCAI has been typically to defend tribal rights through political advocacy and influence, AIM activists added civil disobedience and direct confrontation to the mix. AIM’s reputation was forged in the 1969 occupation of Alcatraz Island, the 1970 takeover of the Washington D. C. offices of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and the 1973 occupation at Wounded Knee that culminated in the exchange of gunfire with United States federal law enforcement and armed forces (Wittstock & Salinas, 2006?).

The assertion of American Indian tribal pride and political activism was incongruous with the popularized notion of the vanquished Indian race and the presumption that the remnants of which would soon dissipate or be completely absorbed into the larger American society. The backlash to this surge of activism was the development of a

modern anti-Indian movement that viewed the call for tribal rights as an infringement on the rights on non-Indians, especially white Americans (Grossman, 1993?). Zoltan Grossman, in his essay *Treaty Rights and Responding to Anti-Indian Activity*, finds that there are five major motivating factors behind anti-Indian groups: 1) The misapplication of civil rights imagery supporting the perspective that white Americans are being oppressed and victimized by Indian rights under the guise of a “Red Apartheid;” 2) The equal access to all natural resources, including fishing, hunting, land, and water, without any “special rights” for tribes to use such resources, with the case being propelled by the distribution of anti-Indian propaganda such as the pamphlets *Are We Giving America Back to the Indians?* and *200 Million Custers*; 3) The myth of Indians living well off of the tax dollars of non-Indians which support their social programs and assumed gargantuan federal cash payments; 4) Presumed cultural superiority of “white America” over “red America,” with such bias displayed in the disrespecting of burial sites, sacred objects and rituals, in racist team logos and mascots promoting stereotypes, as well as in the belief that “the very existence of a non-Western belief system, rooted in the middle of the most powerful Western nation is ... a fundamental obstacle to overcome;” and 5) Simple racism, including “not only vicious slurs and violent harassment of Indian people, but also the widespread belief that Indians are unfit to govern themselves”—with one writer describing “Indian people as ‘children,’ as lazy recipients of outsiders’ hand-outs” and clearly demonstrated by the words of one protestor who urged, “Just wipe ‘em out” (Grossman, 1993?).

Grossman’s analysis of the factors supporting the anti-Indian movement demonstrates the gross misunderstanding of history, the impact of continuous treaty-breaking, and the racist legacy of the Doctrine of Discovery and Manifest Destiny which underlies the movement. The reason that American Indians often talk of “treaty rights” in addition to “civil rights” is precisely because the colonial and federal governments have obligations to American Indian tribes and people because of the history of covenants that have been made; this is not the case with any other Americans. Honoring those covenants is not a form of reverse racism, but rather is merely promise-keeping. Claims of unfair access to natural resources ignore the reality of the long history of land seizure, forced migration, and the fact that many tribes never gave up their indigenous rights to utilize the natural resources of their traditional homelands in a manner unfettered by non-tribal laws or policies. The erroneous myth of enormous annual federal cash payouts to individual Indians can be quickly erased by speaking with any Indian or visiting a

typical reservation where the reality of poverty similar to third world conditions would shock the average American. The reality of how the anti-Indian movement has provided political “cover” for the undermining of any effort to promote tribal self-sufficiency and economic development is a common complaint among tribal leaders and activists.

Ironically, most anti-Indian groups deny that they are racist (Grossman, 1993?). Many of their organizations are named in ways that simply seem patriotic, such as “One Nation,” “All Citizens Equal,” “Citizens Equal Rights Alliance,” and “Equal Rights for Everyone” (Grossman, 1993?). Yet, the racist undertone is quite evident in the stereotypes used and, in some instances, even in the public protests. In the late 1980s, in one protest against the efforts of the Chippewa to protect their traditional sustenance spear-fishing rights in Wisconsin, the anti-Indian crowd

... chanted racist taunts such as “timber niggers,” “welfare warriors,” and “spearchuckers,” and carried signs reading, “Save a Spawning Walleye, Spear a Pregnant Squaw,” and “Too Bad Custer Ran Out of Bullets.” ... The often drunk crowds threw rocks, bottles, and full beer cans... On the roads leading to and from the lakes, spearers’ and other treaty supporters’ tires were slashed, vehicles run into ditches, and elders nearly run down. On the landings, Chippewa were assaulted, threatened with death, harassed with whistles and mock drum chants, and pipe bombs were exploded. On the lakes, spearing boats were rammed, swamped, and blockaded by protest boats, youths fired metal ball bearings with high-powered wristrocket slingshots, and snipers fired rifles from the shoreline (Grossman, 1993?).

Activity resisting Indian rights can also be found among archaeologists and anthropologists who argue against tribal rights over the remains of their ancestors and ancient sacred objects (Grossman, 1993?). The graves of tribal ancestors are often disturbed, their remains removed and placed on display, and the sacred objects are disrespectfully handled. During the testimony given to the New Jersey Committee on Indian Affairs hearings in 2007, one Nanticoke-Lenape witness illustrated the disregard for the remains of tribal ancestors as she attended a class in which the instructor had placed human skulls on the tables around the classroom:

There were skulls lying around the table. This is Princeton University in 1992. I sat there at the table, and the woman said, “I know who these people are; these came from a mass grave, decapitated Native Americans.” And she named Pierce. She named Ridgeway. She named Mosely. She named Alloway. She named a number of places in New Jersey. I was terrified. I went out of the room in hysterics. Went to the director of the program and said... How is this woman in this university disrespecting -- and all I could think of, I wanted to grab them off the

table and take them away. And what could I do? Nothing. Nothing... These are my relatives. These are part of who I am. That's why we're standing here. We're all connected to that. You know, the professor told the lady that she couldn't do that again. She came in the next day and she said, well, because of one of you, the rest of you are suffering. You're going to lack this education because I can't bring these in anymore. And she didn't know who in the room it was that had been impacted by that. It's like we don't exist (New Jersey, 2007b:571-572).

While the remains were not displayed during the remainder of that course, often such remains are kept by universities, libraries, museums, and even in private collections and put on display without regard for the concerns or protests of the contemporary tribal people. Some institutions are actively working with tribal leaders to address this issue. Yet, repatriation efforts are still often met with hostile responses from the academic community. This is highly offensive to tribal people, who view such acts as disrespectful and insulting to the dead and to their living descendants. One advocate for ceremonial reburial of ancestral remains, Pemina Yellowbird, stated, "If this society has no respect for our ancestors who have passed on, it cannot have respect for us who are living" (Grossman, 1993?).

### **3.3.4 The Continuing Perception among Some Churches and Religious Leaders That Traditional Ways are of the Devil**

Anti-Indian views are still perpetuated by some Christian religious leaders. In 2011 the nationally syndicated Christian radio host and spokesman for the conservative American Family Association, Bryan Fischer, asserted that "American Indians deserved to be conquered by European whites ... because they failed to embrace Christianity" (Steinback, 2011). Fischer went on to state that "superstition, savagery and sexual immorality" morally disqualified Native Americans from "sovereign control of American soil," and that the superior battle skills of Europeans gave [them] "rightful and legal sovereign control" of American land through "the right of conquest" (Steinback, 2011). In 2013, David Barton, who is described as a Christian evangelist and conservative Republican political activist, and who was named by *Time* magazine as one of the country's most influential evangelicals (Hagerty, 2012), while expressing his view that American Indians were war-like, torturing, and uncivilized prior to successful missionary efforts, justified America's "bringing the Indians to their knees"

by military might (Anon., 2013). David Hunt, the founder of The Berean Call ministry advocating biblical discernment, called American Indian spiritual practices “paganism” and any attempt at reconciliation between Christianity and American Indian spirituality as “appalling” (Hunt, 1991). Hunt goes further in asserting that all indigenous people around the world traditionally worshipped trees, waterfalls, and a Great Spirit that is not transcendent, but is part of nature and, therefore, cannot be identified with the God of the Bible (Hunt, 1999).

While the previous examples happened to be white conservative Christians denigrating American Indian spiritual traditions, the practice is certainly not racially specific. In 2010 a Canadian Cree tribal community voted to ban sweat lodges, pow wows, and all other spiritual practices in order not to confuse the younger generation regarding the difference between the Bible and such traditional practices (Taliman, 2011). A sweat lodge that had been set up by a member of the tribal community, who had testified that embracing traditional forms of prayer had helped him to turn away from his substance abuse and become clean and sober, was ordered to be destroyed (Taliman, 2011). Another recent example was in northern Wisconsin, where tribal Evangelical Christians inspired by the New Apostolic Reformation movement condemn any expression of traditional spiritual practices among their own people as being demonic, idolatrous, and akin to witchcraft (Pember, 2012:26). In July 2012 several traditional spiritual structures were burned among the Lac Courte Oreilles Band of Lake Superior Ojibwe (Pember, 2012:22). The structures burned included two private sweat lodges and a communal structure used for big drum ceremonies (Pember, 2012:22). The alleged perpetrator charged with the arsons was a member of the tribe who was active among supporters of the New Apostolic Reformation group. The violence marks an increasing division between those who practice traditional expressions of tribal spirituality and those who condemn such activities as evil.

Among the Nanticoke-Lenape, Nanticoke elder and historian William Davis relates that when an African-American pastor was assigned to one of the tribal area’s Methodist churches attended by members of the Nanticoke Tribe, the pastor so berated and demonized tribal practices that some Nanticoke members of the congregation withdrew their enrollment in the tribe for fear of their souls (Davis, 2012). Another Nanticoke elder, who wished to remain unidentified, cited the continuing concern among some of the older Christians of the tribe that such practices as smudging and receiving a tribal

name were pagan and contrary to Christianity. Chief Mark Gould, when asked about how Christians among the Nanticoke Leni-Lenape of New Jersey dealt with traditional tribal spiritual practices, stated that some of the more conservative Christians, especially those who were elders, were uncomfortable even coming into the tribal prayer circle and praying while offering tobacco in the fire. Of those with such qualms, the vast majority were active in churches other than the historical tribal congregations (Gould, 2012). Chief Gould's use of the term "conservative" in this sense was more culturally focused and not a theological category, speaking more of the bias that "good" Christians were those who had adopted Anglo-American cultural traits, practices and perspectives, while abandoning anything "ethnic" or "indigenous." This was confirmed by Lewis "Grey Squirrel" Pierce, the co-chief of the tribe and senior traditional spiritual leader, who also stated that many of the conservative Christians had never spoken of their racial background in their majority non-Native congregations, for fear of being viewed as having descended from savages and pagans. Lewis "Grey Squirrel" Pierce further stated that the thought was "if you were Indian, you were nothing" (Pierce, 2013). The sentiment was so strong among some tribal members that while the tribal family bonds were strong, there was reluctance among some to learn or promote traditional cultural practices, which many conservative Christians associated with the devil.

### **3.4 Tensions in Indian Country Impacting the Nanticoke-Lenape**

For many outside of inter-tribal politics and relationships, America's Indigenous People may appear to be culturally unified and mutually acknowledging and supportive of one another. The rise of the modern "pan-Indian" powwow may have played a role in this perception. The appearance of commonality in these often open-to-the-public events attended by people from tribes across the country gives spectators a glimpse into a homogenized twentieth century spin on an ancient tradition, which will be discussed further in a later chapter. However, the reality is that there are many points of division between tribes that go beyond the differences between tribal cultures. Like nations on almost every continent, there are those who are allies and those who are adversaries and those which fall somewhere between the two. The passage of time and the events of history can alter political relationships wherein the alliances and conflicts of one era may appear diametrically different in another era. American Indian Nations share in

this dynamic. Old pre-contact adversaries may today be allied and once united peoples may now struggle in opposition.

### **3.4.1 Difference between East and West**

Tribes of the eastern and southern coastal areas of the United States experienced their first contact with European colonial powers during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, some three hundred years prior to the famed “Indian Wars” of the nineteenth century, which involved the tribes of the “western frontier” west of the Mississippi River. Eastern tribes, like the Nanticoke-Lenape, experienced a different set of historical circumstances than the tribes of the western frontier. Those that remained in the east continued under different circumstances than their cousins who were forced to migrate to western reservations or north to Canada. This difference has resulted in some strained relationships and misunderstandings between tribes.

Eastern tribes of first contact suffered devastating losses due to the sudden spread of European diseases causing rampant epidemics that cut their populations by as much as ninety percent. The intent of European domination was first learned among eastern tribes. The story of eastern tribal communities is often not known or understood by their western counterparts. Many eastern tribes had dealings with colonial powers, some with colonial reservations or “Indian Towns,” some merely staying in community while partially assimilating into Euro-American society. Those tribal communities remaining in the east, sometimes while others from their tribe migrated away, were often of no interest to the federal government.

Many tribes, however, never entered into a treaty with the United States. These tribes were too peaceful to present a military threat, too small or isolated to be noticed, or simply possessed nothing that the United States and its citizens desired to have. Other groups simply refused to conclude a treaty with the United States (Anderson and Kickingbird, 1978:1).

A significant percentage of historic tribes on the eastern seaboard remained “unrecognized” by the federal government because they had never posed a problem, never required military intervention, and were not situated on lands to be confiscated. Unlike their western cousins, which were tribes from the central part of the continent, or those who had either migrated from the eastern parts of the country in colonial days, or those had been driven west during the Indian Removals under President Andrew

Jackson in the 1830s, these easterners were largely overlooked and forgotten. The Indians remaining east of the Mississippi and those west of the river had lived under different circumstances.

Vine Deloria, former executive director of the National Congress of American Indians, certainly a well versed American Indian leader and educator at the national level, was unaware that American Indians were ever enslaved by Europeans (Deloria, 1988:7). Yet slavery was the reality for some eastern tribal people (Forbes, 1993:191). In Virginia there was a time when Indians away from their “towns” without permission from the governor were to be considered enemies and could be killed or enslaved (Fletcher 1888:30). The statutes of Virginia, following Bacon’s Rebellion, discussed the enslavement of Indians by the Bacon Assembly:

... all Indians which shall hereafter be sold by our neighboring Indians, or any other traficing [sic] with us as for slaves are hereby adjudged, deemed and taken, and shall be adjudged and taken to be slaves to all intents and purposes, any law, usage, or custome [sic] to the contrary notwithstanding (Fletcher, 1888:31).

However, Indians were not only enslaved in Virginia, nor was the slavery of Indians exclusively a southern phenomenon, but is also documented in northern territories like New Jersey (Forbes, 1993:87).

We must remember ... the existence of Indian slavery in many English colonies ... We have been taught to ignore Indian slavery ... but colonial whites frequently showed a willingness to enslave the native [sic] Americans and well as blacks. Nearly all the colonies at the time of the Revolution had a few Indian slaves (Hudson, 1975:161).

Miscegenation with both whites and blacks was not uncommon among many, if not most, eastern tribes until racial identity and tribal integrity challenges and pressures became a greater concern in the early nineteenth century, when the practice of endogamy became a standard among the Nanticoke-Lenape communities in New Jersey and Delaware. However, early on, the presence of racially mixed blood Indians was not an issue even for the eastern tribes migrating westward. For many tribal people, identity was traditionally based more on community origins than on biological racial makeup. During the latter part of the eighteenth century, David Zeisberger observed that among the Lenape/Delaware, “A few Negroes are found among the Indians having been either bought from the whites or secured as prisoners. These are looked upon as of their own kind and allowed full liberty. Indians and Negroes intermarry and their mulatto children

are as much loved as the children of pure Indian blood” (Hubert and Schwarze, 1910:124). At the turn of the twentieth century, Delaware Indian Richard Adams cites the fact that mixed bloods make up the majority of the Lenape who migrated west and became the Delaware Tribe in Bartlesville, Oklahoma. At the time, out of approximately 1,150 Delaware Indians of the tribe, 950 were mixed bloods, (Adams, 1904:7). Anthropologist Frank Speck observed that as late as the 1930s, this same community of Lenape/Delaware held African Americans in high regard: “To white people the general term, meaning ‘brothers’ is applied, while Negroes are termed ‘elder brothers,’ being considered the strongest of all races” (Speck, 1931:33).

The tribes of the east coast of the United States have a history of being the people of “first contact” with European colonial powers and have had longer exposure to non-indigenous populations. While many of America’s indigenous people who maintain enrollment as citizens of historical tribal governments are “mixed bloods,” having some percentage of non-American Indian ancestry, the racial mix among many continuing tribes of the eastern and southern coast have a history of mixed Indian and African ancestry. This has had an impact on the ability of many eastern tribes, like the three Nanticoke-Lenape communities, to gain a “government-to-government” relationship with the United States federal government. A 1978 report from the Institute for the Development of Indian Law states, “The reasons that are usually presented to withhold recognition from tribes are 1) that they are racially tainted with the blood of African Tribesmen, or 2) greed, for newly recognized tribes will share in the appropriations for services given to the Bureau of Indian Affairs” (Anderson and Kickingbird, 1978:17).

According to the findings of the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs session entitled “Roundtable on Federal Recognition: The Political and Legal Relationship Between Governments” held on April 26<sup>th</sup>, 2012, attended by Indian leaders and federal Indian policy makers, it was “revealed that historic coastal area tribes of the colonial era (including the eastern, western, and southern coastlines) remaining in or near their traditional homelands were most affected by the inequities and deficiencies of the Federal Acknowledgment Process” (Alliance of Colonial Era Tribes, 2012).

### 3.4.2 Racism's Continuing Impact among Tribes

While American Indian tribes certainly knew of biases and conflicts between tribes, and sometimes even subtribes, racism appears to have been a learned trait, transferred to the “conquered” by the “conquerors.” Hudson observes, “It is worth remembering that in many instances ‘red,’ ‘white,’ and ‘black’ as monolithic entities rest on fantasies. In colonial sources hundreds of largely ignored records and papers refer to half-breeds, mulattoes, mustees, mestizos, mistezos, ‘French’ Indians, and ‘Spanish’ Indians” (Hudson, 1975:161). Racial classifications that imposed a “value” on each class by attributing certain assumptions, and sometimes even rights, dignities, or even indignities, was not a common practice among the original Americans. Among the indigenous people, there was an acknowledgment of physical and cultural differences between themselves and the newcomers, but it appears that this was an acknowledgment with more “broad strokes” than that which developed as racial blood quantum classifications imposed by Euro-Americans. During the latter colonial era, the Reverend David Brainerd observed that the Indians he was evangelizing referred to themselves by the general category of “black” in contrast to those who were “white.”

I must also say, I have sometimes been almost nonplussed with them, and scarcely knew what to answer them; but never have been more perplexed with them, and when they have pretended to yield to me as knowing more than they, and consequently have asked me numbers of impertinent, and yet difficult questions, as, “How the Indians came first into this part of the world, away from all the white people, if what I said was true,” viz. that the same God made them who made us? “How the Indians became black, if they had the same original parents with the white people?” (Edward & Dwight, 1822:348)

In years past, American Indians have been subjected to classifications based upon the degree of Indian blood and the degree of non-Indian blood to qualify for certain benefits. In the days when the United States was involved in enumerating tribes, type classifications such as “full blood,” “half blood,” and “quarter blood” were applied to all those who identified with the tribes being subject to the enumeration. The determination of the measure of any blood mix was not based upon a documented genealogical study, but often merely on the subjective opinion of the enumerator.

Degree of blood was not required on the early rolls. When it was included, for a short period, blood quantities were artificially compressed into only three categories that may have led to confusion in later years when more specific categories were required. The 1930 Indian census did not allow more than three distinctions to be made in amount of blood

because the census was to be tabulated using a mechanical reading device. Circular 2676 (1930) said the new census form, Form 5-128, "must be filled out in absolute conformity to instructions on reverse. This ruling is necessary because a mechanical device has been installed in the Office for tabulating the data... Thus for degree of blood then symbols "F" for full blood; " $\frac{1}{4}+$ " for one-fourth or more Indian blood; and " $\frac{1}{4}$ " for less than one-fourth. No substitution of more detailed information is permissible in any column." Later, in 1933, the agents were told to use the categories "F", " $\frac{3}{4}$ ", " $\frac{1}{2}$ ", " $\frac{1}{4}$ ", and " $\frac{1}{8}$ ." Still later, they were urged to be exact if possible. Thus, if someone used the 1930 blood quantum information in retrospect it could lead to mistakes, since it is not possible to start from an artificially compressed category and then accurately return with greater detail (United States Archives, 2008).

Prior to the last two decades of the twentieth century, blood quantum was commonly used to allow for Indian school enrollment and other purposes. This blood quantum standard, originally an alien concept to indigenous people, has subsequently been adopted by many tribes for the purpose of determining eligibility for tribal enrollment for citizenship, with the Nanticoke-Lenape being among them. Even today, tribes issue certifications of degree of Indian blood for their enrolled citizens, and in some cases even for tribal descendants ineligible for enrollment as tribal citizens. However, Indian identity is traditionally and generally more a phenomenon of culture than race, based upon a combination of a tribe's claiming an individual and the individual's self-definition (Grossman, 1993?).

Along with racial classifications and measures has arisen racism among tribal people. While there is some prejudice against mixed "white" Indians, there appears to be a greater bias against mixed "black" Indians. Chief Framon Weaver of the MOWA Band of Choctaw Indians in Alabama, while testifying before the United States Congress House of Representatives Committee on Natural Resources, cited a letter from Professor Don Rankin of Stanford University as he related a disturbing incident in a 1995 genealogy seminar. Dr. Rankin reported that two of the people who became influential in the review of federal recognition petitions by American Indian Tribes seeking formal acknowledgment from the federal government were discussing why they believed that Chief Weaver's tribe would not receive acknowledgment because they had "black ancestors" (United States House of Representatives, 2012). Ironically, the tribe of which they spoke continues to live on their own state reservation, had their children sent to Indian boarding schools in the past, and still speaks their indigenous language. Race bias against any hint of black ancestry has been cited as a primary reason why

many eastern and southern coastal tribes remain unrecognized by the federal government, and why many federally recognized tribes with a high percentage of white ancestry are not challenged in the same way (Sunray, 2012).

### **3.4.3 Federal Acknowledgment and Alienation**

The relationship between Indian tribes and the federal government has developed over more than two centuries, having been born of a legacy of conquest, colonization, and broken treaties that extends over three centuries beyond that. In the twentieth century that relationship has evolved into a system under which the federal government determines which tribes it will have a “government-to-government” relationship with and which it will not. Those who by turns of history have such a relationship are said to be “federally recognized” and those who do not are considered “unrecognized.”

American Indians are unlike any other minority group in the United States in that their relationship with the various levels of non-indigenous governments around them involve not only themselves as individuals, but their identity in connection to a tribe which predates the existence of the United States. American Indians who have maintained a tribal identity and connection do not tend to consider themselves as just another domestic minority group (Den Ouden & O’Brien, 2013:13-14). Through the time of the 1934 Indian Reorganization Act, federal acknowledgment was, for the most part, a matter of treaty making. However, the making of such treaty agreements between the United States and American Indian tribes ended by 1913 (Ettawageshik, 2009:2). The Indian Reorganization Act of 1934 was part of an effort to have tribes reorganize their governments in a fashion that was more comprehensible to white administrators and also more in conformity to the fashion in which Indian affairs would be managed by the federal government (Anderson & Kickingbird, 1978:3). Unfortunately, not all tribes that the government was clearly aware of were included in the list of “recognized tribes” after the implementation of the Act. Some were left off of the list inadvertently, and others were not included through the influence of racism impacting the judgment of the team of anthropologists assigned to review those tribes which did not have a clear treaty relationship with the United States (Anderson & Kickingbird, 1978:15). In 1978 an effort was made to provide objective criteria in an administrative process that would allow tribes that were not listed as federally recognized according to the United States Bureau of Indian Affairs to be able to petition the Bureau to be added to the list of

acknowledged tribes (Ettawageshik, 2009:3). However, while the federal acknowledgment criteria have not substantially changed, the way in which the criteria are being applied has become increasingly burdensome and unpredictable, and can take decades to even receive a negative determination (Ettawageshik, 2009:3; Ferguson-Bohnee, 2009:18-19, 22). In the final estimation, tribes that remain without federal acknowledgment will find the administrative process to gain that status to be an insurmountable obstacle increasingly encumbered with interpretations of the original criteria that seem aimed at preventing the acknowledgment of tribes instead of assisting worthy tribes to gain the status of acknowledgment, which is actually a correction of an error committed by the United States against them (Ettawageshik, 2009:5). While the United States Congress and the federal courts may also acknowledge tribes and require that the Bureau of Indian Affairs list them as such, neither the United States Congress nor the federal courts have been active in doing so since the early 1990s, preferring instead to refer such determinations to the administrative process in spite of the fact that the process is “broken” (Ettawageshik, 2009:5; United Nations General Assembly, 2012:15).

The value of federal acknowledgment cannot be overstated. It goes to the heart of a tribal government’s ability to assert any level of sovereignty over its own affairs.

Federal recognition of an Indian tribe can dramatically affect economic and social conditions for the tribe and the surrounding communities. Federally recognized tribes are eligible to participate in federal assistance programs. In fiscal year 2004, the Congress appropriated about \$6 billion for programs and funding almost exclusively for recognized tribes. Recognition also establishes a formal government-to-government relationship between the United States and a tribe (Nazzaro, 2005:1).

The intangibles of federal acknowledged status are far-reaching. It is increasingly the measure that is used in various federal laws and policies to determine who is an “Indian” or what can be considered an “Indian Tribe” for certain legal purposes. Individual state governments may provide a legal status to tribes within their boundaries, known as state recognition, for tribes that have not yet been recognized by the federal government. However, state recognition is a “poorly understood aspect of the U.S. Federalist system that has been increasingly employed in relations between tribal nations and individual states as a counterpart to the unwieldy federal recognition process” (Koenig & Stein, 2013:126-127). State recognized status can serve as an important designation for tribes, “albeit a limited alternative to federal recognition”

(Koenig & Stein, 2013:128). While this “second tier” status of state recognition will permit tribes and their tribal citizens certain advantages over being completely unrecognized, it still does not afford “full Indian status” in all federal protections and provisions.

The full brunt of the limitation of being only state recognized has been the experience of the Nanticoke–Lenape. While through to the latter years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century their tribal citizens had attended Haskell Indian Institute (now known as Haskell Indian Nations University), the qualifications for attendance suddenly went from a blood quantum standard to being a citizen of a federally recognized tribe. Non-federally recognized alumni of Haskell could no longer send their children to their alma mater, nor could they return for further study (Alliance of Colonial Era Tribes, 2011). Federal laws protecting the right of American Indians to utilize and possess eagle feathers for religious and ceremonial purposes in addition to the right of American Indian tribes to take action to protect the remains and artifacts of the graves of their ancestors are all limited to those with the designation “federally recognized.” There are numerous programs and benefits that are exclusive to those Indians and tribes with the federal designation. The difference between being federally recognized and not being federally recognized is so steep that tribes that have state recognition are often grouped with those that are simply called “unrecognized.” A 2012 report to the Human Rights Council of the United Nations referred to the state of being an unrecognized tribe or tribal citizens as being “especially disadvantaged” (United Nations General Assembly, 2012:14).

The divisive nature of the three-tiered system (federally recognized, state recognized, unrecognized) imposed by the United States federal government upon Indian tribes has created a caste system within Indian country. Some powerful regional tribal organizations do not permit non-federally recognized tribes to participate as voting members. In a recent struggle within the largest and oldest organization of tribal governments, the National Congress of American Indians, a few leaders from federally recognized tribes pushed to remove state recognized tribes from voting membership. Fortunately, the matter was resolved in favor of the non-federally recognized tribes, as the vast majority of delegates rejected allowing the federal government to determine who could vote within an organization of inherently sovereign nations (Toensing, 2012).

### **3.5 Conclusion**

American Indian people and tribes are still suffering from the ripples and echoes of the Doctrine of Discovery and the principle of Manifest Destiny. Federal policies hostile to tribal cohesion and continuance have been based upon the doctrine. Modern anti-Indian initiatives aimed at extinguishing tribal entities, and for some, even destroying tribal people, can be traced to the racist implications of the doctrine. In many ways it is now impacting the very idea of who can say they are American Indian and what tribes can still profess that they exist at all, regardless of verifiable tribal history and heritage. The poison of the doctrine has come so far that it is now being fed to Indian people by Indian people, often with little understanding that they are participating in their own subjugation. It would surprise many people around the world, who have become familiar with the story of the famous Pocahontas, who married an Englishman in the early days of English settlement in North America and became famous when she traveled to England, that she would today not meet the definition of “Indian” under certain federal policies because, at the time of this writing, her tribe is not federally recognized.

The continuing influence of the principles of conquest and forced assimilation stemming from the Doctrine of Discovery and the concept of Manifest Destiny is a contemporary reality for the Nanticoke-Lenape. Issues of identity, heritage, and community continue to be affected by the many ways in which the Doctrine of Discovery has been woven into the social, spiritual, and political fabric of the United States. For some, there is an imposed self-hate because of the misperception, promoted by the influence of the Doctrine of Discovery, of their having devil-worshipping, savage, racially inferior ancestors. Five hundred years of history tainted by this doctrine still impacts every day for the Nanticoke-Lenape. Ministry among the Nanticoke-Lenape must take this into consideration in order to be sensitive to the many challenges it brings.

## **4.0 THE TRIBAL CHURCHES AND THE CONTINUING ELEMENTS OF NANTICOKE-LENAPE TRADITIONAL SPIRITUALITY**

### **4.1 The Tribal Congregations**

In the United States there is an organized “Native American Church,” which incorporates various rituals from southwestern and southern plains tribal spiritualism, and includes the use of the hallucinogenic peyote in its worship in order to induce visions. This religious organization, formally incorporated in 1918, is a mixture of various spiritual traditions with elements from Christianity (Swan, 2007). There are other similar expressions, such as the “Peyote Church of God,” which mix Christian and tribal spirituality while also incorporating the use of peyote. While the former has traditionally required American Indian descent by blood, the latter does not. Collectively, such traditions are sometimes commonly referred to as the “Peyote Church,” “Peyotism,” or “Peyote Religion.” Peyotism is “pan-Indian” in nature, as it is a generic expression of an indigenous ritual that may not be rooted in the specific tribal traditions of the region in which it is currently being practiced.

The Native American Church as a singularly organized institution must be distinguished from those Christian congregations made up of tribal people, which also may have historically served as the center of tribal community activity. While Peyotism is a characteristic of the institutionalized Native American Church, this is typically not the case for historic tribal Christian churches, especially in the eastern United States. A historically American Indian / Native American tribal Christian congregation or church may, or may not, have any indigenous or pan-Indian cultural expressions in its worship or décor. In this study, such a congregation is considered “tribal” because it was established as such, either as a mission or because it was organized and led by people from a particular American Indian tribe, or because it evolved into a congregation predominantly of people from a particular American Indian tribe. Because of the common tribal cultural background of the members of the congregation, the tribal church, as referenced in this study, is a homogeneous unit. The Peyote Religion, which claims Christian belief, is overtly syncretistic in its adoption of the sacramental use of an hallucinogenic in addition to other “blended” doctrines and practices which deviate from, and are in opposition to, historic biblical Christianity. “Syncretism is sin in that it directs one’s allegiance to other than Jesus Christ by reason of a person’s participation

in a new religious system—one created from the blend which dilutes or redirects faith to other than Christ” (Twiss, 2005). However, tribal Christian congregations are not typically overtly syncretistic. This is not to assert that no syncretistic tendencies, beliefs, or practices may be apparent within the congregation, but rather that the overt, official, institutional position of the church is consistent with historic biblical Christianity. The issues around the challenge between contextualization and syncretism, in addition to the homogeneous unit principle and the unity of the Body of Christ as a whole, as these concepts pertain to holistic, Christ-centered, culturally sensitive ministry among the Nanticoke-Lenape people, will be further explored in the next chapter. This chapter will primarily serve to provide information on the modern life and influence of the churches at the core of the three Nanticoke-Lenape tribal communities and the elements of traditional ways that are still expressed within the religious life of those communities.

The core congregations among the three Nanticoke-Lenape tribes around the Delaware Bay have been critical for the continuity of the historic communities. They are “tribal” because they were established by tribal people with the aim of ministering to the tribal community. They are referred to as “core” or “central” tribal churches because each was a historic center for tribal governance through the transition from traditional chieftaincies to governance by family clan to formal constitutional governments. The central tribal churches were also a critical vehicle through which the three tribal communities continued to interact. Though each congregation’s political role within their respective communities has diminished, they remain an influential part of tribal culture and a point of pride. The historic core tribal churches have continued from the nineteenth century as hubs for tribal activity.

#### **4.1.1 Core Tribal Congregations Which Served as the Seats of Governance for Each of the Three Tribal Communities**

The Indian Mission Church in Millsboro, Delaware, was established by those desiring to preserve their tribal identity and control over their congregation after it was perceived that the original congregation, Harmony Church, was experiencing a demographic shift that threatened traditional tribal control (Department of the Interior, 2008; Street, 2012). This willingness to include non-tribal members remains a characteristic of the Harmony congregation into contemporary times (Hall, 2012). Unlike the Israel Memorial Church,

which was established primarily on account of the geographic distance between the primary Nanticoke community in Millsboro and the smaller Nanticoke community in Lewes, the Indian Mission Church had its origins in a push to maintain tribal governance. For the Millsboro Nanticoke community, the move from being part of nontribal congregations to forming tribally controlled congregations can be traced at least to the origins of Harmony Church in 1818 and is further emphasized in the establishment of the Indian Mission Church in 1881 (Marker, 2002: SC 122). The 1840 establishment of Israel Memorial Church in Lewes, while not due to a formal “split” from Harmony Church, but rather due to geographic distance (Drain, 2012; Burton, 2012; Street, 2012), still testifies to the effort of the Nanticoke to continue to preserve and promote cultural identity through a tribal congregation. While the goal of maintaining and promoting tribal identity and cohesiveness is clearly demonstrated in this example, its relationship to the essential ministry mission of the Christian Church will be explored in the next chapter.

The Indian Mission Church celebrates an annual Native American Sunday worship, which is encouraged by the denominational judicatory. The congregation’s weekly Bible study, vacation Bible school, and some of its fellowship and community outreach meals are conducted at the Nanticoke Indian Center, which is several miles away. The annual tribal powwow Sunday morning worship is typically led by the congregation, with the morning offering being split between the church and the tribe (Wright, L., 2012). There is an active chapter of the United Methodist Church’s Committee on Native American Ministries (CONAM), which receives funding from the regional denominational judicatory, referred to as the “Annual Conference,” which includes congregations across the Delmarva Peninsula. The church sanctuary has a few cultural decorations, such as a needlepoint display honoring Nanticoke elders with the profile of a tribal warrior with feathered headdress and featuring a prayer pipe, the pulpit cloth with a pan-Indian style depiction of the four cardinal directions, and a feather staff hanging on the wall over the choir. Such displays would give any visitor the notion that there is some interaction with tribal culture. However, the overall typical Sunday morning worship style is decidedly and generically Methodist. With the exception of certain special Sundays, set aside to emphasize tribal culture, cultural distinctions in the order of worship are few and far between. On such special Sundays, it is common to have tribally inspired Christian songs with the accompaniment of a hand drum (Wright, O., 2012). Some songs are based on the tunes of common English hymns, but with lyrics in the native

tongue. An example of this is “Wëntaxa Kishelëmiàn” [Come Here My Creator], which is in the Southern Unami dialect of Lenape, a related language to Nanticoke. It is sung to the tune of “Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing” originally arranged by John Wyeth (1770-1858).

Wëntaxa Kishelëmiàn [Come here You who created me]  
"Witaèmil!" ntasuwin ["Stay with me!" I sing]  
Këtëmakelëntëwakàn [Feeling pity in my mind]  
"Wichëmikèk." ntasuwin ["Help us!" I sing]  
Wëntamail asuwakàn [Teach me a song]  
Elsihtit tali hòkunk [The way they are there above]  
Xinkòkanimkwësëwakàn [The great feeling for others]  
Xinkwe aholtëwakàn [The great love]  
(Lenape Talking Dictionary, 2013)

Such occasions are also marked by many wearing modern forms of tribal dress, ribbon shirts and American Indian jewelry.

In modern times, the Indian Mission Church does not practice restricted membership as it did in the past when there was no other center of tribal governance. When asked about the current racial makeup of the congregation, church lay leader Leolga Wright, who grew up in the Indian Mission Church and is the sister of the recently deceased and highly venerated Chief James T. “Tidewater Laughing-Wolf” Norwood, stated that since the mid-1970s the church had become interracial initially through tribal members “marrying-out” and the non-native spouses being welcomed into the congregation. She stated that it is “important to include all races. No quota in the Bible ... none in the church” (Wright, L., 2012). The non-Native members of Indian Mission Church are typically very supportive of the tribe (Wright, L., 2012). However, Leolga Wright admits that this attitude, though representing the majority, is still not warmly embraced by some of the tribal elders who prefer the community to remain separate, even in regard to church membership (Wright, L., 2012). The connection between the life of the tribe and the life of the church remains strong. On powwow Sunday, the church closes and moves its worship to the powwow grounds (Wright, L., 2012).

Unlike the core tribal churches, as previously defined, in Bridgeton and Cheswold, and even the other two historic tribal churches in the Millsboro area, the Indian Mission Church has had white pastors throughout its history. In the past, it was on a “circuit,” sharing pastors with other local congregations. For the past quarter century, a pastor has been exclusively assigned to the church (Wright, L., 2012). To her memory, Leolga

Wright testified that she believed most pastors seemed rather excited to be assigned to the congregation and would attend the annual tribal powwow. One pastor, the Rev. Sterling Green, provided tremendous moral support and encouragement during the development of the Nanticoke Indian Museum in the facility which once housed one of the tribal elementary schools (Wright, L., 2012). The pastor, as of the date of this research, the Rev. Karen Mumford, has served the congregation for four years. Rev. Mumford states that the Indian Mission Church was her first pastoral charge, having received her call to ministry after spending 30 years in another career. Rev. Mumford was very anxious about being assigned a church outside of her own culture. Having no exposure to any tribal culture previously, she was very concerned about the possibility of making a cultural *faux pas*. Speaking to her fears, her district supervisor informed her that she was going to a “wonderful” congregation. She reported that she found the people welcoming, respectful, loyal, and engaging. She stated that it was very obvious that the tribal culture had high regard and respect for spiritual leadership (Mumford, 2012).

Pastor Mumford indicated that she was very much still on a learning curve when it came down to tribal issues, which she says do impact the life of the church. She approaches such matters in a prayerful and pastoral fashion, but often feels unprepared in such an unfamiliar setting (Mumford, 2012). As the pastor of the Indian Mission Church, she has occasionally found herself having to play a role within the life of the tribe. She was asked to install newly elected tribal officers during a Native ceremony. Being unfamiliar with what exactly was expected of her, she gave a personal statement charging the new officers to handle their responsibilities well and she prayed over them (Mumford, 2012). She states that when she first arrived she sensed that “tribalism” (the strong influence of attitudes, perspectives, values, and traditions that stem from an intense sense of loyalty to one’s tribe), had somewhat of a priority over personal spiritual development among many of the members of the congregation. This was due, in part, to the relationships among church members reflecting political alliances and conflicts within the tribe, or between tribal people and non-tribal people, instead of the unity which should be a hallmark of congregational life. Additionally, for some it appeared that their participation in the congregational life was out of a desire to identify with the tribal heritage instead of growing as disciples of Jesus Christ. However, Pastor Mumford’s ministry emphasis is spiritual development (Mumford, 2012). The congregation has not resisted this emphasis on spiritual formation and many members of the tribal

community openly express warm feelings toward their new pastor (Wright, O., 2012). Tribal elder and former tribal councilwoman, Odette Wright, sings in the Indian Mission Church choir where she also serves as a lay preacher; she stated, “I like good preachers. I don’t care what color they are. As long as they have it in their heart” (Wright, O., 2012).

Odette Wright is well aware of the cultural “learning curve” that some pastors have had to undergo at the Indian Mission Church. Many ministers newly assigned to the congregation by the denomination have little or no understanding of the tribal history of the area or even that American Indians are still living there, assuming that the only remnants of America’s tribal cultures were on reservations in the western part of the country. The only image some have had is what has been presented in movies or on television, too often reflecting old stereotypes instead of current realities. Odette Wright stated that she had become used to having to explain, and defend, certain Native ceremonies, which were initially approached with some anxiety and even disdained by some of the pastors of the congregation in the past. During a recent infant baptism, Odette Wright was asked to “smudge” the baby in addition to the pastor’s baptizing with water. Rev. Mumford admitted her anxiety over allowing the ceremony, given her lack of understanding regarding it (Wright, O., 2012). The act was not meant to alter the ritual Christian baptism. Rather, it was a celebration of the child’s heritage as she was brought to Christ by her parents to be initiated into the visible church. Smudging is wafting the smoke from smoldering sage, cedar, sweet grass, or tobacco, which is akin to the use of incense in the so-called Christian “high church” liturgical traditions. It is a common practice among many American Indians. To her credit, the pastor accepted the explanation that it was a common way to bless in Indian tradition (Mumford, 2012). Rev. Mumford permitted the baby to be smudged as a separate expression of joy and blessing apart from incorporating it directly into the ritual of baptism. Odette Wright is frequently asked to smudge for a variety of reasons, including in ministering to the sick, to those who are getting married, or as a blessing over a dance circle or other ceremony (Wright, O., 2012).

There remains some anxiety and disdain shared by some of the older people of the congregation who turned away from the old tribal ways, feeling that there was something wrong with such things and that they needed to be left in the past. For some who oppose the embracing of old tribal ways, the assumption is that if it is not done in

accordance with the dominant culture's expression of Christianity, it should not be done by American Indians either. However, there is among many a growing interest in the old ceremonies. How such cultural elements can appropriately be used without committing the sin of syncretism will be further explored in the next chapter.

The tribal community in Cheswold, Delaware, provides evidence of similar motivations in the establishment of the core historic tribal congregations of the Nanticoke-Lenape people in that area of Kent County, which were eventually unified into a single church. As early as 1830, the tribal community became determined to establish a congregation respectful of their tribal identity, separate from the non-Native controlled church which had maintained a practice of racially segregated seating during worship between whites and "people of color" and a secondary status for non-white attenders (Durham, 2012). While open to an egalitarian worship, the original tribal congregation, Manship Chapel, upheld restrictive voting membership practices in order to protect the tribal identity of the congregation (Anon., 1892). This practice would continue through to the twentieth century and the merging with the somewhat less restrictive Immanuel Church in 1948. The determination to keep tribal control over the congregation during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was reinforced by the perception that the Methodist denomination had attempted to exert too much control over tribal affairs in Millsboro's Harmony and Indian Mission congregations. The same was not tolerated by the Cheswold community. The lesson had been learned and control of the church had been defended through official channels, with church members successfully challenging the denomination (Anon., 1892).

The Immanuel Union United Methodist Church in Cheswold, Delaware, was formed out of the 1948 merger between the Manship congregation (established around 1830) and the "Little Union" (also known as "Fork Branch") Church (established around 1850). When asked about the merger, Lenape Indian Richard Durham, church treasurer and cemetery record keeper, stated that the two congregations formed simply because walking distance between the locations was inconvenient for families from one side of the community to get to the church on the other side, and the merger was further affirmation of the tribal identity with each church having been established by tribal families (Durham, 2012). Most of the early history of the church saw African-American pastors serving the Immanuel Union congregation, along with unordained American Indian lay preachers. The first white pastor was appointed in 1964. The church is now

predominantly of tribal families, but accepting of others in full membership. However, such tolerance is a relatively recent phenomenon, as the church only became accepting of nontribal people in full membership since about the year 2000 (Durham, 2012). The church is now part of a three church charge, sharing a single pastor between the congregations. According to Richard Durham, the last three pastors expressed that they felt the church was the most open and tolerant of the three under their care, the other two congregations being white (2012). He recalls expressions of racism while interacting with the other churches on the three church charge when the Immanuel Church youth fellowship was being hosted as guests. Several men from the other congregation immediately rose and left the sanctuary when they saw the tribal people entering (Durham, 2012). Such underlying racial tensions within the community, combined with the desire to maintain a distinct tribal identity, are among the chief reasons why the Immanuel Union Church has resisted denominational pressure to join the three churches into a single congregation (Durham, 2012).

Similar to the Indian Mission Church in Millsboro, the Immanuel Union Church has only a few decorations that would suggest it was a tribal congregation. However, at Immanuel, such decorations are even less prominent. Richard Durham pointed out an American Indian “dreamcatcher” above the door to the entrance of the sanctuary. He proudly stated that it was there to remind everyone of the tribal identity of the congregation (Richard Durham, 2012). A typical “dreamcatcher” is a hoop, commonly of twigs, with a web woven in its middle. The center of the web has an opening, which according to the superstition allows good dreams to enter into one’s rest. Bad dreams are said to be caught in the web and will be dissipated by the morning sunlight. The placement of the dreamcatcher against the wall demonstrated that little or no stock was placed in the superstition, which requires that the catcher hang freely above one’s bed. The symbol has developed over time as an aesthetic expression of American Indian culture. Spread with the evolution of pan-Indianism, it is commonly seen as a mere cultural decoration. The appropriateness of such aesthetic expressions will be further examined in the next chapter.

The pastor of Immanuel, as of the date of this research, is the Rev. Richard Rogers, who admitted that his only exposure to Native culture had been attending a Cherokee celebration in North Carolina as a spectator (Rogers, 2012). Ministering to the Immanuel Union Church was his first real contact with Nanticoke–Lenape people,

although he was familiar with some Christian Nanticoke who attended another congregation. Rev. Rogers indicates that he was overwhelmed by the spirit at the church. His wife has claimed Immanuel as “her church” because of its warmth, liveliness, passionate and expressive faith. He states that, “Faith is in their heart and it comes out” (Rogers, 2012). He sees a difference between Immanuel Union and the other two churches under his care, as the tribal church members tend to truly lean on each other and have a sense of togetherness and unity. Their “true community” is clearly felt on Sunday mornings. Rev. Rogers says that he finds it very easy to preach at Immanuel, with the people being so accepting and encouraging (Rogers, 2012).

Overt tribal cultural expressions within the life of the congregation had been subdued in past generations, as there was so much pain associated with their expression. Richard Durham states that it came to a point that people didn’t even know what to say when questioned about it, and some still prefer the older non-specific term “Moor” as a self-description. The continuing of the fellowship between the three tribal communities was one cultural distinction. Called “Delaware Days,” the fellowship was held celebrating the tribal ties between the tribal communities of Immanuel Union, Indian Mission, and St. John (Durham, 2012; Bundy, 2013). However, these fellowships were more expressions of the tribal community than the church congregations, as tribal people not directly connected to the core tribal churches would still attend the events because of their tribal family ties (Gould, 2012). Today the Immanuel Church has begun to celebrate its tribal heritage more openly. One example of this more open celebration of heritage is that Dick “Quiet Thunder” Gilbert, a church member, tribal elder, and former chief of the Nanticoke Lenni-Lenape in New Jersey, is often given time to share tribal wisdom, which includes ancient moral stories, life lessons that have been passed down, and cultural proverbs (Gilbert, 2015). His presentations are not viewed as “sermons,” nor do they have the weight of Scripture. They can illustrate biblical principles and are a way to preserve and pass down the heritage while sharing the insights of a tribal elder. Such outward displays of tribal cultural pride are slowly increasing after years of being subdued (Durham, 2012; Gilbert, 2015).

Coming from a non-tribal background and having pastored for more than two decades, Pastor Rogers sees the cultural uniqueness of the congregation. He says that there is a prominent connection to the earth and the interconnectedness of the natural order. He states that he has found that the congregation is sensitive to the intentions of the Creator

of all life as expressed in the natural order. His insight may speak to how the Nanticoke-Lenape first came to believe in God through natural revelation, which is able to reveal certain truths about God, as the Apostle Paul writes in Romans 1:18-20:

18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. 19 For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. 20 For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse (Bible, ESV, 2001)

The prophet Isaiah witnesses in Isaiah 43:20, “The wild beasts will honor me, the jackals and the ostriches, for I give water in the wilderness, rivers in the desert, to give drink to my chosen people” (Bible, ESV, 2001). King David also states in Psalm 19:1, “The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork” (Bible, ESV, 2001).

Tribal life ways are occasionally expressed during various worship services and rituals in the life of the church. An example of this is that there is special deference given to the four directions of North, South, East, and West (Rogers, 2012), which for the Nanticoke-Lenape represent the stages of life and the rule of the Creator extending beyond all horizons. Additionally, some funerals incorporate smudging (Rogers, 2012), typically done at the graveside as a blessing over the body after a Christian committal. The use of tobacco and the various elements for smudging were foreign to the pastor, who struggled to understand the practice from a Christian theological perspective. It was tribal elder Dick Gilbert who told him that tribal ancestors had all been monotheists and explained the use of tobacco and other “medicines,” which are plant materials used as gifts from the Creator for use in physical healing or which have certain symbolic meanings in spiritual rituals. Pastor Rogers has embraced the incorporation of tribal regalia, drums, and songs into special Sunday worship services. He states that tribal traditions were brought into the church “gracefully,” through educating all on the meaning of certain practices and without forcing anything upon those remaining more reserved about their tribal heritage and who may have questions and concerns. With this compassionate approach, the traditions celebrated have become accepted by all, even the non-Natives, in attendance (Rogers, 2012). Pastor Rogers related the story of being confused as he watched a tribal elder pull out a tobacco pouch and use the “medicine” within it as she prayed over a dead animal. As he was concerned that this was some expression of one of his church members praying to a dead animal, he was

relieved as the elder took the time to explain that she was not praying *to* the dead animal, but thanking the Creator *for* the animal's life and mourning its death. The pastor states that he believes such "education brings us together... The more he learns, the more he embraces... Education brings unity" (Rogers, 2012). In an effort to continue to progress along the learning curve of cultural sensitivity, the pastor has joined the active Committee on Native American Ministry (CONAM) of his parish. CONAM groups are found in various congregations with a concern for discipling American Indians while also remaining sensitive to their cultural heritage and historic situation in the United States. Groups provide educational experiences for non-Natives on tribal culture and support the fellowship of Christian American Indians of various tribal backgrounds.

Zeal to protect tribal identity and control over the tribal church was also evidenced in the northernmost of the three tribal communities. In Bridgeton, New Jersey, the Trinity Church, which had been established by tribal members in the early nineteenth century as a safe haven for Nanticoke-Lenape Christians, faced the challenge of a demographic shift threatening control of the congregation and causing a split that resulted in the establishment of a separate congregation, Saint John Church, which assumed the banner of being the tribal church (Gould, 2012; Pierce, 2012; Rossello, 2003). As in Millsboro, the mother congregation maintained some tribal families, which continue in membership to this day, but the accepted role of "tribal church" was shifted to Saint John Church in the latter part of the nineteenth century.

The Saint John United Methodist Church shares the distinction, along with the other two core tribal churches in Delaware, of being declared a historic Indian church by the United Methodist denomination. American Indian tribal influence is plain to see as one enters the sanctuary and notes that the walls are decorated with tribal arts and crafts, which continue even around the pulpit area and on the communion table. Every fifth Sunday is marked by special American Indian style worship, complete with drumming and regalia. The congregation is active with the denominational CONAM, which includes individuals who are not members of the congregation but are members of the tribe. Tribal members from various congregations, including those who are not United Methodist, will participate as members of CONAM (Bundy, 2013).

Though no longer the seat of tribal governance, the Saint John Church remains an important part of the tribal heritage. When a new fellowship hall wing was dedicated in

2013, the district's United Methodist Bishop was present to witness the tribal spiritual leader, along with tribal drummers, who gathered to bless the new wing in accordance with ancient traditions.

The current pastor of the Saint John United Methodist Church is also a Nanticoke Indian, the Rev. Roy Bundy, who stated that during his pastorate he presided over a racial divide within the congregation. The church was originally tribal, and then some African-Americans became involved over the past 40 years. Eventually, African-Americans also took on leadership roles within the congregation. He found that there was animosity between the two groups. The African-Americans are hostile toward identifying the church as a "historically Native congregation." When the designation was being sought, the African American members of the congregation reacted against it. Sadly, the division drove many tribal families away and the church was almost empty when he was assigned to it in 2001 (Bundy, 2013).

Indian identity has historically been derided in the larger non-Native community, which grouped all nonwhites as "people of color," denying any continuing indigenous presence and categorizing American Indians based upon the hue of their skin. Light-skinned Indians were often categorized as white, while darker Indians were often categorized as black or Hispanic (Gould, 2012). For quite some time the St. John congregation had been part of the churches of the "old Delaware Conference," which had been made up of "congregations of color." In 1965 the congregation was shifted from the jurisdiction of the "old Delaware Conference" to the racially integrated "Southern New Jersey Conference" (Rossello, 2003). The monikers of racial misidentification accompanied the congregation from its former "colored conference" to the new integrated one. The increasing African-American population in Saint John Church reinterpreted the congregation's history: it had always been "colored" and therefore, in modern terms, "black." When the church records were submitted to the larger denomination in order to gain the designation of being an historically Native congregation, many of the African-American members stood in opposition. Some African-Americans were aware of the Native history of the congregation, but did not want the designation in the present day (Bundy, 2013), while others simply denied the Native history altogether. The long-fought challenge to preserve tribal identity and heritage remains a very hot battle even in the new millennium. In this instance, the denial of history is more about racial bias than theology. Even with the congregation

having proven its Native history and being acknowledged as a historic Native American congregation by both the United Methodist Church (Rossello, 2003) and the State of New Jersey, there are those within the Greater New Jersey Conference who still seek to cast the Native presence at the Saint John Church as a recent phenomenon, erroneously asserting that American Indians were being received by African-Americans into the supposedly historically black congregation (Anon., 2014:8).

Rev. Bundy had been the first Native pastor in decades. He recalls that even during his introduction to the congregation, the division between the African-Americans and the American Indians was obvious. The American Indian struggle to reclaim the history of the congregation was already underway. Pastor Bundy recalls that the African-Americans were initially against his appointment because he was a Nanticoke and they feared that with his presence the Indians would return to power in the congregation (Bundy, 2013). The demographic shift that was threatening American Indian identity and tribal legacy within the congregation echoed the struggles of a century prior at the Trinity Church.

Pastor Bundy believes that American Indian identity was shunned for fear of persecution, alienation, and shame due to stereotypes. When Native symbols were being placed in the sanctuary at Saint John Church, there was fierce resistance from the African-American members. The African-American members felt that drumming and smudging should not belong in the Christian church. Many refused to attend the fifth Sunday Native American worship services (Bundy, 2013). No biblical rationales for this position have been reported; it appears that the opinion is related to the general stereotype that anything that does not reflect the dominant culture's practice of Christian worship, which is Anglo-European American, and instead reflects American Indian heritage, is pagan and of the devil.

Pastor Bundy states that there is no major power struggle for leadership over the congregation at this time. There are both American Indian and African-American members, with the tribal members being the majority in the church leadership (Bundy, 2013). He recalls that one of the most vehement individuals against the Indians in the congregation had a daughter who, after doing her own genealogy, came to find that she too had American Indian ancestry that had been denied within her own family. She, in turn, embraced her native ancestry and supported the tribal identity of the congregation

(Bundy, 2013). Rev. Bundy's pastoral strategy is that he has sought to "break down walls by being everyone's pastor ... and not take sides" simply because he is Nanticoke (Bundy, 2013). Rev. Bundy is a biblical preacher, keeping his sermons grounded in Scripture and proclaiming the Word of God to all of his parishioners. His commitment to biblical preaching, relating the truths of Scripture and applying those truths to encourage a faithful walk of discipleship, has aided in the effort to bring his congregation to a greater sense of unity.

Even though there are those who still seek to deny the Native history and identity of the congregation, in spite of the official designation by the denomination and the State of New Jersey, the tribal identity stands firm but requires constant vigilance in order to protect it. As recently as 2013, Pastor Bundy had to demand a correction of the racial makeup of the congregation in an online report which had been entered into the denomination's report template as "African-American," and required a formal request to have the correction made (Bundy, 2013).

Continuity with, and protection of, the tribal identity has been a hallmark of the development of the core tribal congregations, through both separate and collective actions. Each congregation has a similar history of fierce defense of tribal control over the primary core congregation, so much so that opposing the denominational will is evidenced through church splits and / or official protests (Anon., 1892; Department of the Interior, 2008). This zeal demonstrates the tie between political control over the community's religious institution and political control over the tribe. The congregations were the seat of governance and the primary manner by which a separate and unique community identity was preserved. Through the congregations, the three communities continued to maintain the common tribal heritage that tied them together. Worship services and celebrations hosted by one of the congregations would frequently be attended by the others, continuing the sense of an extended tribal family (Durham, 2012; Lonewolf, 2012; Wright, 2012). Often such events were intentionally planned in order to bring the communities together, reinforcing the strong kinship ties (Doyle, 1959:23; Durham, 2012). Homecoming celebrations, which are reunion gatherings marked by food and fellowship, brought extended families together for both worship and recreation. Such events were often used to allow those approaching marrying age to meet one another, as marriages within the three tribal communities was strongly encouraged, and sometimes orchestrated, by community elders (Gould, 2012; Bundy,

2013). Courting a spouse from among “our people” was promoted to the point that heads of families would have to advise enchanted young couples as to whether their “blood was too close” for matrimony (Pierce, 2012).

Such zeal has waned with the establishment of non-congregationally based tribal reorganizations. While religious celebrations between the tribal congregations continue to today, they are no longer the primary means of intercommunity communication and fellowship. Such religious celebrations and services include weddings and funerals, which still serve to bring together the extended tribal families, stretched between the three tribal areas and elsewhere, to share their joy and their grief. The Christian worship services during the annual public powwows and private tribal gatherings also bring the three tribal communities together to share in the worship of Jesus Christ. During a twenty year era of political tension between the Nanticoke leadership in Millsboro and the leaders of the Lenape of Cheswold and the Nanticoke Lenni-Lenape of Bridgeton during the 1980s and 1990s, the churches played a vital role in keeping communications and relationships strong (Gould, 2012). This role was fulfilled through gathering together in Christian worship, singing songs, praying to the Lord, and breaking bread. Through these activities the religious and kinship ties celebrated between the core congregations remained shielded from the political tension and contributed to the eventual healing and reconciliation. Today, the corporate prayers publically prayed at such intertribal gatherings thank God for the unity of the confederation between the three Nanticoke-Lenape communities.

#### **4.1.2 Congregations with a Strong Connection to the Tribal Communities**

Even with the significant role played by the core tribal churches, there are other Christian congregations which have been attended by tribal citizens and have a history that is “tribally related.” These churches were either established by or engaged by tribal citizens, but were never viewed as “historically” tribal or as seats of the tribal government. However, given their history and continued interaction with the tribal communities, they deserve mention. They are distinct from the many congregations which may today merely have some tribal citizens in membership. In these historically “tribally related” churches, tribal families make up a significant portion of the congregation and have done so for more than a generation.

One such church is the Friendship United Methodist Church of Millsboro, Delaware. According to the history of the Harmony Church, the Friendship Church came out of Harmony Church, and was established by tribal family members. The Friendship Church cemetery is filled with headstones that bear tribal surnames, testifying to its relationship to the tribal community. Some of the oldest headstones in the cemetery have tribal names.

In interviews with tribal elders in regard to the congregations that had historic ties to the community, the Friendship Church was regularly named. Although tribal families attended the congregation, there seemed to be no great interaction between the Church and the tribe in regard to the celebration of identity or culture. When asked about the congregation, one leading tribal elder, William Davis, indicated that in the earlier years of the church there had been a pastor who discouraged the celebration of tribal identity and even formal enrollment with the tribe itself. Davis stated that in those years this particular pastor had associated American Indian culture with heathenism and demon worship, convincing some of the members of the congregation to withdraw their enrollment from the tribe itself (Davis, 2012). Davis did not recall any specific biblical argument provided by this pastor defending his position, but suggested that it reflected the general racial stereotypes against American Indian heritage, including the presumption that traditional cultural expressions were all heathen in nature. While the gospel does call culture to faithfulness, sadly, the memory of this pastor's ministry reflects a judgment from ignorance and based upon racial bias. However, while still not intertwined with tribal activities, there seems to be no continuing overt hostility toward American Indian culture by the Friendship Church congregation today.

In addition to the strong Methodist representation within the tribal communities, there is also the presence of the Seventh Day Adventist Church. While there are members of the Seventh Day Adventist denomination in each of the tribal communities, the two communities in Delaware have the strongest representation. The Millsboro Seventh Day Adventist Church was established by tribal families, the most prominent among the early membership being Norwoods, Streets, Harmons, and Jacksons (Lonewolf, 2012). The church cemetery, which sits right next to the church building, is filled with tribal names on the headstones. While it began as an Indian church by membership, though not by declaration, it has been a racially mixed congregation since the late 1940s because of the influx of African-American migrant farm workers into the area. The

initial influx of non-Indian members provoked some tribal members to leave the congregation and join the Indian Mission Church instead (Lonewolf, 2012). Even though there was a sense of tribal identity among the members, there had been only one American Indian pastor, during the 1950s, who also happened to be Nanticoke. Most of the pastors have been African-American, with a few being white.

In the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the Millsboro Seventh Day Adventist Church, also known as the First Seventh Day Adventist Church of Millsboro (Zebley, 1947:293) ran a church-based school for grades one through eight. The school had a mixed population that included Indians. During most of the 20<sup>th</sup> century tribal culture was kept separate from the church. Tribal matters and ceremony were not overtly condemned, but were not conducted in or around the church. According to church member, tribal elder and councilwoman, Pecita Lonewolf, traditional ways were not encouraged and were unofficially frowned upon up until the 1970s (Lonewolf, 2012). With encouragement and financial support from the regional denominational judicatory, church-based American Indian outreach services have assisted tribal elders with health programs and transportation. Some scholarship money and a food bank are available in support of the tribal community. These services are not limited to members of the congregation, but are extended to all Nanticoke Indians as an outreach from the congregation. An annual “Native Heritage Program” is held in November. In recent decades most pastors have been sensitive to the Indian presence within the congregation and in the surrounding community (Lonewolf, 2012).

In Cheswold, the Forrest Grove Seventh Day Adventist Church was organized in 1896, with the first church being built in 1915 and identified primarily as a congregation for members of the tribal community (Zebley, 1947:203). The distinctive practice of observing the Hebrew Sabbath (Saturday) and working on the Christian Sabbath (Sunday), caused a bit of a stir. Hostility toward the congregation appeared to be more based in religious practice than racial identity. In 1897 two men were arrested for desecrating the Christian Sabbath and were fined four dollars and jailed for twenty-four hours (Zebley, 1947:203). Similar to the educational mission evidenced by the Seventh-Day Adventist Church in Millsboro, the Forrest Grove Church opened a day school for the children of the church in 1941 (Zebley, 1947:203).

Other historically tribally connected congregations include the Haven United Methodist Church in Quinton, New Jersey, which was formerly known as “Berry’s Chapel,” the Bethel Baptist Church of Dover, Delaware, the John Wesley United Methodist Church of Milford, Delaware, and the Bethuel Seventh-Day Adventist Church of Dover, Delaware. Each congregation has some connection to the history of the tribal people of the areas. In some instances, tribal families were either involved in or the major force behind the founding of the congregation. The church cemeteries bear the evidence of tribal membership on the gravestones.

#### **4.1.3 Tribal Institutions Originating from the Tribal Congregations**

Family connections, which were upheld and celebrated through the congregations, found additional expression through non-church based social clubs and activities in addition to community-based institutions. It has already been noted that numerous schools were developed by the tribal communities in order to maintain tribal control over the education of tribal children. However, in addition to the various primary schools under the control of each of the tribal communities, there were also social clubs frequented by both regular church attenders and those who were not so regular in their church attendance. The clubs were an outlet for recreational fellowship that forged bonds and memories that remain strong even today.

In Cheswold, the “Just Us” club was a community-based informal organization for the tribal families. A small facility near the railroad tracks in Cheswold held community-based fellowships and recreational activities (Coker, 2012). The chief of the Lenape Indian Tribe, Dennis “White Otter” Coker, recalls roller-skating as a child in the small facility (Coker, 2012). Dances would be held with some Nanticoke-Lenape youth arriving from the New Jersey community (Gould, 2012). The “Just Us” club was exclusive to tribal family members. Outsiders were not welcomed without special approval (Coker, 2012).

While the “Just Us” club in Cheswold is now merely a memory, with the former facility fallen into ruin with a collapsed roof and crumbling walls overgrown with weeds, the social club in the Bridgeton community is still going strong and was readily used by the tribe up until the dedication of the new tribal center in 2005. The “Colonial Riders Motorcycle Club” was another small facility that housed social events for tribal

families. As recently as 2005, the weekly elders' lunch was still held there and youth parties were conducted at the facility prior to both being moved to the tribal center developed on the tribal spiritual grounds, known as "Cohanzick" (Gould, 2012; Pierce, 2012).

Other regular activities included the previously discussed "Delaware days," which brought the three core tribal churches together, and the celebration of "Big Thursday," which was an annual celebration in central Delaware on the third Thursday of August. The Big Thursday celebration was originally a tradition of the tribal people between New Jersey and Delaware. In the late 50s and early 60s, the event was reestablished and embraced by the non-native community, who sadly wrote out the Native history of the event (Doyle, 1959).

These clubs, events, church homecomings and harvest home dinners were expressions of a tribal identity which each of the three communities shared. Each event had its ebb and flow throughout the history of the communities, but the core churches, which served as seats of tribal governance, remained the staunch defenders of the tribal identity. It was demographic shifts in the 1960s and 70s which pushed the tribal communities in Bridgeton and Cheswold to move their governance out from the tribal churches and toward constitutionally organized tribal councils with elected chiefs. The tribal churches in these communities remain an important part of community life, but there is a distinction between the churches and the tribal governments in that the churches are no longer the seats of the modern tribal governments. The Nanticoke community in Millsboro maintains a closer relationship between the church and the tribal government because of a slightly different history. In Millsboro, it was not a demographic shift within the tribal church that resulted in the formation of a separate tribal Council. Rather, it was the determination of the community to maintain control over their own schools that gave birth in 1881 to what the Nanticoke referred to as the "Incorporated Body," which produced a form of tribal governance that was separate from the tribal church (Weslager, 1983:219), and which was influential in forcing the initial split from the Harmony Church to form the Indian Mission Church. The "Incorporated Body" continued to be strongly connected to the tribal church. Subsequently, the "Incorporated Body" officially became the Nanticoke Indian Association in 1922 (Weslager, 1983:222). For generations, the Nanticoke community in Millsboro was able to maintain control over both the church and the tribal

organization. There was no need to protect the tribe from a demographic shift within the church. This relationship, between the tribal government and the church, continues to be expressed in the manner that the church officially and regularly participates in tribal activities and events, and the manner in which the pastor of the Indian Mission Church is often expected to have a role in some tribal activities (Mumford, 2012).

#### **4.2 Pan-Indianism and the Re-Embracing of Tribal Spirituality**

With the emergence of the tribal government from the core tribal congregations, there was a parallel emergence of traditional tribal practices and sacred sensibilities which had been less openly evident among the tribal populations for generations. Prior to World War II, during the 1920s and 1930s, the Millsboro community hosted a cultural festival that drew American Indians from all over the region. American Indians from both sides of the Chesapeake Bay, including the various tribes of the old Powhatan Confederacy in Virginia, joined with the Nanticoke and Lenape people in celebrating common cultural ties during the season of the American celebration of Thanksgiving (Porter, 1987:73). These early powwows were heralded in the media of the day. While the Nanticoke community in Millsboro, Delaware, had served as the host for public expressions of tribal culture through the establishment of a powwow prior to the dawn of World War II, the contemporary reemergence of such an expression was a phenomenon finding new expression in the 1970s among the Nanticoke-Lenape, exemplifying a resurgence of public expressions of cultural pride among tribal people across the United States (Porter, 1987:84).

The timing of this resurgence of cultural pride among American Indians in general, and the Nanticoke-Lenape specifically, is linked to the overall surge of cultural pride stemming from the civil rights movement that focused on the plight of African-Americans. Ethnic pride was a driving force, which was stimulated by the momentum of the civil rights movement and, in turn, gave that movement additional momentum.

Black Americans have promoted their ethnicity with slogans such as “black is beautiful,” and “black power,” thus strongly emphasizing their African roots. Educated Nanticokes had been taught that their own roots ran deeper in American soil than those of either whites or blacks, which undoubtedly contributed to the ethnic revival... The Nanticokes did not try to withdraw from the Delaware society and exist as a racial isolate; they continue to be part of a community where other races lived,

identifying themselves as Americans, Delawareans, and Nanticokes (Weslager, 1983:247).

With the rise of ethnic pride and the increase in the use of civil disobedience to achieve political ends, the 1960s and 1970s were launch pads for tribal cultural revival. The pan-Indian political activism organization exemplifying this new mood of pride and activism, the American Indian Movement (AIM), was not merely political, but also cultural and spiritual. It expressed an inter-tribal cultural and spiritual revolution that was a growing mood among many young tribal people.

The movement was founded to turn the attention of Indian people toward a renewal of spirituality which would impart the strength of resolve needed to reverse the ruinous policies of the United States, Canada, and other colonialist governments of Central and South America. At the heart of AIM is deep spirituality and a belief in the connectedness of all Indian people (Wittstock and Salinas, 2006?).

This spirituality celebrated by AIM is largely influenced by the practices and perspectives of the Lakota culture, which also serve to influence pan-Indianism at large. As stated in a previous chapter, this may be largely due to the fact that, unlike some tribal spiritual traditions, the Lakota were not secretive regarding their rituals. With the rise of pan-Indianism, their traditions were spread. Some of the beliefs and rituals, popularized and spread among many AIM advocates, are incompatible with the gospel of grace. They include some form of personal suffering in order to increase spiritual prowess. This includes a form of the sweat lodge ceremony, described in a previous chapter, which, when under a pan-Indian influence, emphasizes the intensity of the heat of the lodge in order to “suffer” for those for whom one prays. This intercessory suffering aspect is not a part of the traditional Lenape style sweat lodge. A similar principle is demonstrated in the “Sun Dance” which involves the ritual piercing of the flesh of the participant as they hang, or lean away from, the pole to which they are attached through their pierced flesh, until their flesh tears loose. There is a minority of adherents to these practices among the Nanticoke-Lenape, but the tribal leadership and majority of tribal people have declined to adopt the practice or to venerate those who participate. Some reject it because of their Christian beliefs, some because the practices are not indigenous to the tribe, and some decline for both reasons.

#### **4.2.1 The Reaffirmation of Tribal Identity and Spirituality within Modern Tribal Practices**

This revived sense of ethnic pride and embracing of cultural traditions was what Dennis F. Kelley, of the University of Missouri's Department of Religious Studies, believes is a manifestation of the "reprise process."

In the majority of American Indian communities since the turn of the last century, I would argue, what constitutes a revival movement is the manifestation of the reprise process. This sense of the revitalization process assumes that the core aspects of the worldview never dissipated over time. Like a seasonal waterway, American Indian worldviews continue to flow, albeit in the sub terrene. The spiritual motives that once gave rise to specific ritual practices—practices that may have been suspended after contact—remain vital within communal relationships and traditional relationships with the universe. The process of identity revitalization involves merely taking the proper clothes out of storage, literally and figuratively, and donning them once again (Kelley, 2012:121).

For Kelley, the "reprise process" is not the establishment of a previously unknown tradition or culture, but rather an attempt to restore to prominence what was always under the surface. Cultural values, sensitivities, and even the memory of some of the "old ways" which had not been thoroughly discussed or publicized are now being revived and revitalized after years of acculturation and subjugation. The thought of having "tribal pride" had been long in coming. For years, some of the "older generation were ashamed to call themselves 'Indians' for fear of being ridiculed... They were members of a society where the average white citizen in New Jersey had an image of an Indian as an unemotional individual wearing buckskin moccasins, a woven blanket, a feather war bonnet, and who said, 'Ugh. Ugh'" (Weslager, 1983:252).

The revitalization of cultural pride was further expressed through the embracing of traditional spiritual perspectives and practices. There was a renewed sense of what the tribal ancestors viewed as "sacred." The challenge for many eastern tribes was that the specifics of certain rituals and traditional practices were thought to have been lost in the years of suppression. However, while the details may have been muted or forgotten, many of the guiding principles had remained. Lewis Pierce, who serves as co-chief and spiritual leader for the Nanticoke Lenni-Lenape in Bridgeton, recalls how they reestablished a community prayer circle using both fire and tobacco to assist in the ritual. The understanding of a special use for both fire and tobacco had remained among

the elders of the community, with varied perspectives on the reasons behind the use of these symbols. The general explanation provided by Chief Pierce is that the burning of tobacco, being viewed as a “gift from the Creator,” produces smoke which rises like our prayers and is an offering of respect, honoring the Creator with something that is culturally significant (Pierce, 2013). Tobacco and other plant material is often given as an honor gift between people and is viewed as a way of showing respect. Given that prayer is rendered without burning plant materials on numerous other occasions, such as meetings of the leadership, general community meetings, the blessing of food, and in other ritual settings, there seems to be no particular “power” attributed to the burning of tobacco in prayer, other than the symbolic reference given by the chief and the sense of respecting, identifying with, and perpetuating a distinctive cultural tradition. Some plant materials, such as tobacco, cedar, sweet grass, and sage, are burned for smudging (a form of “blessing” a person, item, or area with smoke, similar to the use of incense as explained previously) or for use in prayer as a physical act of “offering” the plant material to the Creator as an act of honoring the Creator by burning it in fire. The plants burned in this way are referred to as “medicine,” which is a term that also encompasses anything that helps a person either physically, emotionally, or spiritually. In the manner that the term is used within the cultural context of American Indians, “medicine” can be practical, including preparations for treating or preventing certain medical ailments, some of which have made their way into modern Western medical practices, or ceremonial for comfort and encouragement through ritual, or even as guidance through the giving of advice and sharing of community wisdom. An individual’s personal “medicine” can also include some memento of an important life event or lesson, kept to ensure that it is never forgotten. Further examination of the spiritual significance of tribal “medicine” and analysis of its impact on ministering to the Nanticoke-Lenape will be more fully explored in the next chapter.

The Nanticoke-Lenape of Bridgeton were to discover, following renewed contact with Lenape communities in Oklahoma and Canada, that the manner in which they were observing many of the traditions closely reflected the ways they were practiced among other distant Lenape communities. Chief Pierce reasons that something of the ancient ways had persisted within the community, albeit under the surface (Pierce, 2013).

This revitalization or manifestation of the reprise process was largely made possible because of the removal of direct legal suppression of American Indian religious

practices. It is difficult to underestimate the impact of the American Indian Religious Freedom Act of 1978 on the perceived sense of new liberty for spiritual expression among tribal communities.

Until 1935, the traditional (non-Christian) religions of the American Indians were banned outright on the reservations, and Indian people practicing their religious beliefs could be fined and sent to prison. The Sweat Lodge purification ritual and the beautiful Sun Dance Religion were outlawed, and many other spiritual practices driven underground. At the same time, Christianity was forced on the Native Peoples by the missionaries. Indeed, it took a special act of Congress, the 1978 American Indian Religious Freedom Act (AIRFA), to affirm religious freedom for the Native nations (Talbot, 2006:7).

While true Christian spiritual conversion is accomplished only through regeneration by the Holy Spirit, producing true repentance and saving faith in Christ, the above quote reflects the common misunderstanding that has historically equated Anglo/Euro-American culture and concepts of civilization with Christianity and refers to the concept of having an Anglo-European worldview, cultural ways, and religious practices imposed upon the American Indian population with stiff penalties for those who refused to comply. One example of this, as discussed in a previous chapter, was the forced removal of American Indian children from their families to place them in boarding schools that forbade them speaking in their own tribal languages, assigned new Anglo/Euro names to them, and taught them to be ashamed of their heritage.

Although the American Indian Religious Freedom Act lacked civil or criminal penalties crucial for any implementation, and although it did not express specific rights concerning sacred sites, human remains, or indigenous intellectual property (Talbot, 2006:7), it did lay the groundwork for the legal expansion of religious expression. It also provided the principle of a federal shield against the repression of traditional spirituality. For the first time, at least in principle if not always in practice, American Indians had some reassurance that the right to freedom of religion protections of the United States Constitution also extended to them. Unfortunately, much of the anticipated freedom has been subsequently restricted and narrowed by federal regulatory changes, still leaving many American Indians without the ability to fully express their spirituality. One example of this restriction are the regulations that prohibit many American Indians from the possession of eagle feathers, as previously discussed in Chapter Three.

The cultural shifts of the 1960s and 1970s exhibited in the general population served as a backdrop to the resurgence of tribal pride and, despite its shortcomings, the American Indian Religious Freedom Act punctuated the era and emboldened the Nanticoke-Lenape communities which had been careful about any demonstration of traditional spirituality.

The term “traditional” is multifaceted within the context of this resurgence of cultural pride. The impact of the Doctrine of Discovery and its manifestations within European colonialism and the federal Indian policy of the United States serve to place pressure on the ability of tribes to retain and practice ancient ways. Spiritual practices were among the most targeted of cultural aspects. The result is that by the time of the resurgence of American Indian pride, many tribes had already lost much of their ancient tradition. For those which had retained ancient ways, their ancestral lands had been stripped from them along with the sacred places tied to ancient rituals. This “reprisal” of tradition for many tribal people was bolstered by the rise of the modern powwow, which promoted an American Indian cultural and spiritual melting pot called “pan-Indianism.” Dennis F. Kelly, of the University of Missouri, states that, “Any discussion of the role played by powwows in the reprise of American Indian religious communities in contemporary contexts must address the phenomenon collectively called “pan-Indianism” (Kelley, 2012:121). Kelley asserts that the transformation from individual distinct tribal cultures to a modern expression of broadly defined “Native American” ethnic identity is a manifestation of the collective resistance toward colonialism (Kelley, 2012:121).

While many of the cultural and spiritual practices promoted within pan-Indianism are common to the histories of individual tribes across North America, the specific influence of Plains Indian culture must be noted. While many tribes used ceremonial pipes, the Lakota form of the sacred pipe tradition and rituals were embraced as a standard within pan-Indian practice. Similarly, while many individual tribal traditions incorporated the use of a sweat lodge, it was the specifics of the Lakota sweat ceremony that have come to influence pan-Indian practices (Kelley, 2012:121).

One of the key issues with regard to the development of a pan-Indian movement has been the willingness of some tribal communities to share sacred information. For many tribes, there are restrictions on the sharing of this information with anyone, even mixed-blood members of their own communities. Therefore, one factor in the overt “Plains style” of supratribal activities is due to a distinct lack of such prohibitions in these tribal contexts, especially those of the Lakota. The Lakota, one of the

divisions of the Siouan-speaking tribes of the northern Great Plains region, have also inculcated themselves in the American popular culture due to their well reported resistance efforts during much of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Kelley, 2012:123).

For many tribal people, the reprisal of American Indian culture through pan-Indianism created a new sense of pride and identity expressed through ceremony in a fashion that had been suppressed for generations for fear of the potential social, spiritual, and even political and legal consequences of such outward displays. Besides the potential stigma of being viewed as “pagan” by various elements within American society, federal laws and policies “often denied American Indians access to sacred sites, ... [prohibited] the use and possession of sacred objects necessary to the exercise of religious rites and ceremonies ... [and resulted in ceremonies being] intruded upon, interfered with, in a few instances banned” (United States, 95<sup>th</sup> Congress, 1978). Marion “Strong Medicine” Gould, the mother of the Nanticoke Lenni-Lenape tribal chief and an honored elder, stated,

We couldn’t celebrate our Indian holidays when I was coming up. We didn’t dare. In those days we just wanted to survive, not get picked on because we were Indian, or have our home taken away. So we just tried to be like everyone else. We did things quietly—someone taught me to do Indian beadwork, for example—but mostly we did not want to be noticed (Hearth, 2008:48).

Strong Medicine, in reflecting on the cultural reprisal, stated, “We have come full circle in my lifetime. I’ve lived to see a complete turnaround, not just in my tribe, but all American Indians. We don’t hate ourselves anymore. And no one’s going to take that away from us” (Hearth, 2008:195).

American Indians who became emboldened during the cultural reprisal of the 1960s and 1970s often quickly embraced the various elements of pan-Indianism which were merged with American Indian political activism. In some instances American Indian urban cultural organizations arose across the country where displaced or culturally repressed tribal people sought one another out in order to express a collective, or what Stephen Cornell calls “supratribal,” culture (Kelley, 2012:122). Common American Indian expressions such as drumming, singing, dancing, crafts, and folklore were shared between individuals with various tribal backgrounds, often under the influence of the increasingly ubiquitous Plains cultural elements.

#### 4.2.2 The Rise and Impact of the Modern Powwow

Perhaps the most visible manifestation of American Indian traditions to non-Indians, the public-access intertribal powwow, serves as a unique and complex manifestation of identity negotiation, spirituality, and social networking for the Indian participants. Both the result of and a venue for contemporary Native religious, social, and political continuity within the confines of modernity, the powwow and its associated activities serves as a key feature in the struggle to maintain traditional orientations in a country that continues to challenge that very expression (Kelley, 2012:108).

In spite of the very apparent influence of Plains Indian culture among the modern powwows, the fact is that its origins do not lie within the cultures of the American Plains but rather among the Northeastern Algonkian cultures. The term “powwow” is derived from the common Algonkian term “pau wau,” first reported among non-Natives by German immigrants observing the Narragansett of southern New England (Kelley, 2012:110). The term was used for healing ceremonies and was also associated with the traditional “medicine men” conducting the ceremonies. It became a term used by subsequent immigrants for any gathering of Indians (Kelley, 2012:110). The term grew to be loosely used to describe gatherings that may not have actually been “pau wau” in its original sense. In August 2014, the Narragansett Tribe hosted its 339<sup>th</sup> annual powwow, called the “Annual Meeting.” It is the oldest documented, continuous, public powwow in the United States, with origins that long predate its documented history. As with other Algonkian tribes, including the Nanticoke-Lenape, the spiritual celebration, which was a part of the Narragansett festival of the “green corn,” was among other seasonal tribal events with deep spiritual significance (Ziner, 2013). While the centuries-old Narragansett powwow is marked by some uniquely Northeastern Woodlands traditions and dances, it too has adopted some of the elements of pan-Indianism. Most significant is the war drum of the plains, commonly called the “powwow drum” today. The smaller water drums and hand drums of the Northeastern nations still remain, but the modern powwow drum has taken center stage.

The protocols observed when engaging in activities associated with the drums provides a key insight into the inherent religiosity associated with contemporary pan-Indian spirituality in general, as the drums are treated as honored beings, given gifts of tobacco and sage, and the drummers observe a strict decorum when in its presence... The powwow requires adherence to certain protocols by all involved, and the non-Indian participants are asked to follow certain rules (no alcohol is allowed, photos are to be taken only with permission, entrance to the dance ground

is regulated, etc.) and it is here that Indians can assert their authority over non-Indians in an act of subversion of dominant cultural paradigms. This expression of pan-Indian identity, along with the utility of the powwow in expressing the value of Indianness and asserting the continued presence of Native Americans, gives the powwow an obvious cachet in the maintenance of Native identity in contemporary Native American communities (Kelley, 2012:111-112).

#### **4.2.3 A Renewed Connection with the “Sacred”**

The reprisal of American Indian cultural elements is evidenced in an awakening of the sense of the sacred from an American Indian perspective. This tribal traditional sense of the sacred is in contrast to the Anglo/European worldview. One of the ways that this is clearly demonstrated is in the different views of land.

From the native view, Europeans have always considered land as a thing. It is something to be used. It is something to be owned. It is capable of being bought and sold. By striking contrast, the Native American tribal stories have almost universally considered the land as a living creation. It is not an “it,” but a “she.” The Earth has being. She is personal, nurturing, protective. Consequently, the notion of owning the earth is incomprehensible; the idea of selling her is repugnant (Charleston, 1983:69-70).

Even though many American Indians adopted European standards of land tenure as a strategy for survival and in an effort to remain upon the land of their ancestors, the common theme of a living, personal earth is evidenced throughout many tribal cultures. Communal land held on behalf of the people by the tribe becomes highly prized. One such story among the Nanticoke Lenni-Lenape of Cumberland County, New Jersey, is the story of how they acquired their current ceremonial tribal grounds, which they referred to as “Cohanzick.” Chief Mark Gould relates the story of a tribal elder, the late Mary Ward, who went about raising the funds to purchase 28 acres that had become available near the site of an old nineteenth century tribal church and schoolhouse. She moved upon the hearts of tribal people by sending them little bits of the earth through the mail. She reminded them that this was their land, the place of their ancestors, where the Creator had put them. The old connection to the earth touched the hearts of the tribal people who swiftly raised the money to make the purchase (Gould, 2012). The spiritual connection to the earth is evidenced in the way many Nanticoke-Lenape tribal people refer to it as “mother” or “grandmother” (Hearth, 2008:194). For American Indians, the land is sacred. The era of cultural reprisal has emboldened this expression of the sacred among tribal people who are openly re-embracing traditionalism.

Additionally, the importance of community versus personal achievement is yet another contrast between the indigenous and the immigrant worldviews in the United States.

Although the vertical nature of European culture has undergone many transformations in North America, native people still detected in the desire of some to “move up the social ladder” or “to get ahead” ... The traditional native society was much more horizontal, radiating out from the individual as a network of family, clan, band, and tribal affiliations. Self-identity was not invested in material possessions, profession, or academic credentials; the place a person held in society was defined by relationships. That this symbolic quality of the horizontal community remains true within the native society is evidenced by the “extended family” concept still very much alive in both reservation and urban settings (Charleston, 1983:70).

It is often repeated within the intertribal gatherings that being part of a tribe is not so much about the individual claiming the tribe, but about the tribe claiming the individual. It is about the community that surrounds the individual and helps to identify and define the individual. A common theme among the Nanticoke-Lenape is “we are all family.” So much so, that when the question is asked of an individual, “Where are you from?” the appropriate response is in regard to which part of the tribal family, which individual family line (Gould, 2012). Moreover, these family connections are viewed within the context of the Creator’s doing. The relationships within and between the family lines is viewed with a spiritual reverence. The community itself is viewed as “sacred.”

Yet another contrast is in the practice of religion. The sense of the sacred permeated all of tribal life. It was more than location or ceremony, it was and is integrated into relationships, interactions, chores, and all manner of other activities.

The institutional quality of European religion is a hard contrast to the much more diffuse, integrated spirituality of most tribal culture. While there certainly were medicine persons, ceremonial societies, or sacred places, we would be pressed to identify structures of polity paralleling those common to the European experience. The term “integrated” means that native religious practice was woven throughout the fabric of tribal culture. There were no clear lines of demarcation between the religious and the secular, the sacred and the profane. Even the most apparently mundane activities were infused with a theological significance (Charleston, 1983:71-72).

To understand the perspective suggested by the above quote, it is important to bear in mind the distinction between the European religious traditions, which are admittedly varied, and biblical Christianity, while also understanding the misguided and widely

accepted equating of the Anglo/Euro-American worldview, culture, concepts of civilization, and religious practices with the term “Christian.” It is just as unwarranted and prejudicial to use the term “Christian” as a synonym for European or Anglo/Euro-American as it is to use term “heathen” or “pagan” as a synonym for American Indian. However, as discussed in previous chapters, the terms became attached in this manner in North America from early colonial history. The comparison, as stated in the quote, merely continues this mislabeling; however, it does demonstrate a difference between the religious traditions of the American colonizers and the indigenous Americans. It may account for why non-tribal Americans tend to be perplexed by how much tribal people view as “sacred.”

The close relationship between American Indian cultural practices and their spiritual traditions as being an integrated, indispensable, and irreplaceable part of their heritage, identity, and value systems is well accepted even by the United States federal government (United States, 95<sup>th</sup> Congress, 1978).

#### **4.2.4 The Continuing Influence of Christianity within Tribal Governance**

Interestingly, in spite of the traditional spiritual reprisal within each of the three Nanticoke-Lenape communities, there is the continuing influence of Christianity even though the tribal government is no longer primarily within the churches. This can be seen at tribal meetings, which are initiated in prayer which is, more often than not, explicitly Christian in nature with the name of Jesus being lifted as Savior and Lord. It is also seen in the fact that the two communities which conduct annual public powwows, Bridgeton and Millsboro, also incorporate a Christian worship service on powwow Sunday. The anthropologist C. A. Weslager observed during the early 1980s that “Christian church services were conducted on the powwow grounds on Sunday morning. The New Jersey Indians are no less devoted to their religion than their Nanticoke cousins in Delaware” (Weslager, 1983:259). The tribal leaders are regular participants in assisting in leading the worship service. In Millsboro, Christian witness cards are distributed by the attendants at the powwow parking lot, sharing a “word” about Jesus to all in attendance.

The overt Christian worship during the powwows has not been without some level of controversy. A tendency toward a more generic and “interfaith” spiritual service on

Sundays had prevailed during the latter 1990s in New Jersey, as some intimately involved in the American Indian traditional spiritual reprisal energized through pan-Indianism wrestled with the perceived incongruity of the tribe recapturing its traditional spiritual values and practices while also remaining tied to Christianity. Tanya Smiling-SpiritDove, the coordinator for both the tribal youth Council and the annual powwow worship service and semiannual gathering worships for the Bridgeton community, recalled the comments of Christian tribal elders who felt that they had to be careful lifting the name of Jesus at tribal events.

You could speak of the Creator, but had to be careful specifically speaking of Jesus. It was as though you needed to leave your Christianity at home when you went to tribal events. There seemed to be the backlash that once it was the Christian missionaries who promoted the notion that you could not be both tribal and Christian, and then it was the new traditionalists who had started to say the same thing. But now, many of the elders happily testify about a change. With the worship services being Christ centered, they feel more free to openly celebrate both their traditional ways and their Christian faith and they feel no less Indian and no less Christian. They have a renewed sense of Holy Spirit empowered gumption and aren't afraid to lift the name of Jesus (Smiling-SpiritDove, 2014).

The change referenced above has primarily been attributed to the activity of a Christian prayer fellowship, begun in the early 2000s (Gould, 2012; Smiling-SpiritDove, 2014). Its informal prayer meetings are open to the public, and there are regular non-tribal participants. The meetings are held at the tribal headquarters or tribal community center. Attended primarily by tribal people, the prayer meetings include Christian prayers and testimonies of praise and thanksgiving, intercession and petition, and confession. The prayer services are opened with Scripture readings that serve as the foundation for biblical lessons and discussions and have evolved to include a fellowship meal that typically follows the celebration of the Lord's Supper. The prayer fellowship began to incorporate hymns in Lenape, such as "Thank You, Our Creator" which is sung to the tune of "Amazing Grace" and finished with the English lyrics of "Amazing Grace":

Wanishi Kishelēmienkw [Thank You Our Creator]  
ntēli pètawsinèn [that we have lived this long]  
Wanishi Kenahkihinèn [Thank You for watching over us]  
ntēli neyowtinèn [so that we can see each other]  
Kuliteheokàn wēnchi [It is a good feeling because]  
Yukwe pètawsinèn [we have now lived this long]  
Kētēmakelēminèn [Take pity on us]  
Wēnchi neyowtinèn [So that we can see each other]  
Yuh Witaeminèn ènta [You be with us when]  
kahta patàmaenkw [we want to pray]

Wènc̄hi wic̄hēminèn ènta [So You would help us when]  
kahta asuwienkw [we want to sing]  
Yuh winki pēntamwēlxinèn [We would like to hear]  
Welh̄ik aptunakàn [Good words]  
Wēnc̄hich kās̄ki wēlawsienkw [So that we can live a good life]  
èli ktēlsuwakàn [because of what you did]  
(Lenape Talking Dictionary, 2013)

Gospel songs were rewritten from a tribal perspective, such as “May the Circle Be Unbroken” which is sung to the tune of “Will the Circle Be Unbroken” and is often sung while dancing a “round dance” with the accompaniment of a drum and or rattle...

1. He who makes us and sustains us by the power of his thoughts,  
All he decrees comes into being, all that is sovereignly is wrought  
O Creator, you who give life and call your saints from work to rest  
Please touch the hearts of all your people, grant them peace and  
righteousness.

Chorus: May the circle be unbroken! By and by, Lord, by and by,  
There's a better home a-waitin' in the sky, Lord, in the sky.

2. Out from every tribe and nation you have called us to your side  
By the cross is redemption granted, in your truth we shall abide  
All my relations, heed the gospel and repent of all your sins  
Know the joy of Christ's salvation, by his love you'll enter in.

Chorus: May the circle be unbroken! By and by, Lord, by and by,  
There's a better home a-waitin' in the sky, Lord, in the sky.

3. All praises to the triune Creator for his mercy and his grace  
His Son Jesus died for our sins, and he rose our souls to save!  
Drums are beating, voices singing, there is joy all round and round  
The Lord has kept us all together, and his love and peace abound.

Chorus: May the circle be unbroken! By and by, Lord, by and by,  
There's a better home a-waitin' in the sky, Lord, in the sky.

4. We will sing the songs of angels and the hymns that made us strong,  
Ones that our blessed elders taught us, hear the angels sing along  
Keep our ancestors gone before us in Christ's perfect heavenly peace  
Till we all dance in that great circle, our joy will never ever cease.

Chorus: May the circle be unbroken! By and by, Lord, by and by,  
There's a better home a-waitin' in the sky, Lord, in the sky

The song gives insight into the perspective of the Christian Nanticoke-Lenape. The concept of the circle speaks to the importance of the symbol for many American Indian tribal cultures, which view the cycles of nature as a blessing from the Creator. The circle also represents the community, bonded together. Referring to God as “He who

makes us and sustains us” is directly related to one of the ancient Lenape descriptions of God, as previously discussed. God is viewed as sovereign and the source of peace and righteousness. The prayer for the increase of the gospel spreading across the world with people accepting salvation and becoming disciples of Christ is referenced in the second verse. The communion of saints receiving the mercy and grace of salvation and divine preservation is cause for the response of joy expressed in verse three. There is the acknowledgement of the souls of believers being kept by the Lord with the anticipation of the worship of the church triumphant before the presence of God. A “round dance,” sometimes called a “friendship dance,” is a communal dance to a double beat with participants forming a circle, holding hands, and stepping together in a circular manner. The song was also embraced by the Nanticoke of Delaware and was sung by their late chief during their annual powwow Church service. The introduction of the drum and rattle with this traditional style of communal dance stirred interest in incorporating other elements of the culture into the prayer fellowship. New songs were added, written in Lenape, such as “Neeheellaleeang Ketaymakilamenen” [Lord have-pity-on-us]:

Ya-Way-a Ho-Ya-Way [common vocables arranged to reflect the sound of the Hebrew name of God]

Wanishi Wanishi Wanishi Nuxati [Thank You, Thank You, Thank You, Dear Father]

Neeheellaleeang ketaymakilamenen [Lord have-pity-on-us]

Wanishi Wanishi Wanishi Nuxati [Thank You, Thank You, Thank You, Dear Father]

Ksi kitche pendaee petamawakina [Please truly hear our prayers]

Wanishi Wanishi Wanishi Nuxati [Thank You, Thank You, Thank You, Dear Father]

Ya-Way-a Ho-Ya-Way [common vocables arranged to reflect the sound of the Hebrew name of God]

Coming from various Christian denominations and with some who had little to no church background, the prayer fellowship determined that it was prudent to define the beliefs that formed the basis for the group. In 2006 the prayer fellowship prepared and adopted the following statement of faith.

1. We believe that Creator’s Book is the Bible, consisting of the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments and that the Bible is verbally inspired by the Holy Spirit, is inerrant in the original manuscripts, and is the infallible and authoritative Word of the Creator.

2. We believe that the one triune Creator exists eternally in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
3. We believe that the Creator made and continues to sustain all things by his sovereign power.
4. We believe that the first man, Adam, created in the image of God, was tempted by Satan, and fell. Because of Adam's sin, all men and women have guilt imputed, are totally depraved, and need to be regenerated by the Holy Spirit for salvation.
5. We believe that Jesus Christ is the Creator in the flesh, the Second Person of the Triune God, and that he was born of a virgin, died on the cross, shed His blood as the perfect and complete substitutionary sacrifice for all who are his, rose bodily, and ascended to heaven where He is presently exalted at the Father's right hand.
6. We believe that salvation consists in the remission of sins, the imputation of Christ's righteousness, and the gift of eternal life received by repentant faith alone, apart from any work other than Jesus Christ's perfect and complete victory over sin and death.
7. We believe in the promised visible and personal return of Jesus Christ.
8. We believe in the resurrection of both those who love and those who reject Jesus Christ as Lord. Those who have been saved by Christ will abide with him eternally and those who have rejected him shall be cast away from the eternal blessedness of his heavenly kingdom and into the presence of divine eternal wrath.
9. We believe that while the visible church may be made up of both the regenerate and the unregenerate, the invisible Church, the body of Christ, consists only of those who are born again, who are baptized by the Holy Spirit into Christ at the time of regeneration, for whom He now makes intercession in heaven and for whom He will come again.
10. We believe that the sign and seal of the Creator's new covenant in Christ are the sacraments of the Lord's Supper and Baptism.
11. We believe that Christ commanded the Church to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every person, baptizing and teaching those who believe.
12. We believe that the gospel can be effectively communicated and celebrated affirming and utilizing the cultural context of Native American Tribal Heritage without compromising biblical truth or committing doctrinal syncretism.

2006 was also marked by a series of nightly studies that brought new insights into the relationship between tribal traditions and biblical truths. The prayer ministry developed a handout that reported on what had been studied that year in an attempt to increase interest and participation. The following is the text from that handout.

The monthly Tribal Prayer Meeting typically meets on the fourth Monday of each month at 7pm from September through to May at the Nanticoke Lenni-Lenape Indian Center located at 18 East Commerce Street in Bridgeton, New Jersey. Our meetings are marked with prayer-filled devotionals, songs and study. During the 2005-06 program year, we studied an overview of traditional Nanticoke and Lenape religious beliefs and practices as compared to historic Biblical Christianity in order to increase an appreciation for the religious traditions of our ancient ancestors and to discern the many ways that the Creator prepared our people to receive the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Native beliefs across North America were not, and are not, [uniform]. In some cases, the differences between ancient tribal religious beliefs were more than merely dissimilar, but were actually incompatible. In our studies on “The Creator,” “The Creation” and “Cosmology,” ancient Lenape understandings of the characteristics of the Creator coincide with the classical biblical attributes of God. Just as with Christian Biblical Doctrine, the ancient Lenape were monotheists and not pagans. In our second comparison, we studied “The Creation.” The striking commonality is that, like the biblical account and unlike many pagan perspectives, the Nanticoke and Lenape believed that all was created with intention and purpose. The Bible clearly teaches that there is a “divine heaven” which is distinct from the astronomical phenomenon of the cosmos. Our ancient Lenape ancestors believed that the created order was beneath the glory of the dwelling of the Creator. The Bible teaches that the divine heaven needs no “created light source” as the Shekinah Glory of God illuminates everything. Our ancient Lenape ancestors believed that in heaven a brilliance would emanate from the Creator ... The Ancient Lenape tradition agrees with the Bible’s proclamation regarding the authority of God and the subordination of all that he created.

In our studies on Spiritual Anthropology and Sacred Ritual, we found that the Bible states that humans function within divine providence (Acts 17:28; Colossians 1:16-17; Isaiah 55:8-9) and that our ancient Lenape ancestors also believed that God is almighty and able to do all that he pleases. The Bible proclaims the human need for spiritual cleansing (Luke 6:45; 1 Corinthians 11:27-30) and Lenape elders admonished people to good life and conduct, warned them against immorality, murder and violence, if they would be happy, attain to great age and after death get to the “good place.” Smudging and sweats are purification and healing rituals, which represent a cleansing by smoke and fire, symbolizing wholeness and holiness. There was no thought that either was a “once and for all” rite, but each was repeated throughout life. The repetition signifies the constant need for purification ... for Christians, the once and for all cleansing of believers is through Jesus Christ’s

crucifixion and we commemorate this divinely purifying forgiveness through Baptism and the repeated celebration of Lord's Supper. In both the Bible and Lenape tradition, the burning of incense and the use of smoke is related to purification, prayer and praise. In the Bible and Lenape tradition, musical instruments and dance are used for spiritual celebrations and seasonal feasts are established as appropriate in both traditions.

Throughout our studies this year, the Prayer Meeting ministry has uncovered the many ways in which God disclosed himself to our ancestors, preparing them for his gospel. We acknowledged that all too often those who bore the divine message to this hemisphere from foreign shores were poor followers of the faith they professed, regularly mishandling it to justify greed and racism, leaving a sad legacy which does not reflect true Christianity. However, the message itself is powerful and true and will continue to transform those who embrace it.

Made up of mostly tribal elders, and often attended by the principal chief, Mark Gould, the leaders of the prayer ministry found renewed joy in celebrating the heritage given to them by the Creator and no longer viewed it as something of which to be ashamed. At the same time, they were encouraged to be bold in expressing their faith in Christ within the tribe as the prayer fellowship familiarized them with tribal history in addition to broadening their understanding of Scripture. Prayer ministry members who had been shy about their tribal background, began to wear cultural apparel even when attending their non-tribal congregational worships and activities. They donned tribal regalia during tribal events and shared their insights with other tribal elders and within their own families. With the traditional deference rendered to tribal elders, this new affirmation of a Christian tribal identity encouraged assertive expressions of the faith in the life of the tribe.

In addition to the annual powwow worship, the Bridgeton community also has a spring and fall "Gathering." This semiannual event takes place over a weekend on the tribal ceremonial grounds, drawing tribal people from each of the three communities for fellowship, fun, and ceremony. While the "Gatherings" are primarily a celebration of tribal culture and family ties, a Christian worship service is conducted by the Christian prayer ministry on Sunday mornings, often including the celebration of the Lord's Supper. The worship affords an opportunity for the Christians in attendance at the Gathering to worship Jesus together and provides an opportunity for the gospel to be heard by the unconverted. Unlike the public powwows, the seasonal gatherings are private celebrations for tribal people and invited non-tribal guests, of which there are

quite a few. They are small and intimate settings in comparison to the large public powwows marked by vendors and spectators. There is a blend between traditional tribal expressions of the sacred and the influence of Christianity which is exhibited at these events. The evening prior to the Christian “church” service, as it is called (though not connected with any particular congregation), and then the afternoon following it are expressions of traditional tribal spirituality.

The night before, many of the young people—and even a few elders—had stayed up all night to dance and drum in the moonlight. Voices singing traditional songs were carried through the cool night air. After a while, in that environment, the concept of time began to disappear. Was it 2005? Or several millennia ago, or perhaps some date in between? The previous night’s celebrations welcomed the spring but today’s ceremony is most important of all. It is here that they will pray to the Creator... One at a time they move toward the fire, pausing to collect a few dried tobacco leaves from Gray Squirrel. Some kneel by the fire and take a long time; others tossed leaves into the flames more quickly. For each person it is a solitary moment (Hearth, 2008:11-12).

Those who attended the Sunday morning Christian church worship, conducted earlier in the day, can also be found in this tribal prayer circle conducted in the afternoon. These Christians began their day by hearing a sermon based upon a Scripture text and celebrating the Lord’s Supper. One such sermon, preached by this researcher at the Nanticoke Lenni-Lenape Tribal Nation fall gathering on 20 October 2013, was entitled “God Has Always Had A Plan for Us!” based upon Jeremiah 29:11-14.

11 For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare[a] and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope. 12 Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will hear you. 13 You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart. 14 I will be found by you, declares the Lord, and I will restore your fortunes and gather you from all the nations and all the places where I have driven you, declares the Lord, and I will bring you back to the place from which I sent you into exile (Bible, ESV, 2001).

Pulling from the pains of the end of the kingdom of Judah during the days of Jeremiah, this sermon dealt with the reality that the onslaught of difficult days and times of trial should not be viewed as evidence that a person or a people have been abandoned by God. An excerpt of the sermon follows:

Not every holy word is an easy word. Not every divine prophecy is a pat on the back or warm fuzzy. Not everything that God has to say is soft and sweet, even to those he loves. But, in the midst of the bad news, there is some great and glorious news. In the midst of the painful word, there is also a word of hope... While this prophecy was given to the people of Judah and Jerusalem, it proclaims a word of truth to us, and for us, even

today. God has plans for the entirety of creation... he is not confused about what he is doing... he is not stumbling and staggering in and out of history, uncertain of what to do... We are now, and have always been, on God's mind. He has always had plans for us! ... He placed within the minds and hearts of our ancient ancestors long before contact with colonial settlers, that there was but one God who made heaven and earth, the sea and all that dwells therein... Ancient ways were passed down from one generation to the next, that the God of all creation would be honored and respected... Difficult circumstances don't mean that we have been overlooked, abandoned, or forsaken. God has plans for us! As Jeremiah told the faithful of Jerusalem that the dark days that lay ahead, days of struggle and turmoil ... The story of America's indigenous peoples became a story about the struggle to survive, to simply continue to exist as a people... Our all-knowing and all-powerful God has a plan for all people and every person. We may not understand it... We may not be able to comprehend it... We may not recognize it... We may stumble through it... We may even struggle against it... But God has a plan... Through good times and through bad times, God has a plan. Through easy days and rough days, God has a plan. In the midst of great triumph and when it seems that all has been lost, God still is working his plan. When people work in accordance with his good pleasure, and even when they struggle against him, God is always working his plan! ... We are still here, because Jeremiah tells us that the Almighty Creator knows the thoughts that he thinks toward us, thoughts of peace, and not of evil... God's plan includes you being who he created you to be... Brothers and Sisters, it does not matter what culture you come from or how proud you are of it... No culture can save you... only faith in Jesus Christ can do that! ... But Salvation does not mean abandoning the cultural heritage God has given you. The Lord saves us in our culture, not from our culture. The Lord even transforms our culture through us... No matter what your race, nationality, or ethnicity ... Only Jesus saves... and he saves all who trust him... he redeems all who believe in him... right as you are in the culture he gave your ancestors... For any and all true disciples of Jesus Christ the testimony must be that we are Christian, first and foremost! But we can celebrate our Christianity within the context God has given us... Within the culture handed down to us... We can see how God spoke to those who came before us, and we can praise him for that... and we can continue to celebrate the ways he did it! ... God made us and gave us the gift of our identities within the human family. God loves diversity, just like the flowers bloom with all of the colors of the spectrum, God loves variety... The Lord Jesus has sheep all over this world... from every nation, tribe, and tongue. He has them now, and always has had them. He tells his apostles in John 10:14-16, 'I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father, and I lay down my life for the sheep. And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.' Jesus Christ saves us and calls us to share our gifts with others... There was always a plan for the Indigenous people of America...

At the Fall Gathering church worship on 19 October 2014, Tanya Smiling-SpiritDove was asked to give the morning sermon, entitled “Who Are You Following?” She spoke from Luke 9:23-26.

23 And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. 24 For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it. 25 For what is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and lose himself, or be cast away? 26 For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father's, and of the holy angels.

The points of the sermon followed the format of verse 23, “Deny Yourself,” “Take Up Your Cross,” and “Follow Me.” Before a person can do any of this, they must know who Jesus is, based upon the confession of Peter in verse 20, stating that Jesus is indeed “the Christ of God.” Self-denial requires that one replace selfishness with selflessness. Such faithfulness requires taking up the burdens of sacrificial living, being put-upon by the world as you stand against its sinful standards, and taking on the righteous causes of Christ in spite of the ridicule of worldly-minded people. Finally, the measure for following Christ is Scripture, it is the only measure that we can use and must use. We must turn our lives over into his hands and never shrink from representing Christ. She encouraged everyone present to examine themselves as to whether they knew Jesus Christ in the pardoning of their sins, and if they did not, they were encouraged to speak with one of the members of the prayer ministry to learn about Jesus and the salvation he brings.

These same Christians, after their morning church worship, then continued by traveling a path through the woods to the prayer circle to pray in the name of Jesus in the “old way,” with the symbols of tobacco and fire. Each is encouraged by the tribal spiritual leader to pray in their own way as they approach the Creator. Some who choose to pray openly, lift the name of Jesus. However, not all in the circle present themselves in an explicitly Christian fashion, and some are known not to be Christian at all. There was a time when many of the Christians would avoid this circle, not feeling welcome or at least not feeling that Jesus was welcome. But within the past decade or so, as discussed previously, expressions of Christianity have become far more common since the proclamation of Chief Mark Gould, a Christian himself, who declared that “Jesus is in this circle and is the center of the circle” (Gould, 2012).

Chief Gould is not shy about speaking the name of Jesus even in tribal meetings. He humbly says, “I am not a good Christian, I have a ways to go” (Gould, 2012) but often speaks of the Lord’s blessing and direction as he leads tribal government meetings. He and many of the Christians within the tribe see Jesus and the Creator of their ancestors as one and the same. The Christians see the Creator as the Triune God of the Bible—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, as revealed in the gospel.

### **4.3 Conclusion**

The historic tribal congregations within the three Nanticoke-Lenape communities continue to serve an important role within the tribes, but none continues as the center of tribal governance or tribal life as they once did. Expressions of tribal culture as part of the worship life of the congregations is evident among the historic core tribal churches in varying degrees, although relegated to special services or events, while the typical worship forms remain indistinguishable from the regional denominational norm. Discerning methods of contextualization remains a challenge for the congregations and their pastors. Tribal identity has been preserved through the core congregations, and non-church based community organizations are one result of the continuing tribal cohesion provided by the tribal churches, with the subsequent emergence of constitutional tribal government being another. The preservation of the tribal heritage of the core tribal churches among the Nanticoke-Lenape remains an ongoing issue. Some tribal people remain reserved regarding expressing tribal heritage and the efforts of some non-Natives to rewrite that history, diminishing or disregarding tribal identity, continue.

The reprisal of tribal cultural traditions and spiritual practices was stimulated by the civil rights and racial pride movements of the 1960s and 1970s, impacting a renewed sense of tribal pride as Nanticoke-Lenape tribal governance reorganized as separate from the tribal churches. Pan-Indianism was promoted through the rise of the modern Powwow and cultural advocacy and activism organizations. Pan-Indian spiritual beliefs and practices are not always consistent with the inherent local tribal traditions and can result in inconsistencies in cultural reprisal. While the pressure was once placed upon tribal Christians by a colonizing view of Christianity that one could not be both truly Christian and Indian, the rise of a more radical form of neo-traditionalism suggested the

same. An organic assertion of contextualization, accomplished by a non-denominational tribal prayer ministry, has supported the celebration of tribal heritage through the incorporation of cultural forms in worship and by encouraging an emboldened Christian presence and witness in certain traditional tribal ceremonies and events.

## **5.0 HOLISTIC CHRISTIAN MINISTRY IN CONTEXT FOR NANTICOKE-LENAPE PEOPLE**

### **5.1 Compassionate Contextualization of the Gospel**

American Indians are confronted with a great dichotomy. The Christian Bible proclaims redemption (Romans 3:24; 1 Corinthians 1:30; Ephesians 1:7; Colossians 1:14; Hebrews 9:12, 15), reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:18-19; Colossians 1:20-21; Hebrews 2:17;), and perfecting self-sacrificing love (John 3:16; Romans 8:35, 37, 39; 12:10; Ephesians 4:15-16; 5:2; 1 Peter 3:8; 1 John 3:1). Yet, what has been presented in American history as “Christian civilization,” also includes the imposition of a destructive colonialism which reduced once independent and completely sovereign tribal nations to the political status of domestic dependents and sought to extinguish the cultural heritage and identity of American Indian people. The great civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr. was quite mindful of this painful truth:

Our nation was born in genocide when it embraced the doctrine that the original American, the Indian, was an inferior race. Even before there were large numbers of Negroes on our shores, the scar of racial hatred had already disfigured colonial society. From the sixteenth century forward, blood flowed in battles of racial supremacy. We are perhaps the only nation which tried as a matter of national policy to wipe out its indigenous population. Moreover, we elevated that tragic experience into a noble crusade. Indeed, even today we have not permitted ourselves to reject or to feel remorse for this shameful episode. Our literature, our films, our drama, our folklore all exalt it (King, 1963:110).

Because war, crimes against humanity, and acts of human brutality from one group upon another may be described using other terms, some may take issue with the notion that America was literally “born in genocide.” It must be noted that the focus of this research is neither to establish nor deny the objective veracity of applying the term to American history in a literal manner. Rather, this quote, and similar usage of the term in subsequent quotations, is appropriated not to inflame or to affirm literal precision in terminology, but merely to demonstrate the manner in which the devastating effect of colonization upon indigenous Americans has been, at least figuratively, described by those passionate about, or involved in, such causes as civil rights, human rights, justice movements, and reconciliation initiatives. Such rhetorical descriptions provide insight into the manner in which the damage of colonization upon American Indian tribes is perceived and characterized.

The United Nations General Assembly passed a convention defining and addressing prevention and punishment of the crime of genocide in 1948. According to Article II of this convention,

...genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such: (a) Killing members of the group; (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; (c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part; (d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; (e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group (United Nations, 1951).

While this provides a definition for use in international legal proceedings, there are those who have critiqued this definition for being too narrow, by excluding “targeted political and social groups,” not addressing “direct acts against environment which sustains [a group] or their cultural distinctiveness,” and the ambiguous use of the “in part” in “establishing how many deaths equal genocide” (British Broadcasting Corporation, 2010). There is also the critique that the term has been diluted by misapplication, resulting in overuse (British Broadcasting Corporation, 2010). It is possible for two people to agree that an inhumane act is an atrocity, yet disagree whether it could be defined as genocide, as the international definition offered by the United Nations is debated. However, this use of the term may reasonably be cited as an indication that an impression of genocide is evident in the stated opinion of the quoted speakers, without being an objective verification of the phenomenon.

Dr. King saw the perpetuation of a legacy of horror in the many ways that it is celebrated and “exalted” with, in his view, little, if any, sense of national repentance over the atrocities committed or sensitivity to the ways in which he saw their impact still rippling through American society. While the characterization of America as a nation “born in genocide” does not take into account such positive interactions as those of the Nanticoke-Lenape with the early Quaker settlements discussed in Chapter Two, Martin Luther King Jr. is not a solitary voice in the use of the term in, at least, an illustrative fashion. The National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States of America issued a statement on the arrival of Christopher Columbus in the Americas that characterized the subsequent colonization as bringing “slavery, genocide, and theft and exploitation of the land” upon the indigenous people of North America, also stating that “What represented newness of freedom, hope and opportunity for some was the

occasion for oppression, degradation and genocide for others” (The National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA, 1990). A further illustration can be given of the term’s use as an expression of the intensity of emotion regarding American colonization: during a session dealing with abolishing genocide, which examined various historical atrocities around the globe, Dr. Anne Marshall, a United Methodist and member of the Muskogee Nation, said that Native Americans suffered both a physical as well as cultural genocide. She added, “Until there is an acknowledgment that genocide has happened here by churches and governments there can’t be healing and wholeness” (National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA, 2007). Therefore, the use of the term illustrates the intensity with which some individuals and organizations view the destructive aspects of colonization upon American Indians.

When considering this view of the historical reputation of Christendom in America, which is closely identified with the Doctrine of Discovery and principles of Manifest Destiny, it is often difficult for tribal people to hear, understand, and heed the essential message of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. As illustrated in earlier chapters, for indigenous Americans the term “Christian” became associated with the invading and colonizing people and powers. The term “civilized” became associated with the culture, lifeways, and government brought by the invading colonizers. Moreover, indigenous culture and lifeways were labeled as “savage,” “heathen,” and “pagan.” Chapters Two and Three previously discussed examples of the presumption that “Anglo/European” was synonymous with “Christian” and “civilized” to the exclusion of any consideration of indigenous civilization.

What happens when missionaries teach that the only way of salvation is for people to completely reject their own culture and accept the Christian culture of the missionary? What is the result of not understanding God’s love for all peoples and his plan for every tribe and tongue to worship and glorify God in all of their uniqueness? One answer is the disastrous history of the Native peoples of North America... It is not possible to fully grasp the brutality and savagery inflicted upon Native Americans by European immigrants to North America. Ranging from callous disregard to outright genocide, the history of Native America is a dark tale of racial/cultural hatred, betrayal and murder (Wood, 2011).

The automatic labeling of any indigenous traditional spiritual beliefs or practices as “pagan” is not exclusively a tendency of some non-Natives, but can also be found among American Indian Christians. The Indian Bible College of Flagstaff, Arizona, indicates on its website that its mission is “to disciple and educate indigenous Native

Christians for lifetimes of biblical ministry and spiritual leadership to their people and the world” (Indian Bible College, 2014). In the college’s statement entitled, *A Biblical Position by Native Leaders on Native Spirituality*, the writers believed that the struggle to remain faithful to sound biblical doctrine necessitated the wholesale rejection of Native traditionalism as incompatible with biblical Christianity. The statement defines what it refers to as “native religious traditionalism” as “the influence of the unwritten rules concerning spiritual conduct in our historical cultures which are not in accord with the revealed Word of God” (Indian Bible College, 2014). However, the same statement allows for some expressions of what is referred to as “native culture,” which they define as “the dynamic learned lifeways, beliefs and values of our people as revealed in our languages, customs, relationships, arts and rituals. In native culture, religion permeates all aspects of life and is often identified as being the culture, even though it is only an aspect of it” (Indian Bible College, 2014). The statement admits that there are many expressions of “native culture” which are compatible with Christianity:

...we affirm that there are many good traditions within our Native cultures, which enhance the lives of both Christians and non-Christians. Such traditions include: respect for elders, love for children, sharing with others, entertaining strangers, considering others before oneself, honoring the accomplishments of others, etc. These all are outstanding examples of the scriptural “law of love” and are to be encouraged (Indian Bible College, 2014).

The statement admits that the perspectives and practices of the many different tribes across North America have varying perceptions on spiritual and cultural traditions which may appear quite similar on the surface. This would mean that a rite or ritual may mean one thing to one tribal community and a similar practice may mean something very different to another tribal community, or even among individuals within a tribal community.

This presents a missiological and pastoral challenge for those seeking to minister to American Indian communities. Within the Nanticoke-Lenape communities, as illustrated in the previous chapter, internal tensions between those adhering exclusively to traditional tribal spirituality and those who are Christian can serve as a source of disruption for community harmony, ultimately potentially impacting the continuance of the tribe itself. Many traditionalists view Christianity as the primary force which has oppressed, and in many instances destroyed, American Indian communities. For American Indian Christians, often there is the pressure to reject their indigenous cultural

identity and practices in favor of adopting an Anglo/European one in order to be truly “Christian.”

It should be said that there are many ways in which the gospel will divide people; however, it was never meant to be unnecessarily divisive. The Lord Jesus Christ clearly states that he will be, and always has been, a point of great division among people, as expressed in Luke 12:51-53:

Do you think that I have come to give peace on earth? No, I tell you, but rather division. For from now on in one house there will be five divided, three against two and two against three. They will be divided, father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law (Bible, ESV, 2001).

Jesus further instructed that this division is because some people will embrace him and others will reject him, and this rejection of him will also cause those who follow him to be likewise rejected, as in John 14:18-19: “If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you” (Bible, ESV, 2001). The Apostle Paul picks up on this theme of division in that he admonishes the Corinthians to separate themselves from those who are devoted to unrighteousness, according to 2 Corinthians 6:14-18:

Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness? What accord has Christ with Belial? Or what portion does a believer share with an unbeliever? What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; as God said, “I will make my dwelling among them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Therefore go out from their midst, and be separate from them, says the Lord, and touch no unclean thing; then I will welcome you, and I will be a father to you, and you shall be sons and daughters to me, says the Lord Almighty” (Bible, ESV, 2001).

Moreover, the apostle continues in 2 Corinthians 10:3-5 by saying,

For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ (Bible, ESV, 2001).

However, while division is a necessary consequence of the spread of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, intentional divisiveness is never encouraged as a goal. Paul writes to Timothy in 2 Timothy 2:24-26,

The Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil, correcting his opponents with gentleness. God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth, and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, after being captured by him to do his will (Bible, ESV, 2001).

The Apostle Peter admonishes Christians in 1 Peter 1:12, "Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation" (Bible, ESV, 2001).

So the challenge is to effectively share the truth of the gospel, minister to the believers, and do so with compassion, but all the while never compromising the truths of Scripture for the teachings of men and women. Can this be done within the context of American Indian tribal communities? Can the heritage and traditions of the Nanticoke-Lenape be part of the Christian life, or must they be cast aside in order for life to truly be Christian?

### **5.1.1 The Importance of an Increased Understanding of the Sensitivities and Concerns of Tribal Communities**

American Indians are often overlooked in the course of American society. All too often viewed as a novelty by the majority non-Native public, their status in the minds of many Americans can be easily illustrated with the common refrain, "All Americans came from some other country, we are a nation of immigrants." Sadly, rarely is the exception cited, "...unless you are an American Indian," until there is a correction or a moment of reflection over the error, if there is any at all. This exclusion, even when stated without malicious intent toward the indigenous people of America, is still indicative of an insensitivity that is noticed by American Indians in many ways. Native issues rarely hit the mainstream news outlets, unless they have an impact on the non-Native population. Robert O'Donnell, formerly of the United States Department of Justice, who worked on tribal justice issues, speaks on an issue that has recently gained the attention of the non-Native media:

Native Americans in the United States are suffering. They are victims of domestic violence at higher levels than any other race. They experience

higher rates of alcohol abuse, mental health illnesses and suicide than the general population. More than a quarter of them live in poverty, a rate two and a half times higher than white Americans. And one in three Native American women will be raped in her lifetime, more than any other racial group. Native Americans lag behind the rest of the country in almost every leading indicator of health and well-being. And yet, we rarely, if ever, hear these problems discussed in the news, on social media or around our own kitchen tables. There is, however, one Native American issue that has captured the national spotlight: the Washington Redskins' name... The debate surrounding the Redskins name is an important one. As our country becomes more diverse, it's critical that we don't condone the use of racial epithets regardless of how long they've represented a team. But when you look at the state of native nations in the U.S., it's clear that the national dialogue about the Redskins name is too narrowly focused on a symbolic victory over real progress. Against the backdrop of crippling challenges facing Native Americans, why are we spending countless hours debating the name of a football team? (O'Donnell, 2014).

The name of the American football team, headquartered in the nation's capital, has been viewed as racially insulting and promoting racist stereotypes. This is the issue that has gained national attention because it affects non-Native fans of the football franchise, while the critical issues that confront American Indians in an array of other ways go virtually unnoticed.

Most Americans are unaware that, within a few generations of the arrival of Christopher Columbus, up to ninety-five percent of the indigenous population of America, or approximately one hundred million people, died during the period of early contact through to the colonial era (Plous, 2015). Most Americans do not know that American Indian and Alaskan Native youth have the highest risk of committing suicide (Centers for Disease Control, 2012; Plous, 2015). The historical backdrop and continuing challenges confronting tribal people have resulted in a high rate of depression linked to an uncommon diagnosis.

While there is not a definitive assessment of the prevalence of depression and other common mental health conditions among all [American Indians and Alaska Natives], available data point to disproportionately high rates of depression in [American Indians and Alaska Natives] compared other ethnic groups. Psychological distress, as evidenced by poor mental health and depression, is associated with historical and intergenerational trauma. The highly prevalent nature of emotional trauma helps explain the disproportionate rate of psychological distress in [American Indian and Alaska Native] communities. Serious co-occurring conditions including alcohol or substance abuse and greater incidence of chronic illness like

diabetes are associated with an increased number of poor mental health days (Urban Health Institute, 2012:1).

The history of the American Indians since the early days of colonization includes the constant presence of some form of trauma. Some tribal people refer to the continuing impact from this history of trauma as “soul wound.” Mental health professionals are now evaluating how such historic trauma, even from events dating back hundreds of years, can still have an impact on modern tribal communities, resulting in symptoms that would fall within a Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) diagnosis (Indian Country Diaries, 2006). What used to be called “shell shock” in soldiers who had experienced the trauma of combat has become far better understood since the 1980s and is now referred to as PTSD. Researchers have come to realize that survivors of other types of trauma, including torture, rape, natural disasters and man-made disasters such as the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, can have the same sense of intense fear, helplessness, and horror that combat veterans have experienced. Symptoms resulting from intense trauma can also be multigenerational. Such historical trauma was studied among survivors of the Jewish Holocaust and their descendants (Brown-Rice, 2014). Research on PTSD as a result of historic/intergenerational trauma among American Indians has found that “The effect of trauma passed from one generation to the next is now understood as one of the causes of a series of social problems in Indian country” (Indian Country Diaries, 2006). There is skepticism among professional counselors as to the validity of the concept of historical trauma among American Indian tribes (Brown-Rice, 2014); however, studies have shown that “depression, substance dependence, diabetes, dysfunctional parenting, and even unemployment can be the result of cross-generational transmission of trauma from historic losses, such as loss of population, land, and culture” (Brown-Rice, 2014). One study of 306 American Indian adults concluded that “thoughts about historical losses and their associated symptomatology are common in the presence of these thoughts [and] are associated with Native American heritage, culture identification, and substance dependence” (Ehlers *et al.*, 2013). The insensitivity toward the issues of historical trauma confronting American Indian tribal communities and individuals can contribute to the perpetuation of the cycle of historical trauma into the future (Brown-Rice, 2014).

The implication for those ministering to American Indian people is that there is a need to be sensitive to the communal history of trauma experienced by the tribe or individual. The various stimuli, or “triggers,” that initiate the traumatic stress associated with

cultural loss must be comprehended in order to facilitate compassionate dialogue and pastoral care. For American Indians such “triggers” often include the celebration of certain heroes from American History embraced by the non-Native population. One federal holiday in the United States that illustrates this is Columbus Day, which is set aside to honor Christopher Columbus. Suzan Harjo (Creek/Cheyenne), former executive director of the National Congress of American Indians and currently of the Morning Star Institute, states, “As Native American peoples in this red quarter of Mother Earth, we have no reason to celebrate an invasion that caused the demise of so many of our people, and is still causing destruction today” (Bigelow, 2012). This is a different perspective on Christopher Columbus than what has been traditionally presented as a celebration of “discovery” and the triumph of colonial expansion into the “New World.” Among American Indians, Columbus represents a memory of pain and loss. While many still celebrate Columbus as a hero, the indigenous people have little joy in the commemoration of his arrival and its results. Their perspective is supported by such accounts as those preserved in writings from the period, including Columbus himself, who wrote, “As soon as I arrived in the Indies, in the first island which I found, I took some of the natives by force, in order that they might learn and might give me information of whatever there is in these parts” (Columbus, 1493). Additionally, the account of Bartolome de las Casas, whose father was on Columbus’ second voyage and who subsequently visited the West Indies, described the atrocities committed against the indigenous people by the Spanish:

[They who] arriv'd at these Islands from the remotest parts of Spain, and who pride themselves in the Name of Christians, steer'd Two courses principally, in order to the Extirpation, and Exterminating of this People from the face of the Earth. The first whereof was raising an unjust, sanguinolent, cruel War. The other, by putting them to death, who hitherto, thirsted after their Liberty, or design'd (which the most Potent, Strenuous and Magnanimous Spirits intended) to recover their pristin Freedom, and shake off the Shackles of so injurious a Captivity ... mounted on generous Steeds, well weapon'd with Lances and Swords, begin to exercise their bloody Butcheries and Strategems, and over-running their Cities and Towns, spar'd no Age, or Sex, nay not so much as Women with Child, but ripping up their Bellies, tore them alive in pieces. They laid Wagers among themselves, who should with a Sword at one blow cut, or divide a Man in two; or which of them should decollate or behead a Man, with the greatest dexterity; nay farther, which should sheath his Sword in the Bowels of a Man with the quickest dispatch and expedition ... They snatcht young Babes from the Mothers Breasts, and then dasht out the brains of those innocents against the Rocks; others they cast into Rivers scoffing and jeering them, and call'd upon their Bodies when falling with derision, the true testimony of their Cruelty, to

come to them, and inhumanely exposing others to their Merciless Swords, together with the Mothers that gave them Life (de las Casas, 1552).

Similarly, one of the United States presidents who is viewed as among the ten best in history by many Americans is considered one of the greatest villains by American Indians. President Andrew Jackson largely initiated, and then enforced, the Indian Removal Act of 1830 which led to the famous “Trail of Tears” resulting in the deaths of thousands of American Indians and left many others in peril for their lives. He did so in defiance of the ruling of the Supreme Court of the United States, which viewed the act as unconstitutional. He also excused the atrocity as being in the interest of “civilization and Christian community;” yet, if his actions occurred in modern times, they would be considered crimes against humanity (Berry, 2001). For this reason, there are American Indians who prefer not to carry twenty dollar bills, which have a portrait of President Jackson (Berry, 2001).

A lack of understanding regarding the various sensitivities, issues, concerns, and perspectives of American Indians can potentially undermine attempts at spreading the gospel or providing pastoral care. Disregarding the pain of “soul wound” or historic intergenerational trauma perpetuates what is commonly perceived by American Indians as the callousness of American triumphalism blessed by American Christianity based upon the Doctrine of Discovery and the principle of Manifest Destiny. Becoming familiar with these sensitivities and concerns can greatly enhance the receptiveness of the tribal community to the witness brought by the Christian preacher, pastor, or missionary.

### **5.1.2 Contextualization as a Part of Evangelization**

Regarding the mission of the church, contextualization can be defined broadly as effective communication of the Gospel of Jesus Christ taking full account of the historical and cultural context of the people who are targeted by that communication. Contextualization is further demonstrated in the manner in which the gospel is faithfully lived and expressed in the lives of diverse converts in various cultural settings who praise and serve the Lord through various aspects of their cultural heritage. H. Richard Niebuhr defines “culture” as follows:

Culture is the “artificial, secondary environment” which man superimposes on the natural. It comprises language, habits, ideas, beliefs, customs, social organization, inherited artifacts, technical progresses, and values. This “social heritage,” this “reality *sui generis*,” which the New Testament writers frequently had in mind when they spoke of “the world,” which is represented in many forms but to which Christians like other men are inevitably subject, is what we mean when we speak of culture (Niebuhr, 1951:32).

The gospel speaks to people within a culture, transforming the people in their culture who then are guided to walk in the light of the gospel which impacts the culture by their witness of salvation in Christ and by their embracing the Word of God. The cultural identity of a person need not be annihilated in order for them to become Christian. The 1974 International Congress on World Evangelism report on *The Gospel, Contextualization and Syncretism* identified four aspects of contextualization:

...the identification of the Gospel [sic] from its cultural clothing; the communication of the same in pertinent, meaningful cultural forms, both external (e.g., liturgical garments) but also thought forms (e.g., time-space dimensions, etc.); the communication that spoke to the real issues and needs of the person and his society; the response made by that person in cultural and societal context and guidance of the Holy Spirit should be done with meaning and integrity. In no way should demands be placed on the person that would dehumanize him or destroy his identity as a person in his culture; as a consequence of his response, he should live an integral Christian life in obedience to the Lord, expressed in the cultural forms that are meaningful to him and his community; this life should be expressed in the local community of saints as they together face their call to missions. We may summarize this statement by identifying the two sides of the coin in this definition: meaningful communication and forms that are real to the person, and his full response to the Lord in repentance and obedience of faith that affects his whole life-style, his attitudes, and his values, etc. (Bradshaw & Savage, 1974:1226).

In a more succinct fashion, Robert Wood, editor of *Mission Frontiers*, defines contextualization as “the process by which familiar cultural forms are adapted, redeemed and given new meaning in order to communicate the truths of Scripture to people on a deep heartfelt level” (Wood, 2011). Contextualization is modeled within Scripture itself (Davis, 2008). Our Lord contextualized the good news of the kingdom by becoming one of the people to whom that good news was being sent. Jesus was born into, and lived within, a culture. The incarnation of the second person of the triune God is the greatest divine expression of bringing the holy message and blessing of redemption by utilizing the parameters of the situational context of those who are to be the recipients of that message and act of grace. When the Apostle John wrote in John

1:14, “14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth” (Bible, EV, 2001), he was describing divine activity that included the contextualization of the bringer of redemption by the miracle of the incarnation. “The Son of God is himself child of a religious culture, and sends his disciples to attend his lambs and sheep, who cannot be guarded without cultural work” (Niebuhr, 1951:39).

Contextualizing the good news of the kingdom of heaven can be seen in the preaching method of Jesus Christ. Jesus used illustrative language and parables, adapting his proclamation of heavenly things within the context of the history and culture of those who were listening. The things of everyday life were used to illustrate the truths of the kingdom. While Jesus himself explains that this was done in a fashion exclusively for those who had the divine gift of “ears to hear” (Matthew 13:9) and comprehend the mysteries of the kingdom, he nonetheless utilized everyday situations and commonalities to communicate these divine truths to those for whom it was given to understand (Matthew 13:11). In other words, for those for whom the teaching was targeted, it was provided within a context of their everyday life experiences in a fashion that they could either immediately understand or be taught to comprehend. The transcendent divine message was transmitted within the context of human experience. Not only was the second person of the triune God incarnate, but the divine message itself took on an aspect of that incarnation.

Contextualizing the divine message of redemption can also be seen in Acts 17 in the Apostle Paul’s proclamation on Mars Hill to the Athenian intelligentsia of the Areopagus. While being disturbed by the rampant paganism and idolatry of the Athenians, he nonetheless chose to use their own context to introduce them to the one true God in Acts 17:22-23:

22 So Paul, standing in the midst of the Areopagus, said: “Men of Athens, I perceive that in every way you are very religious. 23 For as I passed along and observed the objects of your worship, I found also an altar with this inscription, ‘To the unknown god.’ What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you” (Bible, ESV, 2001).

Though the Athenian culture was twisted and marred by wicked idolatry, Paul was still able to point to a truth within the context of that culture which still bore witness to the one true God.

Utilizing the context of the hearer as a tactic in communicating the transcendent truths of God strategically relies on the fact that those truths can somehow be illustrated from within that context as in Romans 1:19-20:

19 For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. 20 For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse (Bible, ESV, 2001).

Though the minds of unregenerated men and women are corrupted by sin, Scripture tells us that still they hold the truth, albeit in “unrighteousness” according to Romans 1:18 (Bible, ESV, 2001) as they “exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator,” according to Romans 1:25 (Bible, ESV, 2001). Yet the infinite power of God and the transcendent truths of God cannot be extinguished, even by wickedness. Even within the context of wicked idolatry there is evidence of the love of God, because without his sustaining grace and forbearance, there would be no context at all. Paul’s experience on Mars Hill illustrates the fact that while unregenerate human beings and their culture may be totally depraved, that does not necessarily mean that they are utterly depraved in the sense that their sin has eradicated the evidence of the divine nature in such a way that no light of God shines within their context. Rather, it is the ignorance of that evidence, the denial of that truth, which must be confronted so that those who have been graced with “ears to hear” may perceive it.

The ability to contextualize the gospel further illustrates the love of God which exists prior to, and independent of, any human response to it. According to Romans 5:8, “God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Bible, ESV, 2001). God’s condescension toward humanity finds its ultimate expression in the Incarnation of Christ indicated in Philippians 2:5-8:

5 Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, 6 who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. (Bible, ESV, 2001).

While the Incarnation of Christ was a “once and for all” unique historic event, its transformative message may continue to be expressed in incarnational terms. The proclamation of the gospel still bears the transcendent good news of Christ to bear, reaching people where they are and in terms to which they can relate. South African

missiologist David J. Bosch stated, “The Church begins to be missionary not through its universal proclamation of the gospel, but through the universality of the gospel it proclaims” (Bosch, 2011:10). The Gospel of Jesus Christ is applicable to every tongue, tribe, and nation. Its eternal penetrating truth addresses the human condition no matter where it may be found, no matter the cultural context. Christian Lakota minister Richard Twiss is in agreement with a statement of missiologist Tite Tienou:

One should be able to take for granted that Christianity is not the religion of white people. “Polycentric Christianity is the Christian faith with many cultural homes. The fact that Christianity is at home in a multiplicity of cultures, without being permanently wedded to any one of them, presents for Christians everywhere a unique opportunity for examining Christian identity and Christian theology.” (Twiss, 2010:pt. 3, ch. 5).

“Polycentric” within this context is used in contrast to “Eurocentric.” While the true Christian faith is ultimately “Christocentric,” having Jesus Christ as both its center and focus, Christ-centered Christianity is communicated, expressed, and practiced within many varying contexts. In fact, from the days of the early church there was resistance on the part of the Apostles and Elders to force cultural conformity as a requirement for Christian conversion. We see in Acts 15:1 that there were those who attempted to impose a Jewish-centric perspective upon Gentile converts: “But some men came down from Judea and were teaching the brothers, ‘Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved’” (Bible, ESV, 2001). More than any other culture, one could reasonably argue for the centrality of Jewish culture and tradition, as Jesus himself was a Palestinian Jew and was the focus of the Hebraic/Jewish prophetic tradition. The Scripture of the day which affirmed him was Jewish Scripture. Moreover, the leaders of the church at the time were all Jewish Christians. Yet, even in the face of this, the Holy Spirit provided discernment to the Council in Jerusalem, which concluded in Acts 15:28-29,

28 For it has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay on you no greater burden than these requirements: 29 that you abstain from what has been sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from what has been strangled, and from sexual immorality. If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well. Farewell (Bible, ESV, 2001).

The Council in Jerusalem determined that only certain universal prohibitions on idolatrous and immoral practices would be continued, calling them “necessary things.” While discerning what is “necessary” and what is “not necessary” is part of the challenge in missions, the action of the Council in Jerusalem demonstrates a resistance

to impose even Jewish cultural tradition upon non-Jewish converts. While not directly articulated by the council in Acts 15, their decision was to embrace diversity, not merely racial diversity, which was not at issue, but cultural diversity. Acts 15 shows that there is no one human culture that is entitled to view itself as the “core” or “standard” of Christianity. Twiss writes,

Cultural diversity is not a deviation from God’s ‘original plan,’ the result of sin or judgment at Babel, but has always been God’s intention and design for human beings. This is good news for Indigenous people and affirms our ‘place’ as Native/indigenous people within the context of God’s eternal triune community and purposes for creation (Twiss, 2010: pt. 3, ch. 5).

The Council of Jerusalem viewed the imposition of Judaism on new Gentile Christians to be unnecessarily burdensome (Act 15:19), yet in the history of missions, far too often the imposition of human culture has been wed to the missionary’s concept of Christian conversion and discipleship. Bosch writes of this:

Until fairly recently virtually all Westerners (and, in many cases, non-Westerners) took it for granted that the reshaping of the entire world in the image of the West was a foregone conclusion. It was only marginally different in missionary circles. The famous Layman’s Foreign Missions Enquiry, published in 1923 under the title *Re-Thinking Missions*, had little doubt not only that every nation was en route to one world culture and that this culture would be essentially Western, but also that this was a development all should applaud. Like all other Westerners in the Third World, missionaries were to be conscious propagandists of this culture. In the early stages of modern missions all this still happened in a rather guileless manner. That the “Christian West” had the “right” to impose its views on others, displayed a consensus so fundamental that it operated mainly at an unconscious, presuppositional level. In the spirit of John Eliot and Cotton Mather, Samuel Worcester, in 1816, described the objectives of the American Board with respect to American Indians as making “the whole tribe English in their language, civilized in their habits, and Christian in their religion” (Bosch, 2011:299).

Bosch’s reference to the “spirit” of John Eliot and Cotton Mather pertains to the 1816 objectives of the Prudential Committee of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (1882:xliv) and may refer to the writing of Mather as he described the missionary labors of John Eliot, stating, “This was a miserable people which our Eliot propounded unto himself the saving of! And he had a double work incumbent on him; he was to make Men of them, ere he could hope to see them Saints; they must be civilized ere they could be Christianized” (Mather, 1694:88). The New England tribe of Massachusetts, to which the Rev. John Eliot preached, reaped a harvest of converts to the Lord Jesus Christ. It appeared that the Holy Spirit had prepared their hearts to

receive the gospel before it was ever proclaimed to them. Eliot is cited as having been asked by the Indians why he and his community had taken so long to share this good news with them after first arriving in their land. Apparently, the swift response of quite a number of the Natives was, “We doe [sic] repent” (Hinkson, 2008:24). Rev. Eliot took it upon himself to learn the indigenous tongue of the community to which he ministered and to translate the Scripture into the local vernacular. Some historians believe that his fourteen year effort, finalized in 1663, may well have been the first since the fourth century to translate the Bible into an unwritten language (Hinkson, 2008:28). Eliot’s persistence and devotion to the conversion of Indians was well appreciated by his indigenous converts, whose expression of gratitude is recorded:

God hath made you to us and our nation a spiritual father, we are inexpressibly engaged to you for your faithful constant, indefatigable labours, care and love to and for us, and you have always manifested the same to us as well in our adversity as prosperity, for about forty years making known to us the Glad [sic] tidings of Salvation of Jesus Christ (Hinkson, 2008:29).

This almost decade and a half long translation effort is a form of contextualization as it brings the gospel to bear in the indigenous tongue. Eliot learned their tongue so that he could proclaim the Gospel of Christ to them in words with which they would be familiar, instead of pressing them to first learn English and then receive the gospel. This is a reflection of the communication of the testimonies of the 120 disciples gathered in the upper room on the day of Pentecost as recorded in Acts 2:6-12:

6 And at this sound the multitude came together, and they were bewildered, because each one was hearing them speak in his own language. 7 And they were amazed and astonished, saying, “Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? 8 And how is it that we hear, each of us in his own native language? 9 Parthians and Medes and Elamites and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, 10 Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, 11 both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians—we hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God.” 12 And all were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, “What does this mean?” (Bible, ESV, 2001).

The intervention of the Holy Spirit upon the crowd that had gathered witnessing the empowerment of the 120 disciples by the Holy Spirit is certainly emblematic of the reverse of the confusion of tongues at Babel in Genesis 11 in demonstration of the unifying power of the gospel and its universal message reaching across many different languages and cultures. At Babel, human hubris and arrogance sought to produce a monument to itself and sustain a singular culture, to which the divine response was

human diversity and dispersal. On Pentecost, God the Holy Spirit blessed human diversity by demonstrating that the one truth of Jesus Christ could speak to all cultures in all languages. Moreover, we are inspired by this moment in Scripture to realize that God's truth is to be proclaimed in every language, with no one human tongue being the sole primary divine vernacular. As language and culture are intertwined, it is not unreasonable to speculate that this embrace of diversity of tongues is also an embrace of a diversity of cultures.

To John Eliot's credit, his effort in translating Scripture into the local vernacular is evidence of his understanding that the language of the Indians was a suitable vehicle for the transmission of the gospel. He did not merely learn their tongue in order to lead them to conversion, but also that they might be disciplined by their growing understanding of the Bible. His biographer wrote:

On this work he had long set his heart with earnest desire, believing that, until God's truth could reach his Indian disciples in the written as well as spoken word, the means of making its power permanent and complete would be wanting. If the schools, which in his plan were to be the never-failing attendance of Christian instruction, should affect their purpose among his converts and their children; and if he could then place the Bible, in their own tongue, under their eyes in every wigwam or house, he might justly feel that a strong foundation would be laid for those great results, which were embraced in the anticipations of his far-reaching benevolence (Francis, 1840:216-217).

Eliot appears to have been of the opinion that the Indians' development in their understanding of Scripture did not necessitate learning English in order to become better Christians. His passion for translation in order to better communicate God's truth is evident in his own words on the final page of his *Indian Grammar Begun*, in which he states, "We must not sit still and look for miracles; up and be doing, and the Lord will be with thee. Prayer and Pains, through faith in Christ Jesus, will do anything" (Hickson, 2008:28).

Additionally, John Eliot's approach included the training and support of indigenous preachers and teachers who he wholeheartedly believed were better prepared to reach their fellow tribesmen with the gospel than would be a non-indigenous mission worker who knew neither the tribal language nor the customs. In that era and area, this was a progressive approach to missions.

The conversion of the Indians of Massachusetts led to the rise of “praying towns” where the “praying Indians” would cluster in Christian community, having been encouraged to separate themselves from their relatives, who were still living in traditional indigenous ways, and to begin to adopt European lifeways which were presented as intertwined with what it meant to live as Christians. While this separation was encouraged by the missionaries, it was also embraced by the “praying Indians” because some were ostracized by traditional sachems and spiritual leaders who had disdain for the change that the converts represented to traditional tribal society and, at least according to the report of the missionaries, because of the converts’ awakening to their own dignity and rights over and against the dominance of their sachems (Francis, 1840:156). While Christian conversion certainly brings personal transformation which radiates forth from the believer as a beacon light into a dark world, there are also indications that some of the hostile reaction was potentially provoked by cultural conflict and not merely Christian conversion (Hinkson, 2008:25). While there was a form of contextualization in the translation of the Scripture into the indigenous language, the imagination of the missionary was unable to grasp that an indigenous pattern of Christian living could possibly be valid. According to Hinkson,

Eliot and his colleagues were very mindful of the great gulf that divided their own faith and the life from that of the Massachusetts. Indeed it was generally held that they could not be converted apart from being first, or at least concurrently, acculturated. As contemporary Cotton Mather expressed the challenge Eliot faced: ‘[H]e had a double work incumbent upon him: he was to make men of them, ere he could hope to see them saints; they must be civilized ere they could be Christianized’ (Hinkson, 2008:24-25).

For Cotton Mather, being civilized meant embracing an Anglo/European understanding of what civilization looked like (Mather, 1694:88). While the missionaries could see that the Bible could be proclaimed in the indigenous tongue, they could not see that true discipleship could be expressed within the indigenous culture. Instead, eradicating the indigenous culture, for what they viewed as the cause of Christ, became their goal (Wood, 2011). Because of the powerfully irresistible inner call of the Holy Spirit inclining the hearts of those destined to salvation toward the gospel, converts were won among the American Indians in spite of the shortcomings in the attitudes of the missionaries. However, at the same time, a legacy of misunderstanding as to what essential Christianity is and resentment as to how it was misapplied by being blended with the imposition of a foreign culture still impacts missions among many American Indians to this day.

The fact is that there is a conglomeration of Euro American scholars, ministers and lay folk who have, over the centuries, used their economic, academic, religious and political dominance to create the illusion that the Bible, read through their experience, is the Bible read correctly. And it was on the basis of this alleged true reading of the Bible that these men and women, my brothers and sisters, professing faith in Jesus Christ and a commitment to the Scriptures, did such oppressive things to native people, and in many cases, still do (Twiss, 2010:pt. 3, ch. 5).

Bosch concurs that in too many historical instances, even in contemporary times, there is a presupposition that “missions” and “Western colonization,” as inspired by the Doctrine of Discovery, are related and that the subjugation of indigenous populations is a requirement for the success of their evangelization. “Therefore since the 16<sup>th</sup> century, if one said ‘mission,’ one in a sense also said ‘colonialism.’ Modern missions originated in the context of modern Western colonialism” (Bosch, 2011:293).

The presupposition that all other expressions of Christianity must be judged against the Anglo/Euro form of Reformed Christianity is quite alive and well among some American Reformed Christian theologians. This is demonstrated in the comments of J. Ligon Duncan III, who was a contributing editor of *Give Glory to God*, a Festschrift inspired by the ministry of James Montgomery Boice. Duncan is a well known and respected proponent of the Reformed tradition in the United States. He is the pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Jackson, Mississippi, president of the Alliance of Confessing Evangelicals, chancellor of Reformed Theological Seminary, and served as the moderator for the Presbyterian Church in America. In *Give Glory to God*, Duncan seemed insensitive to the issue of culture contamination in interpreting what is acceptable worship. He states,

While many present-day worship theorists spend much time seeking to adapt the forms of corporate worship, and especially musical forms, to cultural currencies and see such adaptation as key to reaching the culture, the Reformers were not nearly so interested in that as they were in being biblical... there is a recent common criticism of the kind of worship promoted by the regulative principle that goes like this: Much of what is called historic Reformed worship is derived from Northern European culture and binds the church too closely to a past culture. What can be said to this in reply? Is what is called historic Reformed Protestant worship really just an imposition of North European culture on the practice of the Church? No. Do the principles and elements of historic Protestant worship derive from North European culture? The emphatic answer is no! They are biblically derived, though perhaps more fully implemented in the Reformation and post-Reformation Protestant

tradition that anywhere else, and are manifest in churches today on every continent (Duncan, 2003:69).

Certainly, the intent of the historic Reformed Protestant worship tradition is aimed at a biblical Regulative Principle, as will be discussed later, but to presume that culture did not impact the interpretation of biblical worship and the method with which it was carried out is not reasonable. He continues to clarify,

The argument that historic Protestant worship is north European in essence is no more persuasive than the now-popular assertion that the doctrine of justification by grace alone through faith alone is 16th century European in origin, or the tired old canard that 19<sup>th</sup> century Americans at Princeton invented the doctrine of Biblical inerrancy. It is ironic that some of the very people who make this dismissive assertion are themselves working hard to accommodate Christian worship to a tiny subculture. The historic worship norms reclaimed in Europe five centuries ago are not European in origin. They are Jewish! (Duncan, 2003:70)

The implication is that the melodies in song, the expressions of praise, the response of affirmation of the congregants in Geneva were so culturally neutral that the first century Palestinian Jewish culture could be clearly evidenced. He then equivocates slightly and adds,

That is not to say that European culture (if we can ever speak of such a thing in that time) made no impingement upon what we now identify as “historic worship,” but that the Reformers and their successors were not as interested in accommodating their culture (or redeeming it through the forms of worship) as they were in having their worship according to the word of God (Duncan, 2003:70).

While it may be true that the Reformers pursued the goal of worshipping in accordance with the Word of God, and perhaps came closer than most in their day to achieving it, they did so within a context. Cultural context impacts worldview, tastes, interactions, interpretations, and behavior. It may not dictate limitations, but it certainly colors perspective. Duncan’s defense of Western Reformed Protestantism may be mixed with an obliviousness in regard to the realities and implications of cultural context, which cannot be avoided. Indeed, “there is no such thing as a neutral, culture-free way to do anything” (Keller, 2010:124). While his zeal to lift the centrality of biblical parameters for worship is honorable and faithful, his statement suggests that his cultural context is normative, for he seems to deny that it exists at all. If this is true, it is an unfortunate perspective which can lead to measuring other expressions of culture in worship as legitimate only in as much as they reflect your own. Even if Duncan does not actually

hold to this position, the wording of his statement supports a cultural arrogance that hinders efforts to reflect the true catholic spirit of the Body of Christ. Bosch contends that such arrogance contributed to an insensitivity that supported not only geo-political colonization, but also a cultural and spiritual colonization.

Missionary advocates were, on the whole, unaware of the pagan flaws in their own culture... In addition, as the nineteenth century advanced and the twentieth approached, the missionaries and mission advocates were not sufficiently sensitive to a subtle yet fundamental shift in the mentality of the Western nations; that is, its being permeated, slowly but inexorably, by the notion of Western nations' "manifest destiny." ... The Western missionary enterprise of the period under discussion proceeded not only from the assumption of the superiority of Western culture over all other cultures, but also from the conviction that God, in his providence, had chosen the Western nations, because of their unique qualities, to be the standard-bearers of his cause even to the uttermost ends of the world (Bosch, 2011:328-329).

One cannot escape context, but one can be in denial of it or in denial that one's own context is not the norm. A consequence of that denial is an insensitivity that impacts the efforts of cross-cultural evangelization and may do violence to the culture of those being evangelized. Denying the validity of biblically consistent efforts to contextualize missions cannot be a neutral position, as the denial itself affirms a particular perspective, a context, as normative. Presuming that one cultural context is normative for all Christians, and therefore should be imposed, or at least admonished, regarding new converts from other contexts, is a form of cultural arrogance. T. S. Eliot wrote, in *Christianity and Culture*,

The evils of nationalistic Christianity have ... not been wholly absent: missionaries have sometimes been accused of propagating (through ignorance, not through cunning) customs and attitudes of the social groups to which they have belonged, rather than giving the natives the essentials of the Christian faith in such a way that they might harmonize their own culture with it (Eliot, 2008:42).

Contextualization in missions requires cultural and racial humility on the part of the missionary. Contextualization does not require that the missionary should assimilate into the culture he or she is trying to evangelize, but rather that the missionary should become compassionately sensitive to the ways in which elements of the culture may already reflect the glory of God and how elements of the culture may aid in communicating and celebrating the Gospel of Jesus Christ. This compassionate sensitivity requires that the missionary be consciously and prayerfully reflective over how their own perspectives and preferences may be based more in cultural bias than in

biblical mandate. T. S. Eliot admits that European ministers and missionaries are not immune to such bias and a denial of the truths of their own Christian perspectives and practices:

... the actual religion of no European people has ever been purely Christian, or purely anything else. There are always bits and traces of more primitive faiths, more or less absorbed; there is always the tendency towards parasitic beliefs; there are always perversions, as when patriotism, which pertains to natural religion and is therefore licit and even encouraged by the church, becomes exaggerated into a caricature of itself. And it is only too easy for a people to maintain contradictory beliefs and to propitiate mutually antagonistic powers (Eliot, 2008:104).

In this sense, walking humbly with God amid unfamiliar settings requires spiritual discernment and compassionate consideration of the context in which one ministers, proving another application of the words of the Apostle Paul in Philippians 2:3-4, “3 Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. 4 Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others” (Bible, ESV, 2001).

It must be stated that while we are called to walk humbly, we are also to walk faithfully. Humility with discernment, charity with prudence, openness with judiciousness... such characteristics should be held in balance and prayerfully harmonized in the light of, and in submission to, Scripture. In the absence of harmonious balance, charity can lead to permissiveness, openness to error, and humility to indulgence. Contextualization of the gospel supports evangelism and spiritual development. However, contextualization can have its own thorny issues. One of the great challenges in contextualization is syncretism. Concerns over syncretism can fuel a critical and antagonistic view of contextualization. The committee report on *The Gospel, Contextualization and Syncretism* from the 1974 International Congress on World Evangelism states that,

While there was no final agreement on the definition of syncretism, various elements were brought to light. Syncretism might be said to occur when critical and basic elements of the Gospel [sic] are lost in the progress of contextualization and are replaced by religious elements from the receiving culture; there is a synthesis with this partial Gospel [sic]. In some cases syncretism reaches such portions that a totally new “gospel” appears (Bradshaw & Savage, 1974:1227).

David J. Hesselgrave, of Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, states that “Ultimately, syncretism is but another form of Christ-rejection” (1991:186) and that it occurs “When respondents choose parts of the Christian message that appeal to them and, rejecting

other parts of the message, incorporate the accepted elements into non-Christian religious systems to make a new whole” (1991:185). A more recent definition is offered by A. Scott Moreau, of Wheaton College, who states that syncretism is “the replacement or dilution of the essential truths of the gospel through the incorporation of non-Christian elements” (2012:129). Given varying perspectives on the issue, a plausible working definition of syncretism, as pertaining to Christianity, is the blending of beliefs and practices which are incompatible with biblical teaching, thereby creating a derived false faith which claims to be either Christian, compatible with Christianity, or a superior Christianity. A typical tendency of syncretistic belief is to diminish the gospel of grace by denying the sufficiency of Christ’s substitutionary atonement. Superstitious practices, rituals, and requirements are viewed as necessary for salvation and within the capacity of the believer to provide satisfactory, or supplementary, atonement. Another tendency of syncretism is the denial of the sufficiency, and/or reliability, of Scripture. Other teachings, either written or orally transferred, are viewed as not merely being inspirational or encouraging, but actually “equal” to Scripture in regard to divine revelation and binding the conscience.

While not traditional among the Nanticoke-Lenape, the recent revival of the Sun Dance of the Plains tribal cultures, spread through the influential rise of Pan-Indianism and the impact of the American Indian Movement, has its adherents among some of the Nanticoke-Lenape people, albeit a small minority of neo-traditionalists. Previously prohibited by the United States federal government at the urging of missionary organizations, the Indian Religious Freedom Act (United States, 95<sup>th</sup> Congress, 1978) removed the restrictions and penalties placed upon the practice. While most who embrace the Sun Dance openly reject Christianity, there are Sun Dancers who also profess to be Christian. The practice involves several days of fasting, dancing and singing with the culmination being that the participants (typically from among the male Sun Dancers) pierce their flesh on either side of their chests to attach themselves by ropes to a pole. They will apply reverse pressure to their piercings until torn free through the flesh. All this is done while the Sun Dancer is in prayerful intercession. Women sometimes participate in support of the pierced men by cutting themselves, causing their own blood to flow. The participant’s suffering has been described as intercessory and is part of the pursuit of spiritual power and seeking deep communion with the deity. Among adherents and admirers, the scars that remain are esteemed as marks of honor. The Sun Dance is not a practice of the Nanticoke-Lenape tribal

communities; however, there are Nanticoke-Lenape who travel to participate in this ritual as it is hosted by other tribes and practitioners. Attempts to bring the Sun Dance to the Nanticoke-Lenape by those who practice it have been met with resistance by those who view it as foreign to Nanticoke-Lenape tribal tradition (as it was not practiced by the ancestors) and those who reject it because of Christian influence (Gould, 2012). The Sun Dance, when practiced by professing Christians, is a syncretistic deviation from embracing the sufficiency of salvation by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, as it seeks to earn spiritual merit and power through self-imposed personal suffering.

As with many American Indian tribal cultures, traditional Nanticoke-Lenape spiritual beliefs hold dreams and visions in high regard. In ancient times, traditional ceremonies were held in which dreams and visions were described to the community and attributed great significance. Sometimes such dreams and visions would be told in a song that would be sung and danced by the dreamer, with the community joining in. While the appropriateness of dreams and visions in contextualization will be discussed in greater depth later in this chapter, the issue at hand is that such experiences, when given the status of divine revelation equivalent to Scripture, are another example of syncretism. If a Christian holds their dream or vision to have the same authority as Scripture, if such an experience is considered to be able to bind the conscience, if it is not viewed as subject to the dictates of Scripture and subordinate to the judgment of Scripture, then that belief is syncretistic.

Syncretism also occurs when what appears to be similar between contrary or opposing religions or philosophies is misinterpreted to value both as equal or the same (Twiss, 2000:76). Sometimes this error is based in misunderstanding, poor training, or even unfortunate wording. In attempting to communicate the meaning of the traditional practice of smudging, this researcher witnessed a Christian tribal elder explain to inquiring non-Native guests at a cultural event that it was like baptism. In spite of each representing some form of blessing and/or purification, the act of smudging (the wafting of the smoke of smoldering cedar, sage, tobacco, or sweet grass in an area, over an object, or over a person) is not the equivalent of Christian baptism. An in-depth understanding of the practice of smudging among the Nanticoke-Lenape and the sacrament of Christian baptism would find no equivalency between the two. Smudging is not an induction into a faith tradition, nor is it typically only performed by designated

spiritual leaders. Smudging is not a one-time occurrence in life, but is an often repeated act. Smudging requires no conversion or profession of faith. Smudging is not a seal of a covenant administered to the children of believing parents. Smudging is not even exclusively used only on people. Also, unlike baptism, an individual will often smudge himself or herself. Upon further discussion, the elder realized the unintended error in equating the two. While the erroneous implication of the tribal elder's impromptu explanation was unintended and based upon misunderstanding—or unfortunate and unreflective wording—instead of doctrinal conviction, it was syncretistic in nature.

As can be found among Christians around the world, there are cultural/spiritual expressions, beliefs and practices which are examples of syncretism among the Nanticoke-Lenape. However, the presence of syncretism does not negate the importance of faithful contextualization, rather it may well be the reason it is needed. Robert Wood contends that while improper contextualization can contribute to the rise of syncretistic beliefs and practices, it actually is proper contextualization that helps to prevent the rise of syncretism.

We like to look at the cultural expressions that people use, which are different from our own, and make judgments regarding their relationship with Christ. The reality is, however, that contextualization is the means by which you avoid syncretism, not create it, as long as the Scriptures are the foundation for all practices. The vital thing is to communicate the gospel to people in ways that are meaningful to them so that scriptural truth can change their lives. When foreign forms and practices are forced on people, you are likely to get syncretism because the foreign forms often have very little meaning to them, and they end up just going through the motions (Wood, 2011).

There are those who embrace indigenous spiritual beliefs and practices because they tie them to an indigenous identity, even when those practices are not specifically passed down within the tribal culture, but have been spread by other tribal cultures. It is a way of rebelling against those who labelled all things indigenous as “pagan” or “heathen” and sought to eradicate indigenous culture.

The now-infamous Indian boarding schools, where every vestige of Native culture was replaced by a foreign culture, provide examples of this deliberate cultural destruction perpetrated by the Church. This has resulted in many of the social ills seen on Native reservations today. Their cultural dignity and self-respect as a people have been taken from them, with predictable results. Is it any surprise that the great majority of Native Americans want nothing to do with the Church and the white man's religion? (Wood, 2011).

According to Huron Claus, president of Christian Hope Eskimo Fellowship, “First, in the eyes of many [Native Americans], Christianity has been seen as the white man’s religion... As a result, we’ve had the gospel for 500 years, yet less than 8 percent of our Native people are believers in the Lord” (Chismar, 2002). While it is possible that the proportion of American Indians who are Christians could be as high as eight percent, the evangelistic organization American Indian Crusade is cited as placing the percentage as being possibly as low as three percent (Schaller, 2011). As discussed in Chapter Three and lifted again in the impression of Rick Wood cited above, the reputation of the Indian Boarding Schools during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries has left an impression of bitterness among many American Indians. Overzealous and doctrinally unreflective contextualization without regard to the dictates of Scripture can lead to syncretism. However, the absence of culturally compassionate and biblically faithful contextualization can also result in syncretism and a rejection of Christianity as an imposed foreign religion aided and abetted by colonial conquest.

The gospel is always relevant. It pertains to all people at all times in all cultures. However, the forms that are used to communicate, celebrate, and practice its precepts are inevitably bound to some sociological/cultural form. The gospel is communicated in various human languages. The gospel is celebrated through various artistic forms. Its precepts are practiced by believers who live within some cultural context inevitably having some bearing on the manner in which faith is expressed. To ensure that contextualization is done in a biblically faithful matter, submission to the light of Scripture must always be at the core of the process. The gospel redeems people, and through Christ’s redeemed people cultures are transformed to his glory. Faithful contextualization also holds at bay the sinful processes of cultural extermination. In an effort to experience and express the gospel in culturally relevant forms, Richard Twiss states,

It is important to recognize that there do exist corporate and cultural sins among us. Sin is found in cultural beliefs and practices, and is demonstrated in group pride, arrogance, and our own brand of tribal ethnocentrism. Care must be taken not to mistakenly accommodate sin in our effort to be culturally relevant. However, when we come to Christ as First Nations believers, Jesus does not ask us to abandon our sin-stained cultures, only to embrace someone else’s sin-stained culture (Twiss, 1998:9).

### 5.1.3 Respectful and Compassionate Engagement

One of the greatest challenges for those wanting to engage an American Indian tribal community is one of acceptance. There are quite a few stumbling blocks which can prevent the ability of a non-Native volunteer or researcher from being able to successfully work within the context of a tribal society. One of the first of these challenges is the ability to avoid offending tribal people. An offended community will often swiftly cut off access to those who wish to interact with them.

The late Nora Thompson Dean, an honored Lenape elder from Oklahoma and leader in the Lenape language revival movement, recalled difficulties she witnessed with some anthropologists and decided to write down some of the things that they did wrong. She had spent over twenty-five years working with professionals from various fields. Their faux pas inspired a list of things that one should not do if desiring to work with the tribal community.

1. DO NOT go to work among the Native Americans with the idea that you are doing them a favor. It will show through in your attitude.
2. DO NOT refuse to go into a house if you have been invited to come in. The people will think you consider their house dirty.
3. DO NOT sit on the edge of your seat like a bird about to take flight. As with number two, the person you have come to work with will assume you think his/her house is dirty.
4. DO NOT refuse any food or drink (unless you are allergic to it) which is offered to you by Native Americans. It is an insult to refuse food among my people. The most extreme example of violating this rule occurred one summer while I worked with a professional, and my daughter served us ice cream in our finest dishes. Without eating any this person called our family dog over and set this dish with the spoon in it down on the ground (we were outside) for the dog to eat!
5. DO NOT come to a Native American home or ceremonial with your shirt wide open, or worse, with no shirt at all, especially if you are hairy-chested. While it may be considered virile among the Whites, body hair is repulsive to Native Americans, especially to full-bloods. The same rule would apply to shorts or cut-off jeans.
6. DO NOT tell one person that another knew a word or fact which the person you are speaking to did not know, or do not say "But so-and-so says it this way!" Make note of the difference and recheck them later.

7. DO NOT interrupt when someone is answering your question. Among the White people it might be fine to “jump in” with your opinion, but among Native Americans this is rude. Let the person finish talking.
8. DO NOT talk to the person with whom you are working at the same volume you would use to lecture a class. Most Native Americans, unless hard-of-hearing, do not talk quite as loud as White people. Pay attention to how loud the people where you are talk, and adjust your voice.
9. DO NOT stand very close to the person with whom you are working in order to hear better. Native Americans stand a bit farther apart when talking than do White people. As an exaggerated example, I had one fellow tribesman tell me of a professional person, “He stood on my toes and showered my face with spit.” So if a Native American keeps backing away from you, it may not be that you have BO, you may just be too close for comfort.
10. DO NOT pull your chair up so that you are sitting kneecap-to-kneecap with your resource person. The same rules of distance apply when sitting.
11. DO NOT refuse to attend any ceremonies if you are invited. If you have reasons why you cannot go, tell them, or you may never again be invited. For female professional people it should be mentioned that women in their period are not allowed at some ceremonials, and you may wish to check this fact out with a woman of the group you are working with.
12. DO NOT take photos or make recordings without permission. This applies to people and ceremonials. Among some Native American groups you might have your equipment confiscated, and returned later without film or tape. This may even apply to notebooks. Never try to do these things if you were refused permission.
13. DO NOT forget the people with whom you worked once you get back to ivy-covered halls. An occasional post card or Season’s Greetings card will let them know that they were more to you than an old mop; something to be remembered and used only when you need it (Dean, 1982).

Nora Thompson Dean provided this insight grounded in her Lenape perspective but aimed at giving general guidelines for those wishing to engage the American Indian communities. Dr. Cara Blume, an archaeologist and ethnologist who has worked with the Nanticoke-Lenape communities around the Delaware Bay for more than a quarter century learned well of the cultural peculiarities and sensitivities of the Nanticoke-Lenape. Chief Mark “Quiet Hawk” Gould of the New Jersey Nanticoke-Lenape

community remarks that Cara Blume is one of the few outsiders who learned how to interact with his people, so she has enjoyed a continuing relationship for several decades (Gould, 2012). Dr. Blume provides her perspective as a non-Native researcher who grew to be embraced by each of the three communities she has studied for more than a generation. She advises that any non-Native volunteer, researcher, or other professional desiring to work with the Nanticoke-Lenape people must understand that they are always an outsider, a guest, who has been granted the privilege of interacting with the community because the tribal leadership sees some value for the community in their effort. This requires that permission be gained from the leaders of the community after providing full disclosure as to the motives and ultimate aims of the interaction (Blume, 2012). It should be understood that gaining the approval of a single member of the community does not entitle an outsider to engage the tribe. This is the role and responsibility of tribal leadership, and providing the required respect will typically go a long way in gaining permission and acceptance. Humility is another important aspect that can aid in one's interaction with the tribal community. American Indian tribal communities have existed since time immemorial. The Nanticoke-Lenape trace their history in the area of the Delaware Bay back over ten millennia. It is important that a volunteer acknowledges within themselves that what they do not know about the people is far less than what they do know. Blume writes,

No matter how expert you may be in your own field, you must respect the views of the people you serve. Even if you believe that your goals are good for the community and should be the community's goals, you must defer to the judgment of the tribal leadership. Native history is littered with the disastrous effects of well-meaning efforts by non-Natives to 'help' Native communities (Blume, 2012).

It is important that the value of watching and listening and learning be embraced.

Don't presume familiarity. This means that you should not behave as though you are part of the community. Don't assume that you can become part of conversations, even if you think you have something relevant to say. Quiet listening is an important skill for any non-Native working in a Native community. Sometimes you will be deliberately told things indirectly when you are quietly listening that you would not learn if you were involved in the conversation (Blume, 2012).

Typically, such quiet humility and willingness to learn will be met with warm and open response from tribal people.

On occasion those who have been allowed to interact with the community have presumed to voice their opinions in meetings, taking a tone of authority and counsel. Dr. Blume has learned that this is a grave error and advises that such opinions are best rendered quietly with those tribal leaders who may lend their ear. However, if the advice is not well received, it is important that the volunteer or researcher immediately drop it as it “is not [their] responsibility to find the correct outcome for the community, and it is patronizing ... to think otherwise” (Blume, 2012). Discretion and humility apply in the areas of discussing the tribal community with other outsiders or agencies. Non-Native volunteers and researchers must never presume that they can speak with authority on behalf of the community. It is important that when making statements, the volunteer or researcher clearly states that it is indeed their own opinion and not necessarily representative of the tribal community. No one should ever assume that their relationship with the tribe suddenly allows them to serve as a liaison on behalf of the tribe (Blume, 2012).

Cara Blume advises that volunteers and researchers should never be presumptuous. If a volunteer or researcher is invited to community events, they should quietly remain on the fringe.

Just because one member of the community has invited you to some event, you should not assume that you are universally welcomed. What may seem appropriate to one member of the community may be seen as an affront by others or by those who are more experienced in their knowledge and understanding of Native ways (Blume, 2012).

Doctor Blume also reminds volunteers that they need to be neutral in their interactions. Over time it is very reasonable that a volunteer researcher may become more attached to certain members of the community, but is important that “a non-Native person NOT allow [their] feelings to affect the way [they] treat other people in the community. [They] MUST NOT be seen as taking sides, even if [they] are known to be friends with some of the people involved” (Blume, 2012).

Respect for the tribal culture is vital. This also means that the volunteer or researcher must bear in mind that native culture ultimately belongs to native people. The regalia, ceremonies, crafts, dances, and songs belong to the community and often may involve some protocol prior to even tribal members being able to have access or permission.

You may come to feel that you would be more easily accepted or respected if you have some Native ancestry. However, the only real route

to either acceptance or respect is service to the community. Don't try to ingratiate yourself with community members by asserting a Native ancestry. Even if you do the research and can establish that you have a Native ancestor, you are unlikely to be accepted as Native by the community you are working with unless you can establish a close genealogical relationship (within two or three generations) with an acknowledged Native tribal community or meet the criteria for enrollment in a tribal nation. People who have been raised in or have close genealogical ties to tribal communities have had experiences (often painful) that are not shared by others outside those communities. To assert a Native identity without those experiences is disrespectful (Blume, 2012).

Patience is also a highly prized virtue among non-Natives wanting to interact with tribal communities. Because of a different set of priorities between the tribal community and the non-Native community, it may appear that things take too long to get done. Even reaching decisions can be a long and arduous process. This is because traditional tribal leaders seek to develop consensus instead of mere majority rule. Moreover, patience in regard to being granted certain types of access or a certain depth in tribal relationships may seem to take a long time. The volunteer must remember that as they are learning about the tribal people, the tribal people are also watching, observing, and learning about them. One thing that many tribal people will comment on is the painful lesson of learning that opening themselves too soon to outsiders can result in quite painful experiences.

Both Nora Thompson Dean and Cara Blume conclude their advisory comments by reminding the volunteer or researcher to display gratitude for the privilege of being able to work among the people. This gratitude should go beyond the time period of the work being done, but represent a continued relationship if it will be thought to be genuine.

While the advice of both Nora Thompson Dean and Cara Blume were focusing their comments on volunteers and researchers that may not have been of a religious or mission-oriented nature, certainly their advice would apply to those who would engage tribal communities, especially Nanticoke-Lenape tribal communities, for ministry purposes. The advice may well be summed up in the words of Nanticoke Lenni-Lenape Chief Gould, who when commenting about the non-Natives who have maintained a positive and long-term relationship with the tribal people said, "those who approach us with respect, are willing to listen and learn, and never presume or have a hidden agenda, are the ones who will always be welcome" (Gould, 2012).

It is certainly easier for an American Indian Christian minister or missionary with a tribal background to enter into a tribal setting, as much of the common courtesies and cultural mores are second nature. However, the practice of listening and being open to the perspectives of those to whom we minister is vital, regardless of whether one is an American Indian or not. Being keenly aware of the presumptions of those with whom one engages is just as important as being aware of one's own biases. Being an American Indian in Christian ministry will cause one to be viewed by some as having "sold out" the ways of the ancestors in favor of the ways of the colonizers. Others, who are conservative Christians, may hold the view that such a person is one who denies the ancient ways as heathen and savage and will only promote "good" and "proper" Christianity in its westernized form. Indeed, there will be some who take up a middle position and will misread compassion and openness as a compromise embracing practices that are actually syncretistic and are an abandonment of sound biblical principles. Of this middle position, there will be those who embrace such syncretism and there will be those who prejudge any consideration of traditional practices as being an abandonment of Jesus Christ. Navigating these preconceptions requires prudence and discernment in addition to a reflective awareness that one's own biases must be lifted to the light of biblical principles in order to determine whether they should be embraced or shed away.

Zeal for Christ is often expressed in the believer's eagerness to bring the light of the gospel to all of the dark recesses of this world. This is right and proper. But the strategy with which it is done must be regulated by humility and compassion, even when evaluating the beliefs and practices of those among whom the gospel is being spread. The efforts of the Christian minister among American Indian tribal communities must be tempered with the fact that for several centuries the Anglo/Euro expression of Christianity has proclaimed to an indigenous American Indian expression of the same faith, "I have no need of you. I don't need your customs, arts, society, language, concepts or perspectives... But you need us. You need our theology, leadership, traditions, economic resources, education, sciences, Sunday schools, and ultimately civilization" (Twiss, 1996:8). No matter what the ethnic or racial background of the Christian minister within a tribal setting, this bias has been an influence in their Christian upbringing and training because a context for a truly native expression of Christianity has been historically shunned as syncretistic at best, and completely pagan

at worst. This judgment has been less based upon an interpretation of the actual facts about culture and practice and more a factor of racial and cultural bias. Being able to be truly discerning requires a willingness to gather evidence in an unbiased fashion. The ability to gather evidence in an unbiased fashion also requires a willingness to admit that one's own worldview may render a false perception of certain details of one's own beliefs and practices and that of others.

A worldview is like the filter of a camera. It colors your view of reality. In human cultures, worldview is the way one group defines values, beliefs, and reality. It is also the way we measure and judge the cultures of others. Reality looks very different for rabbits, turtles, and snails. Yet each is a valid and normal for them... Cultural worldviews affect the way that people groups interpret and apply God's word to their respective life experiences. We are naïve if we think that our theologies are completely absent and free of our own cultural bias. One author has said that there is no such thing as "plain" Christianity, regarding cultural beliefs, expressions and practices (Twiss, 1996:11).

Being open-minded in one's evaluation of self or of the beliefs and practices of others is not an abandonment of sound Christian doctrine. Rather, it is an expression of personal humility and compassionate interaction. While ministering within the tribal setting, one can be humble without compassion in that one may realize that they themselves have much to learn but have little regard for what tribal traditions have to offer. It is an "I may not know a lot, but what I know is better than anything you have to offer" approach. One can also be compassionate without being humble, which leads to a paternalistic approach that politely demeans tribal traditions as sincere but primitively erroneous, which ultimately ends in the same dismissiveness as the former attitude. In the case of the latter, it is the type of approach that thinks, "I know much more than you know, but will patiently listen to what you have to say because I value you as a person—but not because I value the content of your communication. In fact, I know more about what you're trying to say than you do." Both of these approaches can easily trigger reactions based in the historic intergenerational trauma, or soul wound, of the tribal community. Either way, there is an underlying arrogance and presumptiveness that does damage by continuing to unreflectively lift up one culture as Christian and to also unreflectively dismiss another as heathen.

The Enlightenment ... together with the scientific and technological advances that followed in its wake, put the West at an unparalleled advantage over the rest of the world. Suddenly a limited number of nations had at their disposal "tools" and know-how vastly superior to those of others. The West could thus establish itself as master of all others in virtually every field. It was only logical that this feeling of

superiority would also rub off on the “religion of the West,” Christianity. As a matter of fact, in most cases there was no attempt to distinguish between religious and cultural supremacy—what applied to one, applied equally axiomatically to the other (Bosch, 2011:282).

It is demeaning to the dignity of tribal heritage to be dismissive of the impact of colonization upon both the tribal community and upon the cultural perspective of the non-Native. Colonization has influenced the perspective that many American Indian Christians embrace as normative, because through most of American history it was the primary, and perhaps only, perspective being taught because of its perceived superiority within the colonized setting. Twiss writes,

It is because of these clashing worldview distinctives that our native cultures have been labeled as being inherently evil and unredeemable. It is this Anglo Euro-American view of native culture that has shaped and in large part defined the role and place of native culture in the Evangelical community in North America (Twiss, 1996:7).

Humble and compassionate interaction is marked by a willingness to empathize with others. This does not require a wholesale embracing of the perspectives being shared, but a willingness to hear those perspectives and discern their origins and the ways that God may use them to open doors and better communicate his plan of redemption. Even with his passionate zeal for Christ, the Apostle Paul was not dismissive of the issues of cultural and theological differences. However, he sought to empathize in a fashion that would transcend these differences in order to effectively communicate the good news of Jesus Christ, as expressed in Romans 9:19-23:

19 You will say to me then, “Why does he still find fault? For who can resist his will?” 20 But who are you, O man, to answer back to God? Will what is molded say to its molder, “Why have you made me like this?” 21 Has the potter no right over the clay, to make out of the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for dishonorable use? 22 What if God, desiring to show his wrath and to make known his power, has endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, 23 in order to make known the riches of his glory for vessels of mercy, which he has prepared beforehand for glory (Bible, ESV, 2001).

The Apostle Paul’s example and testimony evidenced his preference for the cause of Christ over any tendency to hold his own cultural background in such high regard that he sought to impose it upon the converts to Christianity. For Paul, though the gospel stemmed from a single culture, it transcended culture and yet at the same time spoke to all cultures. T. S. Eliot, in his work *Christianity and Culture*, acknowledges that there is a human tendency to bring others not merely to Christ, but also to bring others to one’s

own culture, to one's own way of thinking, acting, and living in the world, to re-create others into one's own image:

It is human, when we do not understand another human being, and cannot ignore him, to exert an unconscious pressure on that person to turn him into something that we can understand: many husbands and wives exert this pressure on each other. The effect on the person so influenced is liable to be the repression and distortion, rather than the improvement, of the personality; and no man is good enough to have the right to make another over in his own image (Eliot, 2008:138).

This tendency to reshape another person or group to be a mirror image of one's self or group, especially when it becomes acquainted with spiritual salvation, is actually a form of idolatry. It is a form of self-worship, or worship of one's own culture, that forces the devaluation of another and demands its conformity and submission. T. S. Eliot asserts that this is a great wrong:

We can also learn to respect every other culture as a whole, however inferior to our own it may appear, or however justly we may disapprove of some features of it: the deliberate destruction of another culture as a whole is an irreparable wrong, almost as evil as to treat human beings like animals (Eliot, 2008:139).

H. Richard Niebuhr states that for a social group, "Culture is the social heritage they receive and transmit" (Niebuhr, 1951:33). American society is often called either a "melting pot" or culturally "pluralistic" depending upon the perspective of the speaker. All immigrant groups in the United States, which includes all non-indigenous people in the United States whether their ancestor's immigration was by choice or by force, can point to another place, or other places, of their family origin. The cultures from which they descend exist elsewhere in the world. The languages and traditions of their ancestors and contemporary relatives continue in other lands. As the non-Native American assimilates into an American "melting pot" or has their culture augmented or their traditional practices and ancestral language fade away, their ancestral culture and language continues somewhere else on planet earth. This is not so for the American Indian. Tribal culture, once lost, cannot be revived; it becomes extinct. There is nowhere else on planet earth that the tribal culture will continue. There is nowhere else that the tribal language will be spoken by born speakers. Once the social heritage of tribal ancestors is no longer transmitted in North America, it is no longer transmitted at all. Respectful and compassionate engagement with tribal people requires an appreciation of this reality and an awareness of the long history and continuing impact of practices, policies, and attitudes which promote the destruction of tribal cultures.

The faithful contextualization of the gospel brings Christ to the culture and transforms it in his name. Contextualization strengthens the church as a whole. The Lord's praise is sung and lived in varying forms but with unified purpose. D. A. Carson states that, "...consideration of Christ and culture promises to be fruitful and revealing: it is a consideration of a different way of seeing, of a different vision, even when we are looking at the same thing" (Carson, 2008:86-87).

## **5.2 The Jesus Way on Turtle Island**

A common reference for North America among the indigenous people of the continent is "Turtle Island," making reference to the ancient teaching that the land itself was living and deserving of respect, as it rested upon the back of a great turtle. Whether this was literally believed as actual fact or was embraced as a mythological expression of a moral value is debatable. However, a reference to "Turtle Island" is immediately understood by many, if not most, North American Indians. For the Nanticoke-Lenape, this great turtle is a box turtle. Using the term "Turtle Island" connotes an indigenous view of the continent given to their ancestors by the Creator. Its common use among varying tribal nations signifies a unified embracing of the nature of the land and the interconnectedness of the indigenous peoples. When used by non-Natives, it is typically received as a sign of respect for indigenous sensibilities and the strong identification American Indians have with the land.

Words can invoke powerful imagery and powerful emotions. They can trigger feelings of joy or pain based upon an individual's past experiences or the collective experience of a group. Sadly, for many American Indians, the word "Christianity" does not merely refer to faith in Jesus Christ, but has been used within American society to refer to an oppressive, genocidal, colonial conquest (Gilbert, 2015). In spite of the various examples of sincere missionaries seeking to simply convert the lost, the overwhelming history of conquest and colonization has caused the label to be tied to the Doctrine of Discovery and the principle of Manifest Destiny. So much so, that tribal people who are Christian often find themselves having to defend the fact that they have not abandoned their tribal identity because the terminology is linked to anti-Indianism. Some tribal Christians are even confronted by non-Natives with the question, "Given the history of the persecution and suffering of your people by Christians, how can you be Christian?"

The term has become so charged that in some instances the word divides people in the tribal community, but not for the right reasons. If the word “Christian” was divisive because it represented the holiness of the redeemed and the manner in which their life of righteousness put to shame those who are devoted to wickedness, then it would be divisive for the right reason. According to John 15:18-19, Jesus told his disciples,

18 If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you.  
19 If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. (Bible, ESV, 2001).

However, in the ears of many American Indians, the term “Christian” has become a stumbling block for the wrong reason.

Christian mission among the tribes of North America has not been very good news. What worldview influences allowed the Creator’s story of creation and redemption to morph into a hegemonic colonial myth justifying the genocide and exploitation of America’s First Nations people? What can be done to deconstruct that myth and move its focus away from a Euro-centric core? (Twiss, 2010:pt. 3, ch. 5).

While there are many American Indian Christians, there are many more American Indians who struggle with the historical legacy of pain associated with American Christianity and who have difficulty separating that history from the term. Even among Christian Indians, the reference can ignite historical and political debates where theological communication should be the focus. Compassionate engagement begins with charitable empathy. Acknowledging the historical misuse of the word “Christianity” in the conquest and colonization of America can enable a better manner of communicating all that is meant by the term when it is used accurately.

A growing number of evangelical Native believers are using the term “the Jesus Way” to describe their faith in Jesus Christ. This phrase speaks of a way of life, a trail we walk on and by... Jesus said of Himself, “I am the way, the truth, and the life” (John 14:6). The Jesus Way presents Jesus Christ to the nonbelieving Native in terms that are more in line with the way Native people approach life. Among nonbelieving Indians the word “Christianity” has come to mean only the abusive religion of the White man (Twiss, 2000:35).

This certainly does not mean that the term “Christian” or “Christianity” should be done away with. By no means! However, a compassionate mode of recognizing the pain, trauma, and unholy division that the term has come to connote among some American Indians can enable an improved manner of communicating the gospel and overcoming unnecessary stumbling blocks. Making a way for the true meaning of the term to be

comprehended, educating as to what Christianity is truly all about is far more vital in the evangelistic effort than the use of the term itself. When the New Testament Church was first born and initially began spreading outside of Judea, it had not even yet come to be called “Christian.” According to Acts 11:26, “in Antioch the disciples were first called Christians” (Bible, ESV, 2001). Christianity is about salvation through Jesus. It focuses on that early Christian creed, “Jesus is Lord!” It is based upon the bedrock of the confession uttered by the Apostle Peter in Matthew 16:16-18:

16 Simon Peter replied, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”  
17 And Jesus answered him, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven.  
18 And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. (Bible, ESV, 2001).

While ultimately the reconciling power of the Holy Spirit will bring healing over the use of the term “Christian” and “Christianity” for all American Indian believers in Jesus, there is no doctrinal compromise in using terminology that focuses on the identity and significance of the Lord Jesus instead of a label used to describe the religion based upon him. Nomenclature should not be allowed to be an impediment to the sharing of the gospel. It is a sign of charity to show sensitivity over the pain that a label can trigger. Historic intergenerational trauma has caused a potential trigger point that has left an area of weakness, a soul wound, among many of America’s indigenous people. It is a trigger point that can be avoided without compromising effective proclamation of the gospel. In a similar manner the Apostle Paul admonished the believers in Rome in Romans 15:1-2, “15 We who are strong have an obligation to bear with the failings of the weak, and not to please ourselves. 2 Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, to build him up.” (Bible, ESV, 2001). The Apostle Paul also wrote of his willingness to strategically identify with those he hoped to evangelize in order to win them for Christ. In 1 Corinthians 9:19-23 he writes,

19 For though I am free from all, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win more of them. 20 To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews. To those under the law I became as one under the law (though not being myself under the law) that I might win those under the law. 21 To those outside the law I became as one outside the law (not being outside the law of God but under the law of Christ) that I might win those outside the law. 22 To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people, that by all means I might save some. 23 I do it all for the sake of the gospel, that I may share with them in its blessings (Bible, ESV, 2001).

### 5.2.1 Contextualized Spiritual Formation

The majority of Nanticoke-Lenape Christians have no particular issue with the term “Christian,” but some are keenly aware that many of their tribal family members and other American Indians do have a negative response which hampers their ability to hear the witness of believers; a defensive wall goes up as a “knee jerk” reaction. That is an issue of strategic nomenclature, which can be adjusted without doing violence to the gospel. Additionally, once an American Indian becomes a disciple, any stigma attached to the term “Christian” or “Christianity” in their mind can fade with the increase of fellowship with other members of the Body of Christ. A “shift” in what the term really means will take place within them as their wounds over it are healed by the love of Christ and fellowship with other Christians.

While charity and maturity in one’s personal witness of salvation in Christ can overcome the issue of emotionally charged nomenclature, another challenge is overcoming the constraints of culturally colonized worship. Colonial era prejudices against traditional indigenous expressions of penitence, praise, intercession, and submission have relegated American Indian Christian worship to be more of a reflection of a foreign culture than Christ’s interaction with their own. This continues a derogatory view of their own heritage as tribal Christians are taught that the only appropriate way of worship is the Anglo/European way. If there are tribal expressions at all, they are during special cultural ceremonies or an annual heritage day, which are seen as exceptions to the rule or an effort to condescend for a momentary acknowledgment of tribal heritage. This has the psychological impact of perpetuating the notion that tribal expressions are not appropriate for Christian worship. However, if they are not appropriate for Christian worship, what does that say about the tribal heritage overall? This not only impacts Christians, but also those who are not.

I have often heard from Native unbelievers that they do not have a problem with Jesus of the Bible or His teachings, but their problem with Christianity is the church—the church is “white” and definitely against them. We can accept the Gospel [sic] message of God coming to earth in the form of a human being, but find it difficult to understand why we can’t find ourselves in His church, unless we become like white people... We are told we cannot use our Native drums for praise and worship, our Native music is not acceptable, our dances are not to be done in church, we cannot sit in a circle, we must not talk or add our words to the discussion. Furthermore, we must learn to sing new Christian music, play new Christian instruments, dress in new church clothes, sit in rows, all

things done in a culturally “white way.” In effect, we are confused by God’s seeming to dislike for everything about our culture, while being so loved by him (Twiss, 1998:5).

Spiritual colonization rejects any forms which may reflect the traditional heritage of indigenous people, replacing them with the culturally based religious practices of the colonizer. It is only the colonizer’s way of doing things that is viewed to be appropriate and acceptable. Often the indigenous forms are not even carefully examined, little if any effort is made to truly understand them and to determine whether their incorporation into Christian worship is truly syncretistic or merely unlike the preference of the colonizer. The Nanticoke-Lenape were taught that Christian names had to be from the languages of the colonizer and Christian dress had to reflect the fashions of the colonizer, so too Christian worship had to be limited to what was being practiced by the colonizer.

In a 1928 report entitled *The Problem of Indian Administration*, also referred to as *The Meriam Report*, the issue of a wholesale rejection of indigenous views and expressions is raised.

The missionaries need to have a better understanding of the Indian point of view, of the Indian’s religion and ethics, in order to start from what is good in them as a foundation. Too frequently, they have made the mistake of attempting to destroy the existing structure and to substitute something else without apparently realizing that much of the old has its place in the new (Talbot, 2006:29).

The report encourages missionaries to “start from what is good” already in tribal spiritual values and ethics, and then build from there. This is the approach previously illustrated in the Apostle Paul’s sermon on Mars Hill. As pagan as the Athenian intelligentsia was, Paul was able to begin not with condemnation of what they already believed, which certainly could have been justifiable, but instead began with the fact that they acknowledged an “unknown god” among their many idols. Some may suggest that the term “what is good” has a theological flaw in the Calvinist sense that all unregenerate persons are in a state of total depravity as illustrated in the Apostle’s letter to the Romans 3:10-12, “10 as it is written: ‘None is righteous, no, not one; 11 no one understands; no one seeks for God. 12 All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one’” (Bible, ESV, 2001). Additionally, in an ultimate sense, the only one who is perfectly good is God, as Jesus himself proclaimed in Luke 18:19, “...No one is good except God alone” (Bible, ESV, 2001).

However, in this case it should be considered that any glimpse of goodness is an imperfect reflection of the divine, in whose image all humans are created. The manner in which the term “good” is used could be understood to mean that the missionaries should strive to overcome any negative biases and open their eyes to areas of “common ground” between the biblical faith and what God had already illumined in the heart of the tribal people through natural revelation. Without the biased perspective of colonizers, there was certainly some “common ground” to be found. While there were certainly individual practices and perspectives which varied from the norm, typically among the Lenape, “common ground” with the missionaries was quite evident, if one was willing to look:

Lenape philosophy was an ancient form of democracy. Traditional Lenape recognize not only the rights of all men, but those of all women. They also believed human beings should respect life—animals, plants, and even the tiny insects—because all had been made by the Creator for a purpose. According to the Lenape the mountains, the rivers, and the Earth and the heavens above were created in harmony for a divine purpose. They viewed the entire universe as alive with spiritual power ... among the traditional native people, the right to liberty meant more than just political freedom for male landowners and the abolition of slavery ... Liberty encompassed the divine right of everyone and everything to exist in a natural state as the Creator had intended (Schaaf, 1990:3).

Yet, even after the rather enlightened recommendation in *The Meriam Report* to start from what is “good”—to use it as common ground and see how some of what was old had its place in the new—seventy years later, the problem persists. Richard Twiss writes in 1998,

The past five centuries of missions among our people has brought great challenge to us as Native leaders to diligently labor to sort out the biblical message from cultural preferences. As Asian leaders said to a group of Western missionaries, “Do not bring us the gospel as a potted plant. Bring us the seed of the gospel and plant it in our soil.” We are responding to Christ’s command to communicate the gospel here in North America among the nearly 800 nations who called “Turtle Island” home, by planting a living seed (Twiss, 1998:2).

Colonizing Christian missionaries bring a perspective that immediately and unreflectively denounces all that is indigenous. Colonized Christians are those who have been convinced of the claims of the colonizers and willingly reject their own indigenous identity as a spiritual handicap that must be overcome and their indigenous ancestors as practitioners of evil who must be denounced as the manners and methods of the colonizer must be embraced. The resistance of colonizing and colonized

Christians to accept that the faith could be expressed in indigenous terms is a denial that the seed of the gospel in fertile soil will grow as God intends. Sadly, all too often, it is the full grown plant of the colonizer which is transplanted and erroneously viewed to be the whole of the faith.

Richard Twiss gives an account of Spokane Garry and Kootenai Pelly, who were tribal boys from the Spokane and Kootenay people of the Oregon territory. After being educated at the Red River Mission School in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, they returned to their tribal communities in 1829, telling their people about Jesus, who they called the “Master of Life.” Anthropologist Leslie Spier recorded a “remarkable spread of Christian practices” presuming that “the revival must have spread from the Spokane Country about 1830 or a little later” (Twiss, 2010:pt. 3, ch. 5). By 1835, other non-Native eyewitnesses described the spread of Christianity among the tribes of the area as “amazingly rapid” and described these indigenous Christians as “a nation of saints” (Twiss, 2010:pt. 3, ch. 5). However, in 1836, non-Native missionaries, Marcus Whitman and Henry Spalding and their wives, were dispatched by the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (Twiss, 2010:pt. 3, ch. 5). The board’s stated purpose and strategy among American Indian tribes was to turn “the whole tribe English in their language, civilized in their habits, and Christian in their religion” (American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, 1882:xliv). Twiss described the effect of these missionaries of a colonizing mentality who were sent to these tribes already exposed to the gospel, which had taken deep root and was rapidly growing among a core of Native believers:

Just as Puritan missionaries insisted on denouncing Indian ways as demonic more than 200 years earlier, so these white missionaries insisted on European-style Christian worship as well as doctrine. What is worse, their paternalism, ethnocentrism, colonial collusion, and modernism soon “civilized” this movement of the gospel and thus blinded Christians to the prevenient work of God among the Native Americans before the missionaries arrived... an authentic Native American cultural or indigenous expression of following Jesus has never been allowed to develop, the very idea being rejected as syncretistic and incongruous with “biblical” faith. Instead of embracing Jesus as the Creator, the majority of Native Americans blame American Christianity and the church for the loss of their own culture and identity (Twiss, 2010:pt. 3, ch. 5).

Twiss was a Methodist minister, and as such probably subscribed to an Arminian view of prevenient grace as opposed to the concept of irresistible grace in Calvinism. However, his use of the term in the above quote is not necessarily restricted to Arminian

soteriology. In this case, the work of grace was prior to the coming of the missionaries in that the gospel had already come to the tribal community, had been received by the elect by faith through the regenerating grace of God, and was being celebrated in indigenous ways. Instead of discerning the growth of the seed of the gospel in ground that had been prepared by God, the missionaries chose to reject what had begun in favor of what they were bringing—a colonizing Christianity that denied the legitimacy of indigenous Christianity.

In the spread of the early church, the Council of Jerusalem had determined that Gentiles did not have to become Jews in order to be Christians. So why on earth should American Indians have to become Europeans in order to be Christians? Twiss testifies to his personal experience regarding this dilemma:

As the years passed I began to resist the pressure to accept interpretations of the Bible that said “old things have passed away and all things had become white” regarding my following Jesus in the context of my native cultural ways, music, dance, drumming, ceremony and culture. In reference to my native culture I was informed the Bible said “touch not the unclean thing,” or “come out from among them and be separate,” or “what fellowship does light have with darkness.” This meant I needed to leave my Indian ways behind me, because I had a new identity in Christ, and it WAS NOT Indian! The Bible was used to demonize just about everything important to our cultural sense of being one with God and creation (Twiss, 2010:pt. 3, ch. 5).

Identifying the ways that God’s common grace is present in indigenous culture and values requires no great leap, just open and unbiased eyes. Such “common ground” can be used to contextualize the truths of the gospel in terms which relate to the worldview of tribal people. Ancient values commonly held among the Nanticoke-Lenape reflect many biblical teachings. Traditional tribal teachings, described in greater detail in Chapter Two, include: the belief in one God, in life after death, and that those who walked in a “good way” would be received by God in heaven (Penn, 1970:33; Adams, 1904:22-23); that those who did not walk in a good way would not be received by God but would receive punishment (Brainerd, 1822: 238); all things are created and sustained by God (Harrington, 1921:18); that prayer is only rendered to God and worship is due only to God (Heckewelder, 1876:213); that gratitude and respect should be rendered unto God for his provision (Harrington, 1921:51; Kraft, 2001:339); that one should be willing to provide self-sacrificing service to others (Wallace, 1996:80). Documented by observers, these values embraced in the Nanticoke-Lenape way of life

speak to the work of God upon the people and culture. “There is an aspect in which we can see a religion as the whole way of life of a people, from birth to the grave, from morning to night and even in sleep, and that way of life is also its culture” (Eliot, 2008:103). Common ground was, and is, not difficult to find. These cultural/spiritual values demonstrated that God’s natural, or general, revelation had spoken to the hearts of the Nanticoke-Lenape. It is evidence that the field was prepared for the seed of the gospel to be planted. There was, and is, no need for destruction of the indigenous cultural framework and substitution of a foreign one.

In order to embrace areas of common ground, where general revelation has impacted cultural values and practices in such a way that they may be viewed as vehicles to communicate the gospel and instill an understanding of biblical standards for living, spiritual discernment must be applied to identifying what is syncretistic in the indigenous expressions of faith and what is merely a cultural adaptation of a biblical principal or value. “For syncretism to be understood correctly, however, it must be defined as a fundamentally doctrinal issue, not a socio-cultural one” (Twiss, 1998:3).

While there are practices that are clearly syncretistic, there are others which may only appear so on the surface to an uninformed observer who, in their ignorance, may label the practice as such. The use of the hallucinogenic peyote in the rituals of the Native American Church, as discussed in Chapter Four, is clearly syncretistic. The practice relies on being placed in an altered mental state by the use of a drug-like agent in order to achieve a heightened spiritual awareness or experience instead of relying on the power of the Holy Spirit to transform the mind and deepen one’s knowledge of God, God’s will through the illumination of the Scripture, and the personal experience of the Lord’s abiding presence. This syncretistic ritual is not known to ever have been practiced among the Nanticoke-Lenape. Also, as previously discussed in this chapter, the Sun Dance ritualizes the achievement of heightened spiritual and intercessory power through enduring physical pain and mutilation. As a practice of self-reliant, merit-based, spiritual communing with deity, it is a rejection of the all-sufficient grace of Christ and seeks to obligate divine response through ritual. This syncretistic practice has not been embraced by any of the Nanticoke-Lenape communities, but does have a few practitioners who travel to other tribal territories to participate in the ritual. Another belief that has been introduced to the Nanticoke-Lenape, through the influence of pan-Indianism, comes from the Plains Tribes; it is the belief that one’s tribal name, which

was received in a naming ceremony, is the name by which the Creator identifies the one praying and should be spoken during prayer as a form of self-identification to the Creator. This is not a historic practice among the Nanticoke-Lenape, who traditionally would approach God in prayer with the understanding that he already knew who they were and needed no aid in identifying them. For Christians, the practice is based in a theological error that denies the omniscience of God and the personal relationship a disciple of Christ has with the Lord who has made his dwelling within them (Matthew 28:20; John 17:26).

So in ministering to, or among, the Nanticoke-Lenape, contextualization does require the understanding that there are incompatible spiritual beliefs and practices which must be discerned in order to avoid syncretism and theological error. These include the practices that represent unsound doctrine as discussed above. However, there are also traditional practices that may be contextually appropriate forms of spiritual expression either as they are or with transformed interpretations. One example, briefly mentioned previously, is the cultural deference for dreams and visions. The difference between the two is that dreams come during sleep and visions occur during waking hours. When viewed as primary divine revelation and given the weight of Scripture in binding the conscience and serving as the basis of doctrine, such reliance is syncretistic. However, an outright denouncing of the relevance of dreams and visions to the individual psyche and, in some instances, even in personal insight, is unwarranted. Well known biblical examples of divine communication through dreams and visions include: Jacob's dream of a ladder or stairway between heaven and earth in Genesis 28:10-16; Jacob's son Joseph's dreams and ability to interpret God's communication even through dreams of pagans in Genesis 37, 40, and 41, and similarly evidenced in the dreams, visions and interpretations of the prophet Daniel in Daniel 2, 4, 7, 8, 10-12. In the early church, we see similar examples of dreams and visions: the apostle Peter's vision of unclean beasts in Acts 10; Paul receiving the "Macedonian call" in Acts 16 and his "vision and thorn" in 2 Corinthians 12; and the apostle John's vision of the Son of Man in Revelation 1. The obvious difference between the dream of a modern believer and the dream of an apostle is that revelation was granted to the ancient biblical prophets and apostles in the process of receiving Scripture, whereas modern believers are called to share the authoritative biblical word given through the prophets and apostles, not to write a new word based upon their own dreams, day-dreams, or imaginings. The dreams of modern believers may most often be merely the after-effects of a good evening meal, but

sometimes may be influenced by the hand of the Lord to provide comfort or guidance; however, such dreams do not have the weight of Scripture, cannot bind the conscience, must be judged in submission to Scripture, and preferably with the counsel of mature and discerning fellow Christians who can aid in determining whether the dream should be dismissed or if some guidance or comfort can be gleaned from it.

Contextualization promotes the believer's ability to identify with the faith as relating to their own life and community and not as something foreign that has been imposed and requires cultural conformity. Rather it speaks to them, in their culture, touching their own situation, without doing any violence to Scripture or doctrine. Richard Twiss provides an example of this as he views Jesus Christ through the eyes of an American Indian tribal person:

Jesus was an aboriginal boy. Jesus was Hebrew. Jesus was born into a traditional Native village. Jesus was a political refugee. Jesus was a cultural man born into the Tribe of Judah. Jesus never doubted his indigenous identity. Jesus overcame colonial oppression. Through his life, death and resurrection, Jesus can heal our broken hoop: "The Word became flesh and blood and moved into the neighborhood" (John 1:14; Message Version). Whose "hood" did the Creator of heaven and earth move into? A small Native village named Bethlehem in the land of Palestine in Asia Minor. Jesus was a black-haired, black-eyed and dark complexioned tribal boy—an ethnic boy depending on who gets to call someone else ethnic. He was born a member of the tribal nation of the Hebrew people and subtribe of Judah. He was given tribal names; Bright and Morning Star, The Rock, Rose of Sharon, Lion of the Tribe of Judah, Lily of the Valley, Chief Cornerstone, DayStar and many more. His people, having been invaded and subjugated by a foreign empire, were living under the tyranny of colonial rule. Though His nation was forced to submit to the empirical domination of Rome, Jesus repeatedly spoke of His kingdom as not being of this world. It was not a kingdom of power, oppression and privilege, but love and mutuality. Though Jesus suffered the humiliation of death on the cross at consent of the colonial magistrate, it did not diminish nor end His kingdom. After three days in death and hell, he rose from the dead, and in newness of life he set the captives—all human and non-human creation—free from the tyranny of hell and death. He shouts back from the other side saying "Oh grave where is your victory, Oh death where is your sting?" As the Way maker he shows us our way back to the "beauty way." We are redeemed from our brokenness to now love our neighbor, forgive our enemies, care for other broken people and be restored back to authentic community in a broken world. When Jesus, God-the-Son was baptized in the Jordan River by John the Baptist, as he came out of the water, God-the-Holy-Spirit, like a dove descended on Jesus; then the voice of God-the-Father was heard from heaven saying, "This is my beloved Native boy in who my heart is deeply pleased." Jesus did not feel ashamed, like a second-class citizen, or any sense of inferiority about His dark skin, tribal ways

or ethnic identity because he received the affirmation of His Father's and the Holy Spirit's love in the midst of His tribal identity. God-the-Father was not embarrassed by His Son's obvious ethnic identity (Twiss, 2010:pt. 3, ch. 5).

While remaining true to Scripture, Jesus' aboriginal, native, tribal identity is easily understood by an American Indian. This presentation of our Lord, consistent with biblical fact, but presented in a fashion that relates directly to the cultural context of tribal people, is a radically different presentation from how Jesus has traditionally been presented from the context of the colonizer. This presentation of Jesus is only one example of how an American Indian contextualization could be displayed and used in evangelizing and discipling.

### **5.2.2 Contextualization in Christian Worship among the Nanticoke-Lenape**

There is a need for careful and prayerful discernment in contextualization, lest charitable cultural accommodation turn into syncretism. This is especially true in worship. There is a need for contextualized worship among the Nanticoke-Lenape in freeing believers to reclaim the culture God gave them and appropriately use its forms to celebrate their salvation in Jesus Christ. There is also a need in the effort to evangelize the non-Christian Nanticoke-Lenape who have rejected the western cultural expressions that dominate their experience of Christianity, to the intentional exclusion of tribal culture and traditions, or the relegating of tribal expressions to only certain special days. However, the process of examining practices should be based on whether they violate doctrine and not merely represent a different socio-cultural tradition. As discussed earlier, prejudice against tribal expressions in worship is not limited to non-Native Christians, as many American Indian congregations were initially taught how to be Christian by those who either were, or were influenced by, colonizing Christians. When contextualization is hampered by a colonized perspective, it can prevent many useful and appropriate practices to be claimed for Christ in ways that would minister to people within their culture as their transformed lives shape their continuing culture to be another expression of the catholic nature of the Body of Christ.

In evaluating the appropriateness of worship practices, or "forms," one must evaluate their meaning, the ability of the form to be conformed to, and exemplify, biblical truth, and the usefulness of the form in edifying the people and glorifying Christ. Protestant

traditions, by and large, typically either subscribe to the Regulative Principle of Worship or the Normative Principle of Worship, or use both to inform their judgment, viewing neither with the authority of Scripture, but both as aids in discerning how Scripture ought to be applied in determining the appropriateness of a worship practice. Chapter XXI of The Westminster Confession of Faith, entitled *Of Religious Worship and the Sabbath Day*, expresses the Regulative Principle of Worship:

The light of nature showeth that there is a God, who hath lordship and sovereignty over all; is good, and doeth good unto all; and is therefore to be feared, loved, praised, called upon, trusted in, and served, with all the heart, and with all the soul, and with all the might. But the acceptable way of worshipping the true God is instituted by himself, and so limited by his own revealed will, that he may not be worshipped according to the imaginations and devices of men, or the suggestions of Satan, under any visible representation, or any other way not prescribed by the Holy Scripture (Macpherson, 1881:126).

Briefly stated, the Regulative Principle of Worship holds that “the public worship of God should include those and only those elements that are instituted, commanded, or appointed by command or example in the Bible. In other words, it is the belief that God institutes in Scripture whatever he requires for worship in the Church, and everything else should be avoided” (Theopedia, s.a.).

While the Regulative Principle limits forms of worship to what is prescribed in Scripture, The Normative Principle of Worship limits forms of worship only to what is specifically excluded by Scripture. Specifically, the Normative Principle of worship “teaches that whatever is not prohibited in Scripture is permitted in worship, so long as it is agreeable to the peace and unity of the Church. In other words, there must be agreement with the general practice of the Church and no prohibition in Scripture for whatever is done in worship” (Theopedia, s.a.).

Each principle is variously interpreted by different Christian denominations and can also be misapplied. The Regulative Principle could be used to unreasonably argue that because Scripture provides examples of Christians only worshipping in house-churches, then the use of church buildings violates the principle. Or, that because the New Testament records that the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper was practiced during full meals, then the manner that it is practiced today, in the absence of a full meal, is a violation of Scripture. Similarly, the Normative Principle could be misapplied as an excuse to use cookies and milk instead of bread and wine in the Lord’s Supper, because

Scripture does not forbid it. The misapplication of the principles can lead either to a Pharisaic legalism in violation of Christian liberty or an overly liberal and worldly irreverence which violates the dignity of worship and diminishes the sense of awe that should always be part of the worship of God. John Calvin writes,

Moreover, the rule which distinguishes between pure and vitiated worship is of universal application, in order that we may not adopt any device which seems fit to ourselves, but look to the injunctions of him who alone is entitled to prescribe. Therefore, if we would have him to approve our worship, this rule, which he everywhere enforces with the utmost strictness, must be carefully observed. For there is a twofold reason why the Lord, in condemning and prohibiting all fictitious worship, requires us to give obedience only to his own voice. First, it tends greatly to establish his authority that we do not follow our own pleasure, but depend entirely on his sovereignty; and, secondly, such is our folly, that when we are left at liberty, all we are able to do is to go astray. And then when once we have turned aside from the right path, there is no end to our wanderings, until we get buried under a multitude of superstitions. Justly, therefore, does the Lord, in order to assert his full right of dominion, strictly enjoin what he wishes us to do, and at once reject all human devices which are at variance with his command. Justly, too, does he, in express terms, define our limits, that we may not, by fabricating perverse modes of worship, provoke his anger against us (Calvin, 1543).

In seeking to honor God in accordance with his design for worship, it is reasonable in contextualization to always be constrained by basing acts of worship upon applicable biblical equivalents (or precedent). In the communal worship life of the church within the context of the local culture, the measure of appropriateness should be in whether the act gives glory to God, its meaning is doctrinally sound, has some applicable equivalent example in Scripture and is not forbidden by Scripture, and is edifying for the worship life of the community of disciples in the context in which it is being used. Another consideration would be to ensure that it is an act of reverent worship and not merely an entertaining performance, as the distinction is often lost in some settings within American Christianity today. The triune God and his glory is the only proper focus of Christian worship.

One must always be reflective of personal bias when reviewing the appropriateness of a form in worship. Allowing personal preference or unconscious bias to influence a determination regarding appropriate contextualization can negatively impact discernment. Derek W.H. Thomas, senior minister of First Presbyterian Church in

Columbia, S.C., and Robert Strong Professor of Systematic and Pastoral Theology at Reformed Theological Seminary in Atlanta, writes,

However, if someone suggests dancing or drama is a valid aspect of public worship, the question must be asked, Where is the biblical justification for it? (To suggest that a preacher moving about in the pulpit or employing “dramatic” voices is “drama” in the sense above is to trivialize the debate.) The fact that both may be (to employ the colloquialism) “neat” is debatable and beside the point; there’s no shred of biblical evidence, let alone mandate, for either. So it is superfluous to argue from the poetry of the Psalms or the example of David dancing before the ark (naked, to be sure) unless we are willing to abandon all the received rules of biblical interpretation. It is a salutary fact that no office of “choreographer” or “producer/director” existed in the temple. The fact that both dance and drama are valid Christian pursuits is also beside the point (Thomas, 2010).

Professor Thomas lumps his condemnation for “drama” as a form of worship with “dance.” However, in regard to dance, there is biblical equivalent. In evaluating the appropriateness of various forms in worship, the words of John M. Frame, also of Reform Theological Seminary, should be heeded: “...we must go back again and again to the Scriptures themselves so that we may please God in worship rather than merely acting on our own intuitions” (Frame, 1997:10). Psalm 149:3 lifts dance as an imperative: “Let them praise his name with dancing, making melody to him with tambourine and lyre!” (Bible, ESV, 2001). This is joined by another imperative in Psalm 150:

3 Praise him with trumpet sound; praise him with lute and harp! 4 Praise him with tambourine and dance; praise him with strings and pipe! 5 Praise him with sounding cymbals; praise him with loud clashing cymbals! 6 Let everything that has breath praise the Lord! Praise the Lord! (Bible, ESV, 2001).

We may not find examples of dance as a form of praise and worship in the New Testament, but neither do we see that the above passages were subsequently modified, reinterpreted, nor their impetus reneged by the Christ or the apostles. While appropriate forms of culturally based liturgical dance may require mature discernment, as there are certainly examples of dance that would be inappropriate for worship, there is no biblical warrant for deeming it completely banned. Additionally, for many cultures, including the Nanticoke-Lenape, this may include simply stepping in place, in time with the beat of a congregational hymn or choral selection as an expression of praise and earnest heartfelt worship. For some Nanticoke-Lenape, this physical response is so instinctive that they would find it difficult to prevent or cease. There are Nanticoke-Lenape dances

to welcome visitors to the community, dance to open certain celebratory ceremonies, dance to express community unity, and dance to celebrate the healing or achievements of a person. All of these dances have been used in the Christian worship services conducted within the tribal community. It appears that prohibiting such, exemplified by biblical example and not subsequently disallowed in Scripture, would be a violation of a contemporary and contextualized expression of biblically based worship. Moreover, while not typically a form in American Indian worship, unless considering traditional story-telling as a form of drama, it is important to note that drama is a useful teaching tool for the edification of the church and the evangelization of the lost. While its use in formal communal worship on the Lord's Day may need to be narrowly and prudently defined, and should never replace preaching or sacrament, its application in other types of gatherings, fellowships, and ministry events may be quite useful and God-glorifying.

To evaluate the relationship between Christian worship and culture, the international consultation of the Lutheran World Federation's Study Team on Worship and Culture was held in January 1996 in Nairobi, Kenya. The following is from that consultation:

Christian worship relates dynamically to culture in at least four ways. First, it is transcultural, the same substance for everyone everywhere, beyond culture. Second, it is contextual, varying according to the local situation (both nature and culture). Third, it is counter-cultural, challenging what is contrary to the Gospel [sic] in a given culture. Fourth, it is cross-cultural, making possible sharing between different local cultures (Nairobi Statement on Worship and Culture, 1996).

Transcultural aspects of Christian worship are those elements of worship which all believers should hold in common, include the assembling of believers, the reading and proclamation of the Word of God, the celebration of the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, prayers of intercession for those in need, offerings and almsgiving. Such transcultural aspects are essential, in that they are at the core of all true Christian worship in any cultural setting.

The recovery in each congregation of the clear centrality of these transcultural and ecumenical elements renews the sense of this Christian unity and gives all churches a solid basis for authentic contextualization (Nairobi Statement on Worship and Culture, 1996).

Contextualized Christian worship embraces biblically compatible expressions of worship from the local culture of the congregation. Such expressions must be able to be interpreted in a manner consistent with sound doctrine. Two methods mentioned in the

Nairobi statement are dynamic equivalent, which “involves re-expressing components of Christian worship with something from a local culture that has an equal meaning, value, and function” (Nairobi Statement on Worship and Culture, 1996), and creative assimilation, which “consists of adding pertinent components of local culture to the liturgical *ordo* in order to enrich its original core” (Nairobi Statement on Worship and Culture, 1996). The Nairobi Statement asserts that contextualization is not merely a novelty, but a necessity:

A given culture’s values and patterns, insofar as they are consonant with the values of the Gospel [sic], can be used to express the meaning and purpose of Christian worship. Contextualization is a necessary task for the Church’s mission in the world, so that the Gospel [sic] can be ever more deeply rooted in diverse local cultures (Nairobi Statement on Worship and Culture, 1996).

Worship is counter-cultural in that the Lord Jesus Christ calls his people to transform the world, not conform to it (Romans 12:2). In this the spiritual discernment reveals that not all cultural expressions and forms of worship can be incorporated into the worship life of the church and should be addressed, but not adopted, by the disciples. “Some components of every culture in the world are sinful, dehumanizing, and contradictory to the values of the Gospel [sic]. From the perspective of the Gospel [sic], they need critique and transformation” (Nairobi Statement on Worship and Culture, 1996).

Christian worship is cross-cultural in that by “virtue of Baptism, there is one Church; and one means of living in faithful response to Baptism is to manifest ever more deeply the unity of the Church” (Nairobi Statement on Worship and Culture, 1996). The unity of the Body of Christ is not constrained by culture, but is a unifying power across cultural lines. Believers may come from many different peoples and cultures, but we are but one Church.

As discussed in Chapter Four, the liturgical elements within the three Nanticoke-Lenape core historical tribal congregations and the tribal Christian prayer ministry fellowship all include the trans-cultural aspects of the reading of Scripture, preaching of the Word, celebration of the sacraments of the Lord’s Supper and—within the congregations—Baptism. Christians from any culture would recognize these trans-cultural aspects. However, in order to contextualize the worship in a fashion that incorporates Nanticoke-Lenape cultural aspects, beyond mere occasional special cultural services and events, an

effort to bring appropriate cultural forms into the regular corporate worship of the congregations would do more to affirm that what is Nanticoke-Lenape can also be Christian. Such an effort would be a step toward healing the historic intergenerational trauma, the soul wound, by removing the erroneous label of “heathen” and “savage” when considering tribal tradition and identity.

For five years, culminating in March 2011, the World Reformed Fellowship worked on a statement of faith which included issues of contextualization and the Regulative Principle. In regard to the Reformers’ response to inherited traditions, the fellowship concluded that,

The sixteenth-century reformers undertook a thorough revision of the church’s traditions and abandoned those beliefs and practices which were clearly contrary to scriptural teaching. Some went further and discarded traditions which were not supported by Scripture even though they were not necessarily contrary to it either. An example of this was the celebration of Christmas on 25th December, which has no biblical warrant but clearly testifies to the New Testament doctrine of the incarnation of Christ. Traditions of this kind may be retained, modified or discarded at the discretion of the local church, provided that no biblical doctrine is thereby compromised (World Reformed Fellowship, 2011: Article IX, paragraph 3).

In regard to patterns of worship, the fellowship concluded that,

Every church has developed patterns of worship and government which over time have become traditions of their own. As long as these practices are not contrary to the teaching of Scripture and continue to fulfil the task for which they were first devised there is no reason why they should not be retained. Nevertheless, each local church is free to modify such traditions as it sees fit. In particular, churches which have emerged from foreign missionary activity may have inherited practices from those missionaries that are not easily indigenized. Churches of that kind have a special responsibility to examine the biblical warrant for such transplanted customs and should be encouraged to modify them if by doing so they can make the witness of the gospel more effective in their circumstances. Nevertheless, no church should abolish, modify or adopt any tradition or practice without considering the effect such a move might have on the witness of the Christian community as a whole (World Reformed Fellowship, 2011: Article IX, paragraph 4).

Biblical faithfulness in worship does not require the elimination of cultural forms, the details of which may not be explicitly described or commanded in Scripture. If the cultural practice is consistent with what Scripture describes or commands and faithfully contextualizes worship, the local Christian community should embrace what glorifies God and edifies the church in an indigenous form over a colonizing foreign form.

The Nanticoke-Lenape tribal prayer fellowship, discussed in chapter four, does not relegate cultural forms to occasional special services or events. Rather, contextualized worship is part of every service. This may be because this fellowship, while open to non-Natives, is independent from any Christian denomination and was begun, and continues to be led, by tribal elders who were learning to embrace their tribal identity as a part of their walk in Christ instead of something which had to remain separate from, or extinguished because of, their walk in Christ. The prayer fellowship is doing what the tribal congregations could prayerfully consider for the “typical” corporate worship in the congregation. Such forms should typically be led by tribal people, as a reclaiming of culture and as a sign of respect for indigenous ownership of tribal heritage. Compassionate engagement in contextualization includes honoring and never usurping the inherent cultural rights of tribal identity. A few simple examples of contextualization could include the following:

1. The use of a prayer fan and smudging: In the absence of a tribal clergyperson, a tribal elder or tribal church official could lead in voluntary smudging prior to the worship as a visual sign of the worshipper’s petition to the Lord to prepare them and the sanctuary for transformative worship, similar to the use of incense in other Christian traditions and even consistent with both temple worship under the old covenant and referenced by the apostle John in Revelation 8. This would also include the use of a prayer fan to waft the smoke, which is a tribal symbol of prayer typically made with turkey, hawk, or eagle feathers. It must be emphasized that this is not a superstitious self-purification or magical warding off of evil spirits, but an expression of God’s blessing through the receiving of prayers through Christ and an expression of the purity brought through him.
2. Communal Dance and drumming: Communal dance is common for the Nanticoke-Lenape and typically incorporates rhythmic stepping to the beat of a drum, similar to the rhythmic stepping of a choir and clergy entering a sanctuary for worship in other cultural settings. Those involved in the processional at the beginning of worship could enter with a traditional entry song, consistent with what is called an “honor dance,” in which the community follows behind one who is being honored for some achievement or special occurrence (like being healed from illness). This is quite appropriate in giving honor to God when

following the movement of the Holy Spirit to gather for worship and when done in a mood of celebration. The closing blessing of a worship service could be followed by a communal dance called a friendship dance, in which participants form a circle and join hands stepping slowly to the beat of the drum or shake of a rattle as an expression of unity, similar to the “passing of peace” done in other church settings.

3. The use of blankets: Decoratively woven blankets and quilts are used as honor gifts and, when placed across the shoulders of the recipient, as a sign of prayers lovingly wrapping them. Such a symbolic act is quite appropriate after a personal confession of faith, personal testimony, or the sacrament of baptism. This can also be incorporated into weddings; at the declaration of matrimony, a blanket is placed on the shoulders of the newlyweds, blessing their new union.
4. Cultural décor: Given the history of institutionalized cultural destruction in the United States, the affirmation of tribal identity can be a point of healing addressed through the way a sanctuary is decorated. Christian banners and wall hangings could feature tribal patterns, styles, and colors. If a national flag is displayed, a tribal flag or feather staff (a staff with feathers attached, the equivalent of a national flag and common among American Indian tribes) could be similarly placed. If possible, or at least for some services or events, the use of seating in a circle would be more in conformity with tribal culture.
5. Regalia: Tribal patterns and styles could be applied if choir robes and clergy vestments are part of the church tradition. Worshippers should be made to feel comfortable wearing tribal cultural garments, if desired. Such could be as simple as jewelry or a vest with tribal decorations, or a “ribbon shirt or skirt,” which is a shirt or skirt with decorative ribbons in tribal patterns, or moccasins (traditional footwear) or it could be as formal as full traditional tribal regalia.
6. Sermon illustrations: Using illustrations that ground the meaning of the message in a fashion that uses elements of the local tribal culture. Illustrations using the natural world, plants and animals, family relationships would ring true to the ear of a tribal person. One example of this is in the fact that eagles are particularly honored because of their swiftness and ability to fly at high altitude, which in

ancient cosmology would have allowed them to soar close to heaven. Their family bond is also honored, as they are thought to mate for life and raise their chicks together. Bearing this in mind would allow for particularly powerful illustrations and application of biblical passages that reference eagles.

The work of contextualization must be driven by the people of the culture being contextualized to ensure that the forms and patterns adopted or adapted are from the targeted culture. Given the history of colonized approaches to ministry in America, contextualization efforts would be blessed by the endorsement and support of the larger church denomination or judicatory, but it requires guidance and initiative from the “grass roots” level with tribal Christians seeking to decolonize their evangelistic and worship ministries with elements of the tribal culture being reprised. It is important that faithful contextualization not only requires submission to biblical standards, but also must be truly accurate to the context it is embracing. In the case of the Nanticoke-Lenape, simply incorporating pan-Indian practices as though they represented the history and heritage of the tribal community may demonstrate cultural openness and an effort to decolonize, but would not aid in the cultural reprisal process, as many if not most such practices are not Nanticoke-Lenape in origin, and in some cases are at best only recently introduced and not historically practiced by the communities. Contextualization requires an effort to understand the specific heritage and cultural forms being embraced to ensure their actual tie to the community heritage. Not doing so could cause non-historic and foreign practices to be imposed, doing damage to the culture instead of aiding in its reprisal and application in Christian ministry and spiritual formation.

### **5.2.3 Compassionate Engagement in the Context of the Personal Life of Nanticoke-Lenape Christians**

Contextualization involves aspects of ministry in addition to worship. Pastoral interaction with those under the care and instruction of the church is also an issue for contextualization, as how disciples live must also reflect their faith in an ever-increasing fashion. The response of some church leaders to traditional personal practices, outside of the corporate worship life of the congregation, is still a point of spiritual formation. How is the minister or missionary, whether Native or non-Native, to faithfully respond to the personal wearing of a medicine bag by a parishioner? What is the faithful

response of the church to a parishioner receiving a tribal name in a naming ceremony? What about a parishioner who desires to learn to pray or sing in their tribal language? The colonized response is that they are pagan and cannot be viewed as acceptable for Christians. However, the theological task incumbent upon the church is to investigate the practice more deeply in order to discern whether it is truly pagan, syncretistic, socio-cultural, or can be interpreted or reinterpreted in a fashion that transforms its use to contextualize the truths of the gospel and aid the Nanticoke-Lenape believers as they follow the Lord Jesus.

Medicine bags and pouches, sometimes also referred to as prayer bags and pouches, are filled with items of sacred meaning to the owner. The medicine bag is typically a small buckskin pouch most often, but not exclusively, hung around the neck. The medicine pouch is a larger buckskin bag which may be kept on the person or in a special location in their home. To presume to group them all together and declare that everyone who has such items believes that they possess some form of mystical power or aid in black magic is to misunderstand the very independent and personalized adaptation of such items among various American Indian traditions and individuals within those traditions. While any form of superstition attached to such an item would be syncretistic, the meaning of a medicine bag is not so easily defined. Ask Indians from different tribes, or even within the tribe, what their medicine bag or pouch means to them, and you will very likely get slightly different, or even completely different, answers. The meaning and use of a medicine bag or pouch is quite specific to the individual who possesses it. Such personalized interpretations are ripe for use in contextualization. In fact, some believers have already contextualized the meaning of the medicine bag or pouch. When asked what was in her medicine pouch, Tanya Smiling-SpiritDove, who is active in the tribal Christian prayer fellowship, stated that it was filled with memories of her prayers. She used it along with her prayer journal to record the things that she approached Jesus about, interceding on behalf of others. For her, it served as a constant reminder of the issues over which she interceded and of the many times she was blessed to witness Jesus answer her prayers with a resounding “Yes!” (Smiling-SpiritDove, 2014). Other Christians among the Nanticoke-Lenape provided responses which reflected their Christian faith. One stated that they kept anointing oil in their pouch so that when they prayed over the sick, they used the oil like the Bible says in accordance with James 5:14. Another favored keeping strips of scripture passages. Another kept a small cross. Still others kept such traditional items as tobacco, sage, or sweetgrass and related that it

was a constant reminder that God hears their prayers, as for them such natural elements used in smudging were things made by God (Davis, 2014) and are symbolic of Christ's blessings in their lives and his compassionate response to prayer. Medicine pouches included such items as simple small mementos from important life events, similar to scrapbooking but without photographs. The items reflected their life's journey, their personal testimony. For the Christians who chose to continue to use them, medicine bags and pouches had been contextualized in a fashion that gave glory to Christ in their walk of faith and served as a testimony to others that their culture need not be denied in order for them to truly be Christian. It is certainly true that because of varying traditions, such items could represent things quite contrary to Scripture. But these days, because of misuse and misinterpretation by non-Christians, so could wearing a cross. Sadly, deeper investigation into how medicine bags and pouches, especially those which still contain tobacco, sage, cedar or sweetgrass, can be contextualized is rejected out of hand by some Christians who presume that their use is an insult to Christ and a denial of the gospel of grace (Indian Bible College, 2014).

Prayer bundles, among the Nanticoke-Lenape, are typically small bits of cedar, sage or tobacco either wrapped with yarn or in a small cloth pouch tied with yarn. Typically they are a gift given to another in fellowship, often signifying that the recipient is being prayed for by the giver (Davis, 2014). This is particularly meaningful to those who are in mourning or are ill. For the American Indian Christian, such items can symbolize the intercessory prayer power of the body of Christ in a similar way as bits of cloth that had touched the apostle Paul's skin were used to symbolize Christ's healing power (Acts 19:12).

Receiving tribal names in a naming ceremony has been questioned by some who feel it is in violation of Christianity and view it as pagan, as discussed in Chapter Three. When Nanticoke-Lenape ancestors were converted to Christianity, the misguided teaching of the missionaries falsely added their cultural bias to the proclamation of the gospel and declared tribal ancestral names to be "heathen" or "savage" names. Even speaking the ancestral language was demonized and punished by non-Native authorities during the federal period, and especially during the boarding school era, as discussed in Chapter Three. Nanticoke-Lenape ancestors were encouraged, and sometimes forced, to replace their names with names of European heritage. However, such a teaching has no biblical basis. There is no culture or race whose language and whose names are inherently more

holy than any other. If we were to erroneously suggest this to be the case, then the most logical languages to be used for Christian naming would not be of English, Spanish, Italian, German, or French origin, but rather should be Hebrew and Greek, the original languages of Scripture. Based upon this assumption, logic would also dictate that we would be encouraged to use the original forms of the biblical names in our worship, so that “Jesus” would be pronounced as the Hebrew “Yeshua,” or the Greek “Iesous.” However, this is not the common practice among American English-speaking Christians. Nor is it part of the common practice today that modern missionaries force European names upon converts in non-European countries. It could be said that the continuing practice of the naming ceremony among Christian tribal people is a correction of grievous cultural crime committed against their ancestors, and a witness to the fact that the Lord Jesus Christ saves them as American Indians and not by making them into Europeans.

People interpret the giving and receiving of tribal names in different ways. However, at the core of the giving of such a name is the notion of honoring that individual with a description of what they already have demonstrated themselves to be, or representing the hopes and aspirations of what they shall one day become (Gould, 2012). Giving a ceremonial name is a celebration of one’s culture and receiving a tribal ceremonial name is being blessed and honored by that culture. It is called a “tribal” or “ceremonial” name because it was bestowed in a tribal ceremony (Pierce, 2013). The name-giver seeks guidance from the Creator to discern his will in giving a name. On occasion, non-Natives who have distinguished themselves in their relationship with the tribal people may be honored with a name as an expression of the community’s embrace of them. It does not “change” any other name by which a person may be already known, nor does it limit the names that may be attributed to an individual in the future. The name is given and received in a way of honoring the culture out of which it comes. For American Indians, it is a way of perpetuating that culture into the future. It represents the way a person is seen by the name-giver and the way that the community may view them, not necessarily how they may see themselves.

Nanticoke-Lenape people may choose to use their tribal ceremonial name as their primary name and some have even changed their legal name to the name given in a tribal ceremony. However, this need not be the case, nor is it the case for most people who have received a tribal ceremonial name (Pierce, 2013). Some simply use it as an

alternate name on occasions, others incorporate it into the way that they may write their own names from time to time, placing the ceremonial name between their legal first and legal last name or even just as their last name. Still, for others, it is a private matter that is rarely used in public settings. Others have simply used it when introducing themselves as they represent their tribe at various functions. How it is used is a matter of personal interpretation or preference. However, although often repeated by non-Christians, the tradition that the name bestowed in a naming ceremony is the name by which one must approach the Creator in order for him to recognize them or the only way that the ancestors will recognize them, is a pan-Indian belief coming from the Plains Indian culture and is neither a Lenape, Nanticoke, nor Christian historical tradition and should be shunned as syncretistic and even illogical. As God is all-knowing, one of his children need not identify themselves for him to know who they are or acknowledge them. Christians need not call out their own name in prayer. This distinction between those participating in naming ceremonies who adhere to nouveau pan-Indian beliefs and those who hold to biblical Christianity can be a powerful form of witness as to the true intimacy with the Almighty granted in one's relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

Language revitalization is of great importance to the Nanticoke-Lenape. American Indian languages underwent direct persecution as various government and private agencies sought to “civilize” and “Christianize” American Indians through systematic “cultural genocide” (Native American Rights Fund, 2013:2). T.S. Eliot wrote concerning language, “It must be remembered, that for the transmission of a culture—a peculiar way of thinking, feeling and behaving—and for its maintenance, there is no safeguard more reliable than a language” (Eliot, 2008:130). While the Nanticoke language is all but lost, with only several hundred words recorded, its parent tongue, Lenape, is well preserved. Born speakers were living within the past thirty years and preservation efforts were well underway prior to their deaths. Interestingly, much of Lenape language preservation can be credited to the efforts of missionaries, especially the Moravians. The desire for tribal people to reclaim their language should be encouraged by the church as a ministry of cultural restoration and preservation. Early missionary efforts included translating Scripture into indigenous tongues. For the Nanticoke-Lenape, reclaiming the language is a vital part of reclaiming the culture and celebrating the cultural identity God gave their people. The Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL) is a faith-based language and cultural preservation initiative

“motivated by the belief that all people are created in the image of God, and that languages and cultures are part of the richness of God's creation” (Summer Institute of Linguistics, 2015). The SIL view of the importance of language to culture is expressed quite aptly:

Language and culture are inextricably interwoven. Effective use of or work with the language requires a good understanding of the culture that is associated with and expressed through that language... decrease the language vitality of a community and [there is] a loss of cultural knowledge. The logical end is endangered languages which are not expected to be spoken in the near future. Such loss undermines the identities of the communities involved, as well as being a loss to humanity—including academic scholarship—of the unique contribution the knowledge and perspectives of these communities might otherwise bring (Summer Institute of Linguistics, 2015).

Supporting language revitalization among the Nanticoke-Lenape is an opportunity for church outreach and ministry to the people. Like feeding programs for the hungry and clothing programs for the impoverished, language revitalization for those whose languages were forcibly stripped from them should be motivated by Christian charity and viewed as a matter of justice. Use of the tribal language requires the initiative of tribal people, but the blessing, encouragement, and support of the larger church for such a contextualized form could be pivotal. While there is no need for a translation of the Bible into Lenape, tribal language revival could be stimulated by using it for simple blessings and benedictions, commonly recited verses of Scripture, and songs, while also providing English translation as appropriate, the goal being the revival of a growing common use of the tongue.

### **5.3 THE CALL FOR REPENTANCE AND RECONCILIATION IN CONTEXT**

Compassionate engagement with the Nanticoke-Lenape community will reveal that one of the great challenges facing that community is the continuation of the injustices of federal Indian policy, which are the legacy of the Doctrine of Discovery and the Principle of Manifest Destiny. As discussed in Chapter 3, tribal rights are tied to tribal status in regard to the acknowledgment of the tribal nation by the federal government. The culture of the tribe is tied to its social structure and communal governance and the ability of its leadership to preserve and protect its heritage, and patrimony is tied to how the state and federal governments acknowledge the tribe. Some of the damage done is part of the legacy of colonizing church policies and initiatives, which eventually

influenced federal regulations and programs. Christian denominations, judicatories, and individual congregations have the ability to call prophetically for justice and lead initiatives for reconciliation and healing.

There has been scant recognition by the U.S. federal government and church denominations that initiated and carried out this policy, and no acceptance of responsibility for the indisputable fact that its purpose was cultural genocide. There are no apparent realistic legal avenues to seek redress for healing from the deep and enduring wounds inflicted both on the individuals and communities of tribal nations... There has been no official U.S. proposal for healing or reconciliation (Native American Rights Fund, 2013:2).

Reconciliation requires repentance, and repentance requires confession, for without the acknowledgment of wrongdoing there is no sense of guilt and no true repentance. Christian denominations, judicatories, and congregations should call the nation to repentance, not merely over what was done to American Indians and their tribal nations, but also over what continues to be done to them. The nation's leaders rarely are the ones who understand the nature of accepting responsibility for sin and its continuing impact, but it is vital that the nation's conscience be stirred.

Once it is admitted that a policy was flawed and harmful, steps can begin to be taken to allow for healing. In fact, there are many models and examples of how healing can be accomplished when one culture or society harms another. Universally, those models of healing, of reconciliation, require recognition of what happened and who was responsible as a first step (Native American Rights Fund, 2013:1-2).

That repentance which is true and deep and sincere and accurate must not merely be for what perpetrators have done, but also for the fact that those who stood by silently contributed to the wrongdoing and allowed it to continue.

We will have to repent in this generation not merely for the hateful words and actions of the bad people but for the appalling silence of the good people. Human progress never rolls in on wheels of inevitability; it comes through the tireless efforts of men willing to be coworkers with God, and without this hard work, time itself becomes an ally of the forces of social stagnation. We must use time creatively, in the knowledge that the time is always ripe to do right (King, 1963a).

Repentance is not merely one-sided in the sense that only those of non-tribal origins must participate. Indeed, repentance is needed among all, as Romans 3:23 declares, "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Bible, ESV, 2001). Tribal Christians must be both repentant and forgiving. Nanticoke-Lenape Christians must be willing to demonstrate Christian charity to non-tribal people as a witness to the love and

forgiveness provided in Christ. They can claim victory through the grace of God and in the name of Jesus over the continuing bondage of historic intergenerational trauma from which Jesus Christ can deliver them. Historic intergenerational trauma is a reason for some of the challenges faced by tribal communities. The diagnosis informs how such challenges must be identified and can be addressed. It should not be viewed as an excuse that negates personal responsibility or denies the possibility of healing.

Christians, both tribal and non-tribal, must hold both their own church governments and the United States accountable for the atrocities committed and being perpetuated against American Indian tribal nations. It is the responsibility of the church not merely to feel sorry for the plight of tribal people, but to execute its prophetic responsibility by identifying evil and striving to set at liberty the oppressed. “Injustice must be exposed, with all the tension its exposure creates, to the light of human conscience and the air of national opinion before it can be cured” (King, 1963a). There are those who embrace the biblical concept that the church proclaims liberty to captives through the proclamation of the gospel and the salvation in Christ which sets them free from bondage to sin; and, this is truly the primary eternal mission of the church of Christ. However, struggling against injustice and standing up for justice is also a mission of the church as it demonstrates the grace and charity of the kingdom of God in this world. As John Stott has written,

It is not just that the [Great] Commission includes a duty to teach converts everything Jesus had previously commanded (Matthew 28:20), and that social responsibility is among the things which Jesus commanded. I now see more clearly that not only the consequences of the Commission but the actual Commission itself must be understood to include social as well as evangelistic responsibility, unless we are to be guilty of distorting the words of Jesus (Stott, 2008:37).

While specifically speaking to the issue of civil rights for African-Americans during that struggle for justice in the early 1960s, the words of Martin Luther King Jr. also ring true to the matter at hand.

In the midst of a mighty struggle to rid our nation of racial and economic injustice, I have heard many ministers say: “Those are social issues, with which the gospel has no real concern.” And I have watched many churches commit themselves to a completely other-worldly religion which makes a strange, un-Biblical distinction between body and soul, between the sacred and the secular (King, 1963a).

According to Isaiah 1:17, people of God are a people of justice who have been called to “Learn to do good; seek justice, correct oppression; bring justice to the fatherless, plead the widow’s cause” (Bible, ESV, 2001). Christians, both non-tribal and tribal, cannot sit idly by and allow injustice to flourish while saying that they need only be concerned about the souls of those who are suffering and not worry about their situation of political oppression. The word of God in Proverbs 31:8-9 calls each and every believer to “Open your mouth for the mute, for the rights of all who are destitute. Open your mouth, judge righteously, defend the rights of the poor and needy” (Bible, ESV, 2001) and according to Galatians 6:2 to “Bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ” (Bible, ESV, 2001). Such is required if one is truly trying to live a life in accordance with the Bible:

The concept and call to justice are inescapable. We do justice when we give all human beings their due as creations of God. Doing justice includes not only the righting of wrongs, but generosity and social concern, especially toward the poor and vulnerable. This kind of life reflects the character of God (Keller, 2010:17).

### **5.3.1 Reconciliation Requires More than an Apology**

In September 2000 the leadership of the Community Church of Oak Orchard, which is in the midst of the Nanticoke tribal community in Sussex County, Delaware, drafted a “Proclamation of Repentance and Reconciliation to the Nanticoke Tribe,” a copy of which now hangs in the Nanticoke Indian Museum in Millsboro, Delaware (Street, 2012). The framed proclamation is a warm reminder of the sincere intentions of the congregation to acknowledge the history and seek healing in the present with their Nanticoke neighbors. There is no reason to doubt the good intentions of the church or its leaders. However, following the celebration around the proclamation, no further actions have been taken to coordinate with the tribe or support its struggles or grow in cultural interaction and understanding or glean from its ancient wisdom (Street, 2012). This does not diminish the heartfelt expression of the proclamation, but it does demonstrate the necessity for an improved understanding of what is really needed to complete the process. Reconciliation requires repentance and repentance begins with heartfelt confession, but it does not end there. If one merely confesses and makes no effort to change one’s ways or to right one’s wrongs, then confession is merely an apology and not healing or transformative. Once a person feels they have apologized for wrongdoing, especially if it is not an evil they personally committed, they sometimes

feel that the simple apology should be sufficient. To their credit several Christian denominations in the United States have repudiated the Doctrine of Discovery, including the Episcopal Church in 2009 (Schori, 2009), the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends in 2009 (Peace and Concerns Standing Committee, 2009), the United Methodist Church in 2012 (United Methodist Church, 2012). The World Council of Churches repudiated the Doctrine of Discovery in 2012 (World Council of Churches, 2012). Recent ceremonies of repentance done by church groups and ecumenical associations and even denominational judicatories with local American Indian nations created cathartic moments for all involved. And, then, far too often the non-Native participants returned home feeling good about what they had done, feeling as though they had “settled the matter,” while the tribal people returned to their communities continuing to suffer under the same injustices and without any additional support to overturn those injustices. For some, the difficulty with thinking that anything more than apology is needed is based on the fact that it seems the wrongdoing is really in the distant past because they have no comprehension of the continuing impact of that wrongdoing.

Science is advancing to finally come to understand what Native communities have been aware of for a long time—that traumas experienced in the past continue to harm the victims and the victimizers through the generations until the heart is effectively confronted and healing is undertaken in earnest (Native American Rights Fund, 2013:11).

A ministry of empathy and advocacy is required for repentance to truly become reconciliation. It is difficult for non-Natives to imagine what tribal people suffer on a regular basis—the pain of historic intergenerational trauma, and the soul wounds which continue from one generation to the next as the injustices of the past are evident in the present and perpetuated on into the future. It is the church which can put forth a regular effort to grow in its level of understanding and sensitivity, to engage with compassion the issues of spiritual formation within the cultural context and also the challenges of injustice that continue to impact tribal communities like the Nanticoke-Lenape. It is difficult for the average American to comprehend and requires heartfelt interaction.

[It is] not possible for non-Natives to fully understand the deep pain, trauma and alienation with which Native Americans can still suffer because of this history and the rejection of them and their culture by the very people who should have been their greatest defenders, the Church. Instead of standing with Native Americans in defending their God-given privilege to worship Jesus using their own cultural forms, the Church became an unofficial partner with political forces in the destruction of their cultures and communities (Wood, 2011).

The healing can begin with denominations and individual congregations learning about and denouncing the Doctrine of Discovery and the principles of Manifest Destiny, as some have already done at a national level. The Episcopal Church and the United Methodist Church are two examples of several in the United States which have funded ongoing initiatives to address the issues of injustice and promote healing and understanding over continuing issues of the Doctrine of Discovery. Their denunciations must become part of the training of their members toward a spirit of repentant empathy. This empathy cuts both ways, impacting both their Native and non-Native congregants. The evils of colonization impact both the colonizer and the colonized, and can even stir sin within the colonized. The response of hate for what was done and what is being perpetrated can contaminate even the oppressed with bigotry. In some instances, as previously discussed, the colonized oppress their own because of the shame that has been imposed upon their indigenous heritage; for this there must also be repentance. Mutual reflection, repentant confession, and intercession form a solid foundation for the process of healing, as James 5:16 tells us, “Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working” (Bible, ESV, 2001). Repentance and reconciliation can best begin within the body of Christ because of the presence of the Spirit of Christ. This is a process that will take more than a simple ceremony or a one-time proclamation. It will take time. It will be difficult and painful. It will be tiring and sometimes seem unrewarding. However, Christians must follow the instruction of Scripture which states in Galatians 6:9-10, “And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up. So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith” (Bible, ESV, 2001).

### **5.3.2 Justice and Advocacy in Context**

Faithfulness to Christ in the presence of injustice requires compassionate engagement and advocating for justice. “Contextualization of Christian faith and worship necessarily involves challenging of all types of oppression and social injustice wherever they exist in earthly cultures” (Nairobi Statement on Worship and Culture, 1996). Worshiping the Lord with all of your soul, mind, and strength is not something that is done merely in the midst of a corporate worship service, but is borne out through a lifestyle of compassion which includes advocacy for the oppressed. One cannot faithfully proclaim

the gospel while ignoring the suffering of the persecuted and downtrodden. As Keller writes,

Doing justice is inseparably connected to preaching grace. This is true in two ways. One way is that the gospel produces a concern for the poor. The other is that deeds of justice gain credibility for the preaching of the gospel. In other words, justification by faith leads to doing justice, and doing justice can make many seek to be justified by faith (Keller, 2010:139).

The congregations and denominations with a history of interaction among the Nanticoke-Lenape tribal communities have the opportunity to seek ways to heal, reconcile, and seek justice while they also empower the evangelistic effort through faithful contextualization.

Churches can seek out opportunities for cultural exchanges and learning sessions that go beyond traditional ways. Such cultural exchanges can also sensitize congregations as to the many government policies that negatively impact tribal communities. This interaction between tribal and non-Native believers can result in bringing pressure to bear on local government and institutions to understand their responsibility to do right by the indigenous tribal community, to hear their concerns, to find ways to respect the dignity of their inherent tribal identity and tribal sovereignty. One of the tools for this is to support the tribe in educating the public and government at every level regarding the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which was adopted by the United Nations in 2007 and finally agreed to by the United States in 2010. Sadly, the United States is one of the last nations to do so, and with great reluctance. The declaration's forty-six articles cover a plethora of inherent rights which far too often have been violated by colonizing powers. A few sample excerpts, which if followed would have a positive impact on the Nanticoke-Lenape community, are as follows:

Indigenous peoples have suffered from historic injustices as a result of, inter alia, their colonization and dispossession of their lands, territories and resources, thus preventing them from exercising, in particular, their right to development in accordance with their own needs and interests [Preamble].

Indigenous peoples, in exercising their right to self-determination, have the right to autonomy or self-government in matters relating to their internal and local affairs, as well as ways and means for financing their autonomous functions [Article 4].

Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain and strengthen their distinct political, legal, economic, social and cultural institutions, while retaining their right to participate fully, if they so choose, in the political, economic, social and cultural life of the state [Article 5].

Indigenous peoples and individuals have the right not to be subjected to forced assimilation or destruction of their culture [Article 8].

Indigenous people should not be forcibly removed from their lands or territories [Article 10].

Indigenous peoples have the right to the dignity and diversity of their cultures, traditions, histories and aspirations which shall be appropriately reflected in education and public information [Article 15].

States shall consult and cooperate in good faith with the indigenous peoples concerned through their own representative institutions in order to obtain their free, prior and informed consent before adopting and implementing legislative or administrative measures that may affect them [Article 19].

Indigenous peoples have the right to the lands, territories and resources which they have traditionally owned, occupied or otherwise used or acquired [Article 26].

Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain, control, protect and develop their cultural heritage, traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions [Article 31].

Indigenous peoples have the right to the recognition, observance and enforcement of treaties, agreements and other constructive arrangements concluded with the states or their successors [Article 37] (United Nations, 2007).

The implementation of this declaration is a continuing struggle for indigenous people around the world and within the United States. For the Nanticoke-Lenape the active compassionate engagement of the church in understanding the nature of how this declaration impacts their tribal community and can be implemented on behalf of the community is a worthy effort of social ministry and a great step in the struggle for justice. It is a way in which the church can do more than merely apologize, but can advocate alongside its Nanticoke-Lenape brothers and sisters in Christ, whose tribal governments are already actively engaged in the struggle for justice. Such advocacy should certainly be at the congregational level, but is even more vital from the judicatory and denominational level because of the nature of the challenges and the injustices. Some of the critical areas in desperate need of advocacy include the following:

1. The American Indian Religious Freedom Act (United States, 95<sup>th</sup> Congress, 1978), as described previously, does not clearly apply to tribes that have not yet received listing with the Bureau of Indian Affairs as having a government-to-government relationship with the United States. Such federal acknowledgment is the only means through which American Indians can legally possess eagle

feathers or the feathers of other raptors, which are spiritually significant to many American Indian tribes.

2. The Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978, which was established to protect Indian children from being torn from their families and tribes and adopted out to non-Natives, only applies to members of federal tribes (National Indian Child Welfare Association, 2015). The law was designed to prevent the forced breakup of American Indian families, which is now once again on the rise (National Indian Child Welfare Association, 2015). Agencies seizing and adopting out tribal children have often encouraged the non-Native adoptive parents to ensure a disconnection from the child's ancestral tribe by not speaking of, or providing any details about, the child's heritage (Washburn, 2015). However, the church cannot only advocate that the federal government come into compliance with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples by including all historically verifiable American Indian tribes under its protections, but can also advocate that states and local courts give deference and respect to tribes seeking to protect and retain tribal children.
3. The Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, which provides for the rights of tribes to protect sacred sites in the remains of their ancestors, only applies to tribes listed by the Bureau of Indian Affairs as being federally recognized (Association on American Indian Affairs, 2015). The Nanticoke-Lenape have difficulty defending their sacred sites from desecration and find it almost impossible to request back ancestral remains and grave goods taken by various entities. Church advocacy could aid in putting pressure on both the federal and state governments and other agencies to support all historically verifiable American Indian tribes in retaining their sacred sites and ancestral remains in compliance with the United Nations Declaration.
4. The American Indian Arts and Crafts Act was designed to protect American Indian arts and crafts from being devalued with the introduction of American Indian inspired arts and crafts from non-tribal sources (American Indian Arts and Crafts Board, 2015). The ability to label a product "American Indian made" is regulated by the federal government and requires either federal or state acknowledgment of the tribe for any craftsman to utilize the label (American

Indian Arts and Crafts Board, 2015). Those who are members of historically verifiable, but unrecognized, tribes cannot label their products even with their own tribal name without facing stiff federal fines and penalties. This creates an economic hardship for artisans, as genuine tribally made crafts have greater market value. The church could put pressure on both the federal and state governments to find ways to enforce the spirit of this law without penalizing legitimate tribal artists and crafters.

5. In an effort to educate the non-Native public and increase respect for tribal heritage, having an official welcome from the local tribes in whose territory national and statewide meetings occur is a powerful acknowledgment of the fact that such continuing territorial ties should be respected. Another way of doing this is to utilize the tribal name for the region in which the meeting or event is taking place.

Advocacy could involve compassionate engagement with the tribal people and government, aimed at increasing awareness for tribal issues, like those indicated above, among the non-Native public and government. Advocacy could involve affirming and supporting tribal Christians to help lead initiatives to increase such awareness and support them with by providing access to use church-based media to inform their fellow Christians about matters of justice for tribal people and encourage the personal involvement of fellow believers in rallying around the tribal people in addition to offering intercessory prayer over issues of justice. 1 Peter 3:12 states “For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and his ears are open to their prayer” (Bible, ESV, 2001).

However, the justice and advocacy in the light of contextualization and reconciliation between tribal and non-tribal Christians is not unidirectional. It is not merely the “tribe receiving what the church is giving,” but a mutual increase through the sharing of gifts and resources.

The Native community is to this day primarily viewed by Evangelicals as a needy but largely forgotten mission field, a group in need of *receiving* ministry. The flow of ministry between the Anglo and Native churches is almost always in a top-down direction, a one-way flow of goods, services, ministry and resources from the Anglo church to the “lower” Native church. I would love to see some of our Anglo church leaders, when asked to help a Native church, say, “Yes, but on one condition: only if you will in turn send your pastors and leaders to come and equip us with the grace and

gifting God has given you as Native people.” When that day comes, it will verify that we are seen by our Anglo brethren as equal collaborators in the mission of the church (Twiss, 2000:58).

One example of potential reciprocal blessing is in the American Indian values as they apply to respect for nature and the concept that the ultimate owner of the world is its Creator. Teaching such values could inspire contextualized denominational positions on environmental stewardship and protection, affirming anew Psalm 24:1, “The earth is the Lord’s and the fullness thereof” (Bible, ESV, 2001).

#### **5.4 CONCLUSION**

In considering holistic Christian ministry in context for the Nanticoke-Lenape people, it is important to acknowledge the history and ongoing concerns of the tribal communities and to admit that cultural context is an unavoidable influence in evangelism, ministry, worship, and spiritual formation. While syncretism is an ever-present risk, faithful biblical contextualization can be a force against syncretism and a valuable tool in missions. The Nanticoke-Lenape, along with many other American Indian tribal people, suffered through one of the greatest acts of physical and cultural destruction in the history of humanity and now continue to cope with the legacy of the Doctrine of Discovery in American law and policy, in American society, in American Christianity, and even within the minds of their own people who suffer from historic intergenerational trauma. Because historic tribal churches, like those within the Nanticoke-Lenape communities, often served as a refuge for the continuance of tribal identity in a climate of hostility toward the continuance of tribal culture, their role was unique within the history of American Christianity. The nature of the Nanticoke-Lenape congregations as homogeneous units from the nineteenth century through to the latter twentieth century, zealously defending against nontribal voting membership, could be viewed to have violated the biblical principle of the unity of the body of Christ; however, given the hostile environment impacting the tribal community, it could also be argued that the congregations were an ark of survival for the tribal people. The uniqueness of the situation, now altered by the existence of non-church based tribal government, has resulted in the congregations now becoming open to non-tribal members, as discussed in Chapter Four. Although no longer homogeneous units as they once were, the continuing passion to maintain the tribal heritage of the churches and protect their unique history can be viewed as necessary for the purpose of

contextualization and to address historic intergenerational trauma within the tribal community. The modern heterogeneous make-up of the congregations provides an opportunity for, and model of, healing and reconciliation within the congregations among the tribal and non-tribal members. Moreover, the unique history and heritage of the core tribal congregations is an asset to the body of Christ in educating and inspiring contextually sensitive ministries of reconciliation and advocacy as the church repents for its past sins and carries out its prophetic ministry of justice, aspiring to live out the words of Amos 5:24, “Let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream” (Bible, ESV, 2001). Tribal Christians have a responsibility to facilitate a ministry of decolonization, contextualization and reconciliation, and to guide and implement advocacy ministries, and not merely anticipate that such should be delivered to them by a denomination or ministry organization. This also involves introspection regarding what requires repentance on behalf of tribal Christians. Resentment against their believers of European descent, potential poor witness to non-Christian tribal people, and rejection of the call for contextualization, are all issues in need of reflection, repentance, and healing.

## 6.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

### 6.1 Proposed Questions and Objectives Addressed by the Research

This study examined the history and continuing impact of European colonization and Christian conversion upon the Nanticoke-Lenape people who primarily live in three tribal communities around the area of the Delaware Bay, between the states of New Jersey and Delaware in the United States. The main aim of this study was to assess and address issues of contextualization and reconciliation through which the Church may reinforce the blessings of Christian *koinonia* within the context of celebrating tribal heritage and struggling for justice in such a manner that the gospel is spread afresh to the tribal people.

The first research question was to identify what historical realities continue to be unaddressed missional and pastoral issues among the Nanticoke-Lenape tribal communities and to identify how they hinder the spread of the gospel among those tribal people who are not vested in the congregations. The stated research objective was to do so by studying and analyzing the historical backdrop of the three Nanticoke-Lenape communities of the Delaware Bay as pertaining to their Christianization and the particular issues of racial, cultural, and political subjugation which continue to impact the modern Nanticoke-Lenape communities. This task was accomplished through a review of historical documents, anthropological studies and modern tribal testimony on the Lenape and Nanticoke lifeways, beliefs, and practices from the point of contact with early Anglo/European colonizers (2.2 - 2.4), through to the coalescing of remnant Nanticoke and Lenape people into the three continuing tribal communities (2.4.1 and 2.4.2), and subsequent conversion to Christianity (2.5 - 2.5.3). The research identified how Lenape and Nanticoke traditional spiritual beliefs and practices were misidentified and mischaracterized as idolatrous, polytheistic, pantheistic, and panentheistic (2.2.2). However, while there may have been some individual Nanticoke and Lenape deviation, the research identified evidence to show that the normative belief and practice was a monotheistic belief in a sovereign, transcendent, and benevolent deity (2.2.2). Labeling the indigenous culture and people as uncivilized polytheistic heathens was used under the Doctrine of Discovery (3.1.1) to justify various methods of seizing land and subjugating tribes (3.1.2; 3.2.1). The Doctrine of Discovery influenced early missionary efforts, promoting the premise that to be Christian and civilized required the

adoption of Anglo/European culture and the denial of indigenous cultural lifeways, beliefs, and practices (3.1.3). The codification of the Doctrine of Discovery into American Indian law and policy, evidenced in the United States Supreme Court “Marshall Trilogy” (3.2), federal treaty breaking (3.2.2), and the establishment of the federal and closely aligned mission Indian boarding schools (3.3.1) perpetuated a climate of hostility toward the continuance of tribal identity and culture. Results of this history include: administrative racial reassignment (2.5.2); the denial of the continuance of Nanticoke-Lenape tribal existence (3.3.2; 3.4.1; 3.4.2; 3.4.3); anti-tribal organizations and initiatives among some non-Natives (3.3.3); and, the perpetuation of the error that traditional tribal ways are pagan and of the devil (3.3.4) and cannot be reconciled with Christianity (5.1). The study found that the historic losses suffered by American Indians has resulted in a form of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, referred to by researchers as “historic intergenerational trauma,” and as “soul wound” by some tribal people, and has resulted in high rates of such symptoms as hopelessness, depression, substance abuse, and suicide among American Indians (5.1.1). The study showed that there has been an inner conflict among tribal Christians who have been challenged to denounce their culture and ancestors and live with a sense of cultural shame (3.3; 3.3.1; 4.1.1; 4.2.1) principally due to the lack of an indigenous contextualized expression of Christianity. The research revealed tension between tribal Christians and those tribal people who hold to traditional spiritual beliefs and practices (4.2.4), many of whom are hostile toward Christianity as a force for colonization and cultural destruction (5.1) and who view tribal Christians as having turned their backs on their ancestors and culture (4.2.4).

The second area of inquiry was to discern how the Christian congregations at the core of the Nanticoke-Lenape tribal communities, and those interacting with the Nanticoke-Lenape tribes, can strive for meaningful reconciliation in the light of past atrocities. This was done in accordance with the stated research objective to evaluating the manner in which cultural preservation relates to missions among the Nanticoke-Lenape tribal communities. Through a review of congregational histories, the tribal core congregations were identified in this study as those which served to sustain tribal governance and community cohesion from the nineteenth century (2.1.3; 2.1.4; 4.1; 4.1.1). One of the distinctions was not only that these congregations were initiated by tribal people and continued with a majority of tribal people in membership, but also that from their inception through to recent times they were zealously protective of tribal

control over the congregations, rendering them as homogeneous units, which in the past rejected non-tribal membership (4.1.1) just as the tribal communities practiced a high rate of endogamy (2.1.2; 2.4.1; 3.2.1; 3.4.1), becoming self-isolating. The research also identified those non-core congregations interacting with the tribal community who were distinguished by a significant historic connection to Nanticoke-Lenape communities because of the involvement of tribal people in their founding and a retained significant number in their membership from at least the early to mid-twentieth century (4.1.2). Among the core tribal congregations, it was determined, through interviews and visits to the churches, that some contextualization of worship practices was taking place, but was primarily limited to special services and events (4.1.1; 5.2.2). At least one of the non-core, community related congregations is remembered as having at least a brief period of hostility toward anything of a tribal nature, even enrollment (4.1.2). The research revealed that the core tribal congregations are in the process of reconciling with non-Natives, as today they no longer practice tribal exclusivity in membership and are becoming more heterogeneous over the past decade and a half (4.1.1) following a decline in endogamy since the 1980s. The research determined that community healing through compassionate engagement (5.1.3), contextualized worship (5.2.2), contextualized witness (5.1.2), and contextualized spiritual formation (5.2; 5.2.1) are ways that reconciliation can take place among tribal believers, between tribal Christians and traditional practitioners, and with non-Native Christians. The increase in the contextualization efforts of tribal Christians is evidenced in the tribal interdenominational Christian prayer ministry fellowship, in which cultural practices and Lenape vocabulary are incorporated as regular expressions of faith in worship (4.1.1; 4.2.4; 5.2.2). This contextualization is also evident in the Sunday church worship services during the two annual public powwows conducted among the Nanticoke-Lenape and the quarterly prayer meetings which include non-tribal people (4.1.1; 4.2.4). Contextualization has emboldened the Christian witness among tribal believers, many of whom have come to realize that they are no longer facing an inherent contradiction between their Indian and Christian identities (4.2.4). Contextualization is also serving to aid in discerning and evaluating the rise of pan-Indian spiritual practices and issues of syncretism among the tribal communities (3.4; 4.1; 4.2; 4.2.4; 5.1.2; 5.2.3). Reconciliation also involves acknowledgement of sin and repentance (5.3) both within and toward the tribal communities. Proclamations of repentance from denominational judicatories and individual congregations, along with denominational denunciations of the Doctrine of Discovery, provide an environment for mutual confession and healing

between Native and non-Native Christians (5.3.1) which can promote dialogue and opportunities for cultural sharing and cooperation within the Body of Christ (5.3.2).

The third area of investigation was to determine what critical sensitivities and strategies must be engaged in order to minister effectively to the Nanticoke-Lenape tribal communities. This was addressed through interviews with tribal people and a review of the contemporary information and studies on the topic. The research suggests that becoming familiar with, and acknowledging, the challenge of historic intergenerational trauma is a worthy starting point (5.1.1). The research identified practical suggestions on how to engage Nanticoke-Lenape people in a respectful and compassionate manner through a comparison of the written reflections of Lenape elder Nora Thompson Dean and ethnologist Cara Blume, each of whom listed areas of tribal cultural taboos (5.1.3) and emotional triggers (5.1.1) guiding the non-Native volunteer or researcher. Areas of sensitivity and conflict among tribes were revealed, such as differences between eastern and western tribes (3.4.1) and political and identity struggles on the issue of federal recognition (3.4.3). The research also revealed issues of racism among tribal people (3.4.2). It was revealed that while tribally acculturated Natives may have an easier time engaging a tribal community, it by no means eradicates the need to build trust, as some tribal traditionalists view tribal Christians, especially American Indian ministers, as having “sold out” the ways of the ancestors in favor of the ways of the colonizers (5.1.3). The research pointed out the potential bias, even among some tribal Christians, to presume a biblical mandate for non-essential cultural adaptations or to presume that non-Anglo/Euro cultural expressions are necessarily syncretistic, instead of seeing all cultural expressions as being subject to reflection and review (5.1; 5.2.3) in the light of Scripture and an accurate understanding of the cultural form being employed. The research showed that decolonizing one’s theological perspectives is an important aspect of compassionate engagement (5.2.2). The study cited Lakota United Methodist minister Richard Twiss, who provided a decolonized indigenous view of Jesus (5.2.1) and further illustrated the way that evangelical efforts can overcome the historic barriers, misunderstandings, and misguided hostility toward the term “Christianity” by presenting the Gospel of Jesus Christ as the “Jesus Way” (5.2) with the expectation that overcoming issues related to nomenclature can eventually lead to healing over such terms through exposure to faithful contextualization and the fellowship of the multi-racial and multi-cultural communion of saints in the Body of Christ (5.2.1).

The fourth research question involved determining how the Church can promote integral, holistic, contextualized Christian ministry of the gospel among the Nanticoke-Lenape tribal communities. This involved the stated research objective to study and evaluate historic and contemporary ministries and their efficacy in addressing unresolved issues of injustice that continue to impact the Nanticoke-Lenape tribal communities. This was accomplished through the review of both historic mission efforts from the colonial era, such as that of Reverends John and David Brainerd and the establishment of the Brotherton Reservation (2.1.3; 2.2.2), to the establishment of congregational worship within the tribal communities (2.1.3; 2.1.4). Approaches to mission from early contact and colonialism, such as that of the Moravians David Zeisberger and John Heckwelder (2.1.3; 2.2.1; 3.1.3), in addition to that of the Rev. John Eliot in New England (3.1.3; 5.1.2), were also reviewed with an eye on the importance of contextualization from the perspectives of such missiologists as David Bosch and Richard Twiss (5.1.2; 5.1.3; 5.2; 5.2.1), statements from international Christian organizations (5.1.2; 5.2.2), an evaluation of Scripture (5.1; 5.1.2; 5.1.3; 5.2; 5.2.1; 5.2.2), and consideration of the Regulative Principle of Worship and the Normative Principle of Worship (5.2.2). Practices and forms for contextualized ministry guiding individual spiritual development were considered in the light of Scripture (5.2.3). Issues and initiatives regarding continuing processes of repentance and reconciliation to promote healing, restoration, and Christian communion among tribal people and non-tribal people were reviewed (5.3) in the light of the need for cooperation and advocacy (5.3.1; 5.3.2).

While there have been some historical, archaeological, anthropological, and ethnological studies on the Nanticoke-Lenape, this researcher was unable to verify any study on the missiological issues relating to the Nanticoke-Lenape. As far as this researcher was able to verify, this research is the first to provide a history of the Nanticoke-Lenape core tribal churches in a unified manner from the perspective of cultural survival with an investigation into the challenges and benefits of contextualization.

## **6.2 General Overview**

Descended from the Lenape, also called Lenni-Lenape, and Nanticoke American Indians of the period of first contact with European explorers and colonists in North

America, the modern Nanticoke-Lenape tribal communities are a mixture of the two tribal bloodlines (Heite, 1998). The Nanticoke and Lenape were among the tribal peoples most affected by European diseases, losing as much as ninety percent of their population during the colonial period (Dowd, 2001:43; Fur, 2009:203; Grumet, 1995:239). The tribal families making up the three communities are those which remained after the majority of their relatives underwent forced migration westward and northward, departing the ancient homeland prior to the early nineteenth century (Grumet, 1995:239-240). The remaining Nanticoke and Lenape were Christianized and adapted to a colonial way of life (Weslager, 2003:277), concentrated in the three communities that continue today. The survival of the Nanticoke-Lenape depended largely on going unnoticed by the non-Native population because of legalized persecution of the indigenous people during both the colonial and federal periods (Maryland, 2009a:417-418; Berry, 2001). Christianization of the Nanticoke-Lenape led to administrative racial reclassification and subsequent challenges to tribal identity and status (Anderson and Kickingbird, 1978:17; Forbes, 1993:89, 220, 259-61; Heite, 1997?; Heite & Heite, 1982?).

Colonial land seizure, ignoring of indigenous interpretations of land tenure (Bowden, 1981:104; Charleston, 1983:69-70), the subsequent establishing of reservations and designated Indian areas, which were also eventually lost (Porter, 1987:42; Weslager, 1983:115, 131), and the frequent breaking of treaties with the tribal populations (Deloria, 1988:28, 48-49) all found justification in the Doctrine of Discovery (Miller, 2010:51). This doctrine, evolved from a series of Roman Catholic papal bulls and further expressed in the philosophical and legal positions of colonial powers claiming territory in the Americas, justified the claiming of non-Christian lands by Christian monarchs and permitted the subjugation and forced conversion of indigenous populations (Miller, 2010:53; Newcomb, 2008:84; Williams, 1990:89-92). This doctrine inspired the view of indigenous population as uncivilized, barbarian, heathen savages; it gave rise to the principle of Manifest Destiny in the United States (Newcomb, 2008:xvii; Tinker, 2010:pt. 1, ch.1) and serves as a basis for modern federal Indian policy in the United States (Love *et al.*, 2008:108; Miller, 2010:59). The dominant position derived from the doctrine presumes that Anglo/European culture in the Americas is normative for what is Christian and civilized, promoting the notion that imposing Anglo/European culture upon the indigenous population is a necessary aspect

of Christian missions (Bosch, 2011: 282, 293; Blumm, 2004:720; Miller, 2010:58-59, 62).

An objective examination of traditional Nanticoke and Lenape spiritual beliefs, cultural practices, and lifeways was rare and typically overshadowed by cultural presumption, racism, and stereotype in the minds of the colonizing powers and institutions, which included Christian denominations and organizations (Bond, 2010: pt. 1, ch. 4; Brinton, 1885:62; Weslager, 2003:289). While there were those missionaries and researchers who came to understand that the Nanticoke and Lenape were traditionally monotheists (Danckaerts, 1941:174-175; Heckewelder, 1876:212) and had a code of personal conduct which reflected many biblical Christian values (Brinton, 1885:62-63; Lindstrom 1928:235; Penn, 1970:30, 45), there was little effort made to contextualize Christianity, save translation efforts for the purpose of evangelization (Lieberkühn, 1821:5-6). The majority bias was the view that Nanticoke and Lenape culture was merely savage and needed to be replaced with an Anglo/European version of Christian civilization (Brinton, 1885:62; Edwards & Dwight, 1822:344-345; Weslager, 2003:283). The federal policy of forced assimilation and Christianization reflected the sentiment of United States Army Colonel Richard Pratt, the architect of the Indian Boarding School system, who stated, “A great general has said that the only good Indian is a dead one... In a sense, I agree with the sentiment, but only in this: that all the Indian there is in the race should be dead. Kill the Indian in him, and save the man” (Bear, 2008).

During the nineteenth century, Christian Nanticoke-Lenape formed churches at the core of their communities, through which they continued to preserve a sense of tribal community continuity and governance (Department of the Interior, 2008). The subsequent reorganized tribal governing bodies continue to the modern day (Charter, 2007:Article 1, Section 2; Weslager, 1983:219, 222). The modern Nanticokei-Lenape people have a renewed sense of pride in their heritage (Weslager, 1983:247), are motivated to bring about the reprisal of tribal culture (Kelley, 2012:121), and desire to assert tribal rights. Partial relief from the legal restriction placed upon indigenous spiritual expressions came with the 1978 American Indian Religious Freedom Act (Talbot, 2006:7); however, limitations due to the Nanticoke-Lenape legal status as tribes under the United States Bureau of Indian Affairs continue to impede cultural reprisal and restrict the rights of tribal people (Ettawageshik, 2009:5; Nazzaro, 2005:1; United Nations General Assembly, 2012:15).

A truly Nanticoke-Lenape expression of Christianity has been largely suppressed by the continuing effects of the Doctrine of Discovery influencing the perspective that all things indigenous are inferior, uncivilized, based in primitive superstition, and potentially leading to syncretism (Twiss, 2010:pt. 3, ch. 5). Resisting contextualization has contributed to tensions between Christians who reject indigenous ways as pagan and Christians seeking to find appropriate ways of using cultural forms for worship, spiritual formation, and witness. A response to the colonizing activities within the history of American Christianity has caused a rejection of all things Christian by some who seek to affirm their tribal identity (Twiss, 2010:pt. 3, ch. 5), also resulting in some divisions within the Nanticoke-Lenape tribal community. For some, so much historical and psychological pain is attached to the word “Christianity” that some American Indian Christians witness to fellow tribal people by referring to themselves as “followers of Jesus” and to Christianity as “The Jesus Way” (Twiss, 2000:35).

The long history and contemporary realities of institutionalized efforts of cultural extermination, loss of territory, diminishing of tribal governing authority, identity challenges, devaluing of tribal heritage, and societal marginalization, have caused a form of intergenerational post-traumatic stress disorder, referred to as historic intergenerational trauma, that is affecting American Indian communities (Brown-Rice, 2014; Indian Country Diaries, 2006; Urban Health Institute, 2012:1). This presents a challenge regarding cultural and situational sensitivity and awareness for non-Natives desiring to engage the Nanticoke-Lenape tribal communities for volunteer service, research, or ministry (Blume, 2012; Dean, 1982). Because of an innate awareness of cultural sensitivities, ministry engagement by American Indians with tribal people may meet with less resistance than engagement by non-Natives, but still requires a heightened understanding of the real pastoral issues resulting from historic intergenerational trauma.

Contextualization in the proclamation of the gospel, forms of worship, and spiritual formation is unavoidable and is reflected in Scripture (Davis, 2008; Niebuhr, 1951:32, 89). However, when the contextualization of one cultural perspective is viewed as normative for the faith, so much so that it is not thought of as contextual but axiomatic, the result can be a colonizing approach to missions that causes undue damage to the recipients and their culture (Bosch, 2011:293,299; Bradshaw & Savage, 1974:1226;

Twiss, 2010:pt. 3, ch. 5). Another challenge for contextualization, if done unreflectively and without sound biblical moorings, is the danger of syncretism (Bradshaw & Savage, 1974:1227). However, doctrinally sound contextualization can be a deterrent to syncretism (Wood, 2011).

The historic tribal churches are designated “core congregations” because of their history of serving as seats of tribal governance until constitutional reorganization with elected tribal councils. These congregations, which today are part of the United Methodist Church, acknowledge tribal heritage through some sanctuary décor and occasional special culturally themed worship services and events. However, contextualization among the Nanticoke-Lenape is actively occurring more within the interdenominational Christian tribally-based prayer ministry of the Nanticoke Lenni-Lenape of Bridgeton, New Jersey, than within the three core tribal congregations. Contextualization within the worship, study, and spiritual formation of the tribal prayer ministry has contributed to a striking reversal of imposed colonized presumptions and has freed tribal followers of Jesus to embrace being both Christian and Indian instead of being constrained by the colonized view of having to be either Christian or Indian (Gould, 2012; Heite, 1997?; Smiling-SpiritDove, 2014).

Repentance is an important element in any effort toward healing and reconciliation (Native American Rights Fund, 2013:1-2). In regard to ministering to American Indians, one aspect of such repentance is the repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery and the principle of Manifest Destiny. However, a mere denominational or governmental apology in a single cathartic ceremony cannot be viewed as an end, but must be seen as a beginning in the effort toward establishing justice for American Indians (Wood, 2011). Contextualization involves more than worship or spiritual formation, but also prophetically challenges injustice (Nairobi Statement on Worship and Culture, 1996). A ministry of advocacy, supporting the efforts of the Nanticoke-Lenape tribal communities in cultural reprisal and socio-political justice, is a part of faithful contextualization and holistic ministry. Such advocacy can be guided by the principles of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (United Nations, 2007).

### 6.3 CONCLUSION

The Nanticoke-Lenape, with many other American Indian tribal people, were colonized and Christianized in a manner that forced conformity to an alien cultural perspective, bolstered by the Doctrine of Discovery, which misunderstood and demeaned their cultural heritage, diminished their tribal sovereignty and identity, and dismissed contextualization of the gospel to which they had been converted. The climate of hostility forged by the Doctrine of Discovery continues in United States federal Indian policy and in the attitudes of many within American society, perpetuating injustice upon the tribes. A result of this continuing cycle of cultural denial and tribal nullification is historic intergenerational trauma and, for some, resentment against Christianity.

However, there is hope for a contextualization of worship, spiritual formation, and community advocacy that demonstrates the relevance and healing power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ through the compassionate engagement of the Body of Christ. The core tribal congregations have taken some steps toward engaging the culture and accepting some cultural forms in some worship services and special events. The tribal Christian prayer ministry in the northernmost community, controlled by tribal elders unconstrained by denominational oversight or alien views of propriety, actively engages in biblically faithful contextualized worship, study, and spiritual formation among its participants. The result has been a renewed embracing of tribal heritage and identity among the members of the prayer ministry and the instilling of a boldness regarding their Christian faith within the context of tribal interactions. This active contextualization has also stimulated dialogue with both those affected by colonized Christian views and those given to ancient tribal spiritual traditions. This ministry of contextualization is a vital witness and vehicle for healing and reconciliation within the tribal communities.

Because of the church's biblical prophetic role in society, and because of the relationship between the history of American Christianity and the devastating effects of colonization upon American Indians, the Christian church can lead in a process of healing and reconciliation. The history of trauma is over five hundred years old, therefore reconciliation cannot occur within a moment or through a single declaration. Rather, it is a long process, requiring true repentance. Such true repentance is proven through ongoing efforts of contextualization, empathy, charity, and advocacy among

and between both non-tribal and tribal people. If the church, tribal and non-tribal together, actively involves itself in this work, true healing can occur, Christ will be glorified, the saints will be edified, and many of the lost who were hostile to Christianity may see the beauty of the Jesus Way on Turtle Island and be brought to faith in Christ.

Areas suggested for further research include: 1) determining ways that Nanticoke-Lenape Christians can bless the global Christian community and be a witness to other indigenous believers around the world; 2) evaluating whether and in what ways the Nanticoke-Lenape use of the sweat lodge and prayer pipe can be faithfully contextualized in regard to evangelization, spiritual formation, and pastoral care; 3) identifying the key elements in training Nanticoke-Lenape Christian leaders to strengthen the ministry of contextualization, and developing curricula that can be shared with those training for ministry no matter what their racial or ethnic background; 4) Assessing, given the effects of historic intergenerational trauma, what specific steps or initiatives should be taken by tribal Christians to minister among their own to help break the cycle of depression, substance abuse, and alcoholism to create a community ministry of healing and reconciliation.

## 7.0 REFERENCES

- ADAMS, R.C., 1899. A Delaware Indian legend and the story of their troubles. Washington, DC: Richard Adams. 82 p.
- ADAMS, R.C. 1904. The ancient religion of the Delaware Indians and observations and reflections. Washington, DC: The Law Reporter Printing Co. [Available online] <http://ia700200.us.archive.org/10/items/cu31924097755494/cu31924097755494.pdf> [Date of Access 28 February 2013]. 43 p.
- ALLIANCE OF COLONIAL ERA TRIBES. 2011. Heritage under attack. [Available Online] <http://www.acet-online.org/publication-archives> [Date of Access: 13 December 2013].
- ALLIANCE OF COLONIAL ERA TRIBES. 2012a. Pattern revealed at SCIA roundtable. [Available Online] <http://www.acet-online.org/resolutions> [Date of Access: 10 December 2013].
- AMERICAN BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS FOR FOREIGN MISSIONS. 1882. Seventy-second annual report of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. Presented at the meeting held in Portland, Maine. 3-6 October. Boston, MA: Riverside Press. 118 p.
- AMERICAN INDIAN ARTS AND CRAFTS BOARD. 2015. American Indian Arts and Crafts Act of 1990. Washington, DC: United States Department of the Interior. [Available Online]: <http://www.iacb.doi.gov/act.html> [Date of Access: 11 March 2015].
- ANDERSON, T. and KICKINGBIRD, K. 1978. An historical perspective on the issue of federal recognition and non-recognition. Washington, DC: Institute for the Development of Indian Law. 20 p.
- ANON. 1892. A curious Delaware community and its history: Kent County Moors Leni Lenapes of to-day. *The Times of Philadelphia*: 19 May.

ANON. 2013. Christian evangelist David Barton: 'We had to destroy Indian tribes.' *Indian country today*. 22 March. [Available Online] <http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2013/03/22/christian-evangelist-david-barton-we-had-destroy-indian-tribes-148317> [Date of Access: 22 March 2013].

ANON. 2014. Ministries with Native Americans in local churches. *United Methodist relay*. April. [Available Online] [http://www.gnjumc.org/console/files/oUMConnection\\_Issues\\_FMXDQI/Relay\\_April\\_2014\\_issue\\_LKXVKFJX.pdf](http://www.gnjumc.org/console/files/oUMConnection_Issues_FMXDQI/Relay_April_2014_issue_LKXVKFJX.pdf) [Date of Access: 3 July 2014].

ASSOCIATION ON AMERICAN INDIAN AFFAIRS. 2015. The Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act. [Available Online] [http://indian-affairs.org/programs/aaia\\_repatriation\\_nagpra.htm](http://indian-affairs.org/programs/aaia_repatriation_nagpra.htm) [Date of Access: 11 March 2015].

BEAR, C. 2008. American Indian boarding schools haunt many. *National public radio*. May 12. [Available Online] <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=16516865> [Date of Access: 6 November 2013].

BERKHOFER, JR., R. F. 1972. *Salvation and the savage: an analysis of Protestant missions and American Indian Response, 1787-1862*. Atheneum, NY: University of Kentucky Press. 186 p.

BERRY, C. 2001. Andrew Jackson – the worst president the Cherokee ever met. *All things Cherokee*. 2 February. [Available Online]: <http://www.allthingscherokee.com/andrew-jackson-worst-president-cherokee-ever-met/> [Date of Access: 10 February 2015].

BIBLE. 2001. English Standard Version, published in 2001. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles of Good News Publishers.

BIGELOW, B. 2012. It's Columbus day...time to break the silence. *Zinn education project. October*. [Available Online]: <http://zinnedproject.org/2012/10/its-columbus-day-time-to-break-the-silence/> [Date of Access: 10 February 2015].

- BLUME, C.L. 2010. Kent County land sales. (Unpublished manuscript in possession of the researcher).
- BLUME, C. L. 2012. Guidelines for non-native volunteers and professionals working with Native communities. (Unpublished manuscript in possession of the researcher).
- BLUMM, M. C. 2004. Retracing the discovery doctrine: aboriginal title, tribal sovereignty, and their significance to treaty-making and modern natural resources policy in Indian country. *Vermont law review*, Volume 28:713. Academic OneFile, EBSCOhost, [Available Online] <http://www.heinonline.org.nwulib.nwu.ac.za/HOL/Page?handle=hein.journals/vlr28&id=723&collection=journals&index=journals/vlr#723> [Date of Access: 30 September 2013]
- BOND, E. L. 2010. Colonial Virginia mission attitudes toward Native peoples and African-American slaves. (In Young, A. & Zikmund, B. B., ed. *Remembering Jamestown: hard questions about Christian mission*. Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications. [Kindle ed.]). Available at [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com). part 1, loc 1529-2119.
- BOSCH, D. J. 2011. *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books. [Kindle ed.].
- BOWDEN, H. W. 1981. *American Indians and Christian missions: studies in cultural conflict*. Chicago History of American Religion. M.E. Marty, ed. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press. 255 p.
- BRADSHAW, M. & SAVAGE, P. 1974. The gospel, contextualization and syncretism report. (In *Let the earth hear his voice: the International Congress on World Evangelism*. July 16-25. Lausanne, Switzerland). [Available Online]: <http://www.lausanne.org/docs/lau1docs/1224.pdf> [Date of Access: 23 February 2015].

- BRAINERD, D. 1822. *Memoirs of Rev. David Brainerd, missionary to the Indians on the borders of New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania*. S.E. Dwight, editor. New Haven: S. Converse. 507 p. [Available online] [http://books.google.com/books/about/Memoirs\\_of\\_the\\_Rev\\_David\\_Brainerd.html?id=17oRAAAAYAAJ](http://books.google.com/books/about/Memoirs_of_the_Rev_David_Brainerd.html?id=17oRAAAAYAAJ) [Date of Access 8 March 2013].
- BRINTON, D. G. 1885. *The Lenape and their legends with the complete text and symbols of the Walam Olam*. *Brinton's library of Aboriginal American literature*, number v. Philadelphia: D. G. Brinton [Available Online] [http://ia700307.us.archive.org/26/items/lenptheirleg00brin/lenptheirleg00brin\\_bw.pdf](http://ia700307.us.archive.org/26/items/lenptheirleg00brin/lenptheirleg00brin_bw.pdf) [Date of Access: 26 April 2013]. 262p.
- BRITISH BROADCASTING CORPORATION. 2010. *Analysis: defining genocide*. BBC news. 27 August. [Available Online] <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-11108059> [Date of Access: 15 March 2015].
- BROWN-RICE, K. 2014. *Examining the theory of historical trauma among Native Americans*. *The Professional Counselor*. October. [Available Online]: <http://tpcjournal.nbcc.org/examining-the-theory-of-historical-trauma-among-native-americans/> [Date of Access: 9 February 2015].
- BUKEN, G. 2002. *Construction of the Mythic Indian in Mainstream Media and the Demystification of the Stereotype by American Indian Artists*. *American Studies International* 40/3:46. Academic Search Premier, EBSCOhost, [Date of Access: 22 March 2013].
- BUNDY, R. 2013. *Pastoring Saint John Church*. [personal interview]. 19 March 2013. Pennsauken, NJ.
- BURTON, J. 2012. *Israel United Methodist Church History* [personal interview]. 12 August. Lewes, DE.
- CALVIN, J. 1543. *The necessity of reforming the church*. [Available Online]: [http://www.monergism.com/thethreshold/sdg/calvin\\_necessityreform.html](http://www.monergism.com/thethreshold/sdg/calvin_necessityreform.html) [Date of Access: 26 February 2015].

- CARSON, D. A. 2008. Christ and culture revisited. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. [Kindle ed.].
- CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL. 2012. Suicide: facts at a glance. [Available Online] [http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/Suicide\\_DataSheet-a.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/Suicide_DataSheet-a.pdf) [Date of Access: 14 March 2015].
- CHARLESTON, S. 1983. Reflections on a revival: the Native American alternative. *Theological Education*. Vol. 20. No 1. Autumn [Available Online]: <http://eds.b.ebscohost.com.nwulib.nwu.ac.za/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=6&sid=905c565a-62f9-473d-ae7-def5616304f1%40sessionmgr198&hid=105> [Date of Access: 12 July 2014].
- CHARTER see Confederation of Sovereign Nanticoke-Lenape Tribes. 2007.
- CHISMAR, J. 2002. Missionaries to Native Americans face many challenges. Christian Headlines. 27 June. [Available Online] <http://www.christianheadlines.com/news/missionaries-to-native-americans-face-many-challenges-1144000.html> [Date of Access: 16 March 2015].
- COKER, D. J. 2012. Memories of a Lenape Chief [personal interview]. 17 August 2012. Cheswold, DE.
- COLUMBUS, C. 1493. Letter to King Ferdinand of Spain. [Available Online] <http://xroads.virginia.edu/~hyper/hns/garden/columbus.html> [Date of Access: 14 March 2015].
- CONFEDERATION OF SOVEREIGN NANTICOKE LENAPE TRIBES. 2007. Charter. [Available Online] <https://sites.google.com/site/3tribeconfederation/charter> [Date of Access: 14 March 2015].
- COOPER, R. W. & COOPER, H. 1923. Negro school attendance in Delaware: A report to the State Board of Education of Delaware. Newark, DE: University of Delaware Press. 389 p.

- DANCKAERTS, J. 1941. *Journal of Jasper Danckaerts, 1679-1680*. Bartlett Burleigh James & J. Franklin Jameson, editors. New York: Barnes & Noble. [Available Online] <http://archive.org/details/journalofjasperd00danc> [Date of Access, 17 April 2013] 310 p.
- DAVIS, A. 2014. Act of repentance highlights Native American celebration. *United Methodist Relay*. Vol. LVIII, No. 5. June. [Available Online]: [http://www.gnjumc.org/console/files/oUMConnection\\_Issues\\_FMXDQI/Relay\\_June\\_2014\\_JFBTSEBM.pdf](http://www.gnjumc.org/console/files/oUMConnection_Issues_FMXDQI/Relay_June_2014_JFBTSEBM.pdf) [Date of Access: 3 July 2014]
- DAVIS, S. M. 2008. Contextualization: theological and missiological necessity. *Sharper Iron*. 8 December. [Available Online]: <http://sharperiron.org/2008/08/11/contextualization-theological-and-missiological-necessity> [Date of Access: 29 November 2012].
- DAVIS, W. 2012. Personal experiences of a Nanticoke elder. [personal interview]. 12 August. Millsboro, DE.
- DEAN, N. T. 1982. A baker's dozen do-nots: some guidelines for linguists, anthropologists, and their related tribal members. *Algonquin and Iroquoian Linguistics Newsletter* no. 7, Feb. [Text Available Online]: <http://brownimages.com/blog/blog/2011/07/17/nora-thompson-deans-advice/> [Date of Access: 12 December 2012].
- DE LAS CASAS, B. 1552. A brief account of the destruction of the Indies or, a faithful narrative of the horrid and unexampled massacres, butcheries, and all manner of cruelties, that hell and malice could invent, committed by the popish Spanish party on the inhabitants of West-India, together with the devastations of several kingdoms in America by fire and sword, for the space of forty and two years, from the time of its first discovery by them. [Available Online] <http://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/20321/pg20321.html> [Date of Access: 14 March 2015].

DELAWARE PUBLIC ARCHIVES MARKER (United State of America). 2004.  
Harmony United Methodist Church. SC 187. [Available Online]  
<http://archives.delaware.gov/markers/sc/SC-187.shtml> [Date of Access: 24  
March 2015].

DELAWARE PUBLIC ARCHIVES MARKER (United States of America). 2002.  
Indian Mission United Methodist Church. SC 122 [Available Online]  
<http://archives.delaware.gov/markers/sc/SC-122.shtml>. [Date of Access: 24  
March 2015].

DELAWARE (United States of America). 1881. An Act to exempt certain persons from  
the operation of Chapter 48 of Volume 15 of the Laws of Delaware, and to  
enable them to establish schools for their children in Sussex County. Passed at  
Dover. 10 March. (*In Digest of Laws Relating to Free Schools in the State of  
Delaware*. Dover, DE: James Kirk and Sons Publishers). 39-41.

DELAWARE (United States of America). 1899. Report of the State Board of Education  
of Delaware 1898. Dover, DE: Press of the Delawarean.

DELAWARE (United States of America). 1900. Annual report of the state auditor of the  
State of Delaware 1899. Dover, DE: Sentinel Printing.

DELAWARE (United States of America). 1901. Laws of the State of Delaware passed at  
a session of the General Assembly commenced and held at Dover on Tuesday,  
January 1, A. D. 1901 and in the year of the independence of the United States  
the one hundred and twenty-fifth. Volume XII – Part 1. Milford, DE: Press of  
the Milford Chronicle.

DELAWARE (United States of America). 1921. Laws of the State of Delaware passed at  
the ninety-eighth session of the General Assembly commenced and held at  
Dover on Tuesday, January 4<sup>th</sup>, A. D. 1921 and in the year of the independence  
of the United States the one hundredth and forty-fifth. Volume XXXII.  
Wilmington, DE: Star Publishing.

DELAWARE (United States of America). 1936. Revised code of Delaware 1935 to which are added the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution of the United States, and the Constitution of Delaware. Wilmington, DE: Star Publishing.

DELORIA, V. JR. 1988. *Custer died for your sins: an Indian manifesto*. Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press. 278 p.

DELORIA, V. JR. 2003. *God is red*. 3rd ed. Golden, CO: Fulcrum Publishing. 325p.

DELORIA, V. JR. 2006. *Conquest masquerading as law*. (In *Unlearning the language of conquest: scholars expose anti-Indianism in America*. Jacobs, D. T. "Wahinkpe Topa – Four Winds," ed. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press). 2006. 300p.

DEN OUDEN, A. E. & O'BRIEN, J. M. 2013. Introduction. (In *Recognition, sovereignty struggles, and indigenous rights in the United States: a sourcebook*. Den Ouden, A. E. & O'Brien, J. M., eds. Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press. Google Books Version). 377 p.

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE see United States. Department of Commerce.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR see United States. Department of the Interior.

DE VALINGER, L. 1941. Indian land sales in Delaware, part II. *New York colonial documents*, Vol. 12. *Bulletin, Archaeological Society of Delaware*, Vol. 3, No. 4.

DOWD, G.E.. 2001. *The Indians of New Jersey*. New Jersey history series, 3. Trenton, New Jersey: New Jersey Historical Commission. 88 p.

DOYLE, J. T., 1959. Moor says his people started 'Big Thursday.' *The journal - every evening*. Wilmington, DE. 13 Aug.

DRAIN, R.G. 2012. *Harmony United Methodist Church History* [personal interview]. 14 Aug., Millsboro, DE.

- DUFFIN, B. & LAWTON, P. 2000. *Cultivating the Methodist garden: a brief history of the peninsula Delaware conference of the United Methodist Church*. Frederica, MD: Barratts Chapel Museum. 120 p.
- DUNCAN, J. L. II. 2003. Foundations for biblically directed worship. (*In*, Give praise to God: a vision for reformed worship. Ryken, P. G., Thomas, D. W. H., & Duncan, J. L. II. Phillipsburg, eds.) NJ: P&R Publishing. 22 p.
- DURHAM, R. 2012. Immanuel Union United Methodist Church History [personal interview]. 17 Aug., Cheswold, DE.
- EDWARDS, J. & DWIGHT, S. E. 1822. *Memoirs of the Rev. David Brainerd; missionary to the Indians on the borders of New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania: chiefly taken from his own diary*. New Haven, CT: S. Converse. [Available Online] [http://books.google.com/books/about/Memoirs\\_of\\_the\\_Rev\\_David\\_Brainerd.html?id=17oRAAAAYAAJ](http://books.google.com/books/about/Memoirs_of_the_Rev_David_Brainerd.html?id=17oRAAAAYAAJ) [Accessed 8 March 2013]. 507 p.
- EHLERS, C, GIZER, I, GILDER, D, ELLINGSON, J, & YEHUDA, R 2013, Measuring historical trauma in an American Indian community sample: Contributions of substance dependence, affective disorder, conduct disorder and PTSD. *Drug and Alcohol Dependence*, 133, pp. 180-187, ScienceDirect, EBSCOhost. [Available Online]: <http://eds.b.ebscohost.com.nwulib.nwu.ac.za/eds/detail/detail?vid=4&sid=2f1871f3-21de-4d07-b778-b844fe31a9a3%40sessionmgr111&hid=122&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWRzLWxpdmU%3d#db=edselp&AN=S0376871613001865> [Date of Access: 9 February 2015].
- ELIOT, T. S. 2008. *Christianity and culture: The idea of a Christian society and notes towards the definition of culture*. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co. 186 p. [Kindle ed.].
- ELMER, L. Q. C. 1869. *History of the early settlement and progress of Cumberland county, New Jersey and of the currency of this and the adjoining colonies*. Bridgeton, NJ: George F. Nixon. 142 p.

- ETTAWAGESHIK, F. 2009. Testimony of the National Congress of American Indians on fixing the federal acknowledgment process United States Senate Committee on Indian Affairs. November, 4. [Available Online] <http://files.ncai.org/testimony/2009/4%20Nov%202009%20SCIA%20Frank%20Ettawageshik%20Acknowledgment.pdf> [Date of Access: 13 December 2013]. 5 p.
- FERGUSON-BOHNEE, P. 2009. Testimony before the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs Oversight Hearing on Fixing the Federal Acknowledgment Process. November 4. [Available Online] [http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=1846965](http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1846965) [Date of Access: 13 December 2013]. 49 p.
- FISHER, G. P. 1895. The so-called Moors of Delaware. *Millsboro Herald*. 15 June.
- FLEMING, G. D. 2005. Brotherton New Jersey's first and only Indian reservation and the communities of Shamong and Tabernacle that followed. Medford, NJ: Plexus Publishing. 280 p.
- FLETCHER, A. C. 1888. Bureau of Education special report, Indian education and civilization: a report prepared in answer to senate resolution of February, 23, 1885. Washington: Government Printing Office. 693 p.
- FORBES, J. D. 1993. Africans and Native Americans: the language of race and the evolution of red-black peoples. Chicago, IL: University of Illinois Press. 344 p.
- FRAME, J. M. 1997. Contemporary worship music: a biblical defense. Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing. 212 p.
- FRANCIS, C. 1840. Life of John Eliot, the apostle to the Indians. *The library of American biography*, vol. v. Sparks, J. editor. New York, NY: Harper & Brothers. 357 p.
- FRICHNER, T. G. 2010. The "preliminary study" on the doctrine of discovery. *Pace environmental law review*, Volume 28, Issue 1, Fall. [Available Online] <http://digitalcommons.pace.edu/pelr/vol28/iss1/11> [Accessed 30 September 2013].

- FUR, G. 2009. A nation of women: gender and colonial encounters among the Delaware Indians. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press. 251 p.
- GILBERT, R. 2015. Nanticoke-Lenape Spiritual Values [personal interview]. 12 Mar., Rising Sun, DE.
- GILBERT, W. H. 1948. Surviving Indian groups of the eastern United States. Annual report of the Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution. Pub. 3954. Washington, DC: United States Government Printing Office.
- GOULD, M. M. 2012. Nanticoke-Lenape Tribalism [personal interview]. 15 Sep., Bridgeton, NJ.
- GROSSMAN, Z. 1993? Treaty rights and responding to anti-Indian activity. The fourth world documentation project. Olympia, WA: Center for World Indigenous Studies. [Available Online] <http://www.dickshovel.com/anti.html> [Date of Access: 19 November 2013].
- GRUMET, R. S. 1995. Historic contact: Indian people and colonists in today's northeastern United States in the sixteenth through eighteenth centuries. Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press. 514 p.
- HAGERTY, B. B. 2012. The most influential evangelist you've never heard of. National public radio website, 8 August. [Available Online] <http://www.npr.org/2012/08/08/157754542/the-most-influential-evangelist-youve-never-heard-of> [Date of Access: 30 November 2013].
- HALL, B. W. 2012. Harmony United Methodist Church History [personal interview]. 14 Aug., Millsboro, NJ.
- HARRINGTON, M. R. 1921. Religion and ceremonies of the Lenape. Indian notes and monographs. F.W. Hodge, editor. New York: Museum of the American Indian Heye Foundation. 249 p. [Available Online] <http://books.google.com/books?id=>

CTITAAAAYAAJ&printsec=frontcover&dq=harrington+delaware+indians&hl=en&sa=X&ei=i786UZmHMoua9QSiuoHgCQ&ved=0CEIQ6AEwAw#v=onepage&q=harrington%20delaware%20indians&f=false [Date Accessed: 22 February 2013].

HEARTH, A. H. 2008. Strong Medicine speaks: a Native American elder has her say. New York, NY: Atria Books. 267 p.

HECKEWELDER, J.G. 1876. History manners and customs of the Indian nations who once inhabited Pennsylvania and the neighboring states. Philadelphia, PA: Historical Society of Pennsylvania. 465 p.

HEITE, E.F. 1998. Genealogical indistinguishability of Nanticokes, Cheswoldians & expatriates to N.J. [Available Online] <http://www.mitsawokett.com/Puckham.htm> [Date of Access: 22 February 2013]

HEITE, E.F. Mitsawoket. 1997? [Available Online] [http://nativeamericansofdelawarestate.com/HeiteReport1.htm#Mitsawoket, the Community on Pumpkin Neck](http://nativeamericansofdelawarestate.com/HeiteReport1.htm#Mitsawoket,theCommunityonPumpkinNeck) [Date of Access: 22 February 2013]

HEITE, E.F. & BLUME, C.L. 2008. Mitsawokett to Bloomsbury, archaeology and history of a Native-American descendant community in central Delaware. Delaware Department of Transportation archaeology series, 154. [Available Online] <http://nativeamericansofdelawarestate.com/Bloomsbury/BloomsburyIndex.htm> [Date of Access: 22 February 2013].

HEITE, E.F. & HEITE, L. 1982? Delaware's invisible Indians, parts 1 & 2. Heite consulting reports. [Available online] <http://nativeamericansofdelawarestate.com/HeiteReport1.htm#Delaware%27s> [Date of Access: 22 February 2013].

HESSELGRAVE, D. J. 1991. Communicating Christ cross-culturally: an introduction to missionary communication. Second edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House. 672p.

- HINKSON, J. 2008. Mission among Puritans and Pietists. The great commission: evangelicals and the history of world missions. Klauber, M. I. & Manetsch, S. M. editors. North Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group. 240 p.
- HOLMES, W.H. 1883. Art in shell of the ancient Americans. *Second annual report of the Bureau of Ethnology to the secretary of the Smithsonian Institution 1880-'81*. J.W. Powell, Director. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office. 904 p. [Available Online] <http://books.google.com/books?id=lqwQAQAA MAAJ&pg=PA240&dq=Wampum+belts+as+mnemonic&hl=en&sa=X&ei=CYhlUevpIpez4APQj4EY&ved=0CDwQ6AEwAg#v=onepage&q=Wampum%20belts%20as%20mnemonic&f=false> [Date of Access 10 March 2013]
- HOWARD, J.H. 1975. The Nanticoke-Delaware skeleton dance. *American Indian Quarterly*, vol.2, No.1 Spring. University of Nebraska Press. [Available Online] URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1184476> [Date of Access: 3 May 2013].
- HUBERT, A.B. & SCHWARZE, W.N., eds. 1910. David Zeisberger's history of the northern American Indians. Ohio State Archaeological and Historical Society. 189 p. [Available online] <http://archive.org/details/zeisbergerhistnaind00zeisrich> [Date of Access: 28 February 2013]
- HUDSON, C. M., editor. 1975 (reissued in 2007). Four centuries of southern Indians. Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press. 184 p.
- HULTKRANTZ, A. 1953. Conception of the soul among North American Indians. The ethnographical museum of Sweden: Stockholm. Monograph Series. Publication No. 1. [Available Online] [http://books.google.com/books/about/Conceptions\\_of\\_the\\_soul\\_among\\_North\\_Amer.html?id=UKy0AAAIAAJ](http://books.google.com/books/about/Conceptions_of_the_soul_among_North_Amer.html?id=UKy0AAAIAAJ) [Date of Access: 26 July 2012]. 545 p.
- HUNT, D. 1991. Knowing what we believe and why. The Berean call website. 1 August. [Accessible Online] <http://www.thebereancall.org/content/knowing-what-we-believe-why> [Date of Access: 30 November 2013].

- HUNT, D. 1999. Is Satan's power natural or supernatural? The Berean call website. 6 June. [Accessible Online] <http://www.thebereancall.org/content/satans-power-natural-or-supernatural> [Date of Access: 30 November 2013].
- INDIAN BIBLE COLLEGE. 2014. A Biblical position by Native leaders on Native spirituality. [Available Online]: <http://www.indianbible.org> [Date of Access: 27 October 2014].
- INDIAN COUNTRY DIARIES. 2008. Historic trauma may be causing today's health crisis. Native American public telecommunications. September. [Available Online]: <http://www.pbs.org/indiancountry/challenges/trauma.html> [Date of Access 9 February 2015].
- KELLER, T. 2010. *Generous Justice: how God's grace makes us just*. New York: Penguin. 190 p. [Kindle ed.].
- KELLEY, D. F. 2012. Ancient traditions, modern constructions: innovation, continuity, and spirituality on the powwow trail. *Journal for the Study of Religions and Ideologies*, vol. 11, issue 33 (Winter 2012) [Available Online] <http://jsri.ro/ojs/index.php/jsri/article/view/654/567> [Date of Access: 12 July 2014] pp 107-136.
- KING, Jr. M. L. 1963a. Letter from a Birmingham jail. [Available Online]: [http://mlk-kpp01.stanford.edu/kingweb/liberation\\_curriculum/pdfs/letterfrombirmingham\\_wwcw.pdf](http://mlk-kpp01.stanford.edu/kingweb/liberation_curriculum/pdfs/letterfrombirmingham_wwcw.pdf) [Date of Access: 1 March 2015].
- KING, Jr. M. L. 1963b. *Why we can't wait*. New York, NY: New American Library. 166 p.
- KOENIG, K. A. & STEIN, J. 2013. State recognition of American Indian tribes: a survey of state-recognized tribes and state recognition processes. (*In* Recognition, sovereignty struggles, and indigenous rights in the United States: a sourcebook. Den Ouden, A. E. and O'Brien, J. M. *ed.* Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press. Google Books Version). 377 p.

- KRAFT, H.C. 1986. *The Lenape: archaeology, history, and ethnography*. Newark: New Jersey Historical Society. 303 p.
- KRAFT, H.C. 2001. *The Lenape-Delaware Indian heritage 10,000 BC to AD 2000*. Stanhope, NJ: Lenape Books. 670 p.
- LENAPE TALKING DICTIONARY. 2013. Lenape language preservation project of the Delaware Tribe of Oklahoma. [Accessible only online] <http://www.talk-lenape.org/index.php> [Date of Access 15 April 2013].
- LIEBERKÜHN, S. ed. 1821. *The history of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ: comprehending all that the four evangelists have recorded concerning him: all their relations being brought together in one narration, so that no circumstance is omitted, but that inestimable history is continued in one series, in the very words of Scripture*. Translated by David Zeisberger. New York: David Fanshaw. 222 p.
- LINDSTROM, P.M. 1928. *Geographia Americae: with an account of the Delaware Indians. Scandinavians in America*. Philadelphia: the Swedish Colonial Society. 1979 Illustrated reprint edition. Steven Bedney, ed. New York: Arno. 418 p.
- LIVESAY, N. 2002, Understanding the history of tribal enrollment. American Indian Policy Center. [Available Online] <http://www.americanindianpolicycenter.org/pubs/enroll.html> [Date of Access: 24 March 2013].
- LONEWOLF, P. N. 2012. Life experience of a relocated and returned Nanticoke elder. [personal interview]. 9 Aug., Millsboro, DE.
- LOSKIEL, G. H. 1794. *History of the mission of the United Brethren among the Indians in North America*. In three parts. LaTrobe, C. E. translator. London: Brethren's Society for the Furtherance of the Gospel. [Available Online] [http://books.google.com/books/about/History\\_of\\_the\\_mission\\_of\\_the\\_United\\_Bre.html?id=BGUF AAAA QAAJ](http://books.google.com/books/about/History_of_the_mission_of_the_United_Bre.html?id=BGUF AAAA QAAJ) [Date of Access: 30 May 2013]. 671 p.
- LOVE, A. FEATHERS, S. & KPROWSKI, A. 2008. The Supreme Court tribal land claims and the doctrine of discovery; trampling on the walking purchase. *Guild*

*Practitioner* Vol. 65, Issue 2 (Summer). [Available Online] <http://heionling.org>  
[Date of Access: 20 September 2013].

MACPHERSON, J. 1881. The Westminster confession of faith: with introduction and notes. (*In Handbook for Bible classes*. Dods, M. & Whyte. D., *ed.* Edinburgh, Scotland: T. & T. Clark). 171 p.

MARKER see Delaware Public Archives Marker

MARR, C. J. 1998? Assimilation through education: Indian boarding schools in the Pacific northwest. University of Washington Digital Collections. [Available Online] <http://content.lib.washington.edu/aipnw/marr.html> [Date of Access: 6 November 2013].

MARYE, W.B. 1939. The Wiccomiss Indians of Maryland, part 2. *American Antiquity*. Jan 1939. Washington DC: Society for American Archaeology.

MARYLAND (United States of America). 2009a. An Act for giving a bounty for taking Indian prisoners and other purposes therein mentioned. Passed 21<sup>st</sup> November 1763. *Proceedings and Acts of the General Assembly, 1762-1763, Volume 58*. Maryland State Archives. [Available Online] <http://aomol.net/000001/000058/html/am58--418.html> [Date of Access: 8 October 2013].

MARYLAND (United States of America). 2009b. Articles of peace and amity which were concluded and agreed upon between the right honorable Charles absolute lord and proprietary of this province and Unnacocassimon emperor of the Nanticoke the 28<sup>th</sup> of March 1687. *Proceedings of the Council of Maryland 1684-89, Volume 5*. Maryland State Archives. [Available Online] <http://aomol.net/000001/000005/html/am5--558.html> [Date of Access: 8 October 2013].

MATHER, C. 1694. *The life and death of the Reverend Mr. John Eliot, who was the first preacher of the gospel to the Indians in America with an account of the wonderful success which the gospel has had amongst the heathen in that part of the world*. Third edition. London: John Dunton. 168 p.

- MILANO, K.W. 2009. The history of Penn Treaty Park. Charleston, NC: The History Press. 157 p.
- MILLER, J. 1997. Old religion among the Delawares: the Gamwing (Big House Rite). *Ethnohistory*. Vol. 44. No. 1 (Winter). Duke University Press. [Available Online] <http://www.jstor.org/stable/482903> [Date of Access: 29 April 2013]. 21 p.
- MILLER, R. J. 2010. Christianity, American Indians, and the doctrine of discovery, Remembering Jamestown. Lewis & Clark Law School Legal Studies Research Paper Series. Susan F. Mandiberg, editor. Portland, OR: Lewis & Clark Law School. [Available Online] [http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=1803674###](http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1803674###) [Date of Access: 30 September 2013]. 17 p.
- MILLER, R. J. 2011. American Indians, the doctrine of discovery, and manifest destiny. *Wyoming Law Review*, Volume 11, Number 2. [Available Online] <http://heinonline.org> [Date of Access: 30 September 2013].
- MOONEY, J. & THOMAS, C. 1910. Nanticoke. (*In Handbook of American Indians north of Mexico, Part 2*. Hodge, F.W. *ed.* Smithsonian Institution Bureau of American Ethnology. Bulletin 30. Washington: Government Printing Office). 1221 p.
- MOONEY, J. 1911. Delaware. (*In Handbook of American Indians north of Mexico, Part 1*. Hodge, F.W. *ed.* Smithsonian Institution Bureau of American Ethnology. Bulletin 30. Washington: Government Printing Office). 972 p.
- MOREAU, A. S. 2012. Contextualization in world missions: mapping and assessing evangelical models. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications. 432 p.
- MOWREY, R. C. 1974. Delaware school district organization and boundaries. Dover, DE: Delaware State Department of Public Instruction. [Available Online] [https://www.doe.k12.de.us/infosuites/schools/mapping/files/District\\_Organization\\_Boundaries.pdf](https://www.doe.k12.de.us/infosuites/schools/mapping/files/District_Organization_Boundaries.pdf) [Date of Access: 14 November 2013]. 94 p.

- MUMFORD, K. 2012. Pastoring at Indian Mission Church. [personal interview]. 9 Aug., Millsboro, DE.
- NAIROBI STATEMENT ON WORSHIP AND CULTURE. 1996. [Available Online]: <http://worship.calvin.edu/resources/resource-library/nairobi-statement-on-worship-and-culturefull-text/> [Date of Access: 19 February 2015].
- NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS. 2013. Mission and history. Website. [Available Online] <http://www.ncai.org/about-ncai/mission-history> [Date of Access: 26 November 2013].
- NATIONAL COUNCIL OF THE CHURCHES OF CHRIST IN THE USA. 1990. A faithful response to the 500th anniversary of the arrival of Christopher Columbus as adopted by the governing board, May 17, 1990. [Available Online] <http://www.indians.org/welker/faithful.htm> [Date of Access: 14 March 2015].
- NATIONAL COUNCIL OF THE CHURCHES OF CHRIST IN THE USA. 2007. Abolish genocide alliance forms. NCC news service. 9 November [Available Online] <http://www.nccusa.org/news/071109abolishgenocide.html> [Date of Access: 14 March 2015].
- NATIONAL INDIAN CHILD WELFARE ASSOCIATION. 2015. The Indian child welfare act of 1978. [Available Online]: [http://www.nicwa.org/indian\\_child\\_welfare\\_act/](http://www.nicwa.org/indian_child_welfare_act/) [Date of Access: 11 March 2015].
- NATIVE AMERICAN RIGHTS FUND. 2013. Let all that is Indian within you die! *Legal Review* Vol. 38, No. 2. Summer/Fall. Boulder, CO.
- NAZZARO, R. M. 2005. Timeliness of the tribal recognition process has improved, but it will take years to clear the existing backlog of petitions. Testimony before the Committee on Resources, House of Representatives. February 10. [Available Online] <http://www.gao.gov/assets/120/111322.pdf> [Date of Access: 13 December 2013].

- NEHNALAHAMAT. 2013. Lenape Language, Cosmology, and Lifeways [personal interview]. 22 Feb., Mount Bethel, PA.
- NEWCOMB, S. T. 2008. Pagans in the promised land: decoding the doctrine of discovery. Golden, CO: Fulcrum Publishers. [Kindle ed.]. 2583 l.
- NEW JERSEY (United States of America). 2007a. New Jersey Committee on Native American Community Affairs report to Governor Jon S. Corzine. Volume I. 17 December. [Available Online] <https://dspace.njstatelib.org/xmlui/bitstream/handle/10929/23742/14152007.pdf?sequence=1> [Date of Access: 13 November 2013]. 87 p.
- NEW JERSEY (United States of America). 2007b. New Jersey Committee on Native American Community Affairs report to Governor Jon S. Corzine. Volume II Appendix. 17 December. 639 p.
- NIEBUHR, H. R. 1951. Christ and culture. 2001 edition. New York, NY: Harper Collins Publishers. 259 p.
- NORWOOD, H. 1650. A voyage to Virginia 1650. Personal narratives from the virtual Jamestown project, 1575-1705. Virtual Jamestown 2000. [Available Online] : <http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/etcbin/jamestown-browse?id=J1025> [Date of Access: 5 March 2013].
- NYKAMP, E. 2011. Drumming to the heartbeat of God. *Reformed worship: Resources for planning and leading worship*. Issue 102. Dec. [Available Online]: <http://www.reformedworship.org/article/december-2011/drumming-heartbeat-god> [Date of Access: 26 February 2015].
- O'DONNELL, R. 2014. Stop congratulating yourself for opposing the Redskins' name. You're not helping the real problem. *The Washington Post*. 17 September [Available Online]: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/posteverything/wp/2014/09/17/stop-congratulating-yourself-for-opposing-the-redskins-name-youre-not-helping-the-real-problem/> [Date of Access: 8 February 2015].

- PEACE AND CONCERNS STANDING COMMITTEE. 2009. Report of the Indian committee of the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting. 19 September. [Available Online] [http://www.pym.org/interim-meeting/files/2012/11/im-june-2010-doctrine-of-discovery\\_2.pdf](http://www.pym.org/interim-meeting/files/2012/11/im-june-2010-doctrine-of-discovery_2.pdf) [Date of Access: 20 March 2015].
- PEMBER, M. A. 2012. The fire next time. *Indian Country Today Magazine*. December 12. Vol 2. Issue 47.
- PENN, W. 1970. William Penn's own account of the Lenni Lenape or Delaware Indians. Meyers, A. C., ed. Moorestown, NJ: Middle Atlantic Press. 96 p.
- PIERCE, L. 2013. Nanticoke-Lenape Tribalism [personal interview]. 16 Mar., Bridgeton, NJ.
- PLOUS, S. 2015. Test your Native IQ. [Available Online]: <http://www.understandingprejudice.org/index.php?section=nativeiq&action=takeSurvey> [Date of Access: 8 February 2015].
- PORTER, F.W., III. 1979. Strategies for survival: the Nanticoke Indians in a hostile world. *Ethnohistory*, 26 (4): 325-345, Autumn.
- PORTER, F.W., III. 1987. The Nanticoke. New York: Chelsea House Publishers. 95 p.
- PRICE, E. T. 1953. A geographic analysis of White-Negro-Indian racial mixtures in eastern United States. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, Vol. 43, No. 2. June. [Accessible Online] <http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0004-5608%28195306%2943%3A2%3C138%3AAGAOWR%3E2.0.CO%3B2-A> [Date Accessed: 9 March 2008].
- ROGERS, R. 2012. Pastoring the Immanuel Union Church. [personal interview]. 17 August 2012. Cheswold, DE.
- ROSSELLO, P. 2003. Brief historical sketch of St. John United Methodist Church 1841-2003. (Unpublished manuscript in possession of the researcher).

- ROUNTREE, H.C. DAVIDSON, T.E. 1977. Eastern shore Indians of Virginia and Maryland. Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press. 329 p.
- SARAPIN, J. K. 2002 ed. Old burial grounds of New Jersey. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press. 224 p.
- SCHAAF, G. 1990. Wampum belts & peace trees: George Morgan, Native Americans and revolutionary diplomacy. Golden, CO: Fulcrum Publishing. 278 p.
- SCHALLER, K. B. 2011. A Native American Christian speaks on “why?” *Christian Post*. 11 April. [Available Online] <http://blogs.christianpost.com/bindings/a-native-american-christian-speaks-on-why-5494/> [Date of Access: 16 March 2015].
- SCHARF, J.T. 1888. History of Delaware 1609-1888, vol. 2. Philadelphia: Richards Company.
- SHORI, K. J. 2009. Presiding Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori on the repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery. [Available Online] <http://www.episcopalchurch.org/page/repudiation-doctrine-discovery> [Date of Access: 20 March 2015].
- SINDIMA, H. J. 2008. The gospel according to the marginalized. Martin Luther King, Jr. memorial studies in religion, culture, and social development. Vol. 6. New York, NY: Peter Lang Publishing Inc. 250 p.
- SMILING-SPIRITDOVE, T. 2014. Christian worship at tribal events [personal interview]. 15 June 2014. Woodstown, NJ.
- SPECK, F. G. 1915. The Nanticoke Community of Delaware. New York: The Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation. 43 p.
- SPECK, F.G. 1931. A study of the Delaware Indian big house ceremony, vol. 2. Harrisburg, PA: Pennsylvania Historical Commission. 192 p.

- STEINBACK, R. 2011. Bryan Fischer: American Indians should have ‘assimilated.’ Southern Poverty Law Center website. 24 February. [Available Online] <http://www.splcenter.org/blog/2011/02/24/bryan-fischer-american-indians-should-have-assimilated-like-pocahontas/> [Date of Access: 30 November 2013].
- STEVENS, L. M., 2006. *The poor Indians: British missionaries, Native Americans, and colonial sensibility*. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press. 264p.
- STEWART, W. & STEWART, G. 1913. *Gouldtown: a very remarkable settlement of ancient date*. Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Company. 234 p.
- STOTT, J. 2008. *Christian mission in the modern world*. Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity. 192 p. [Kindle ed.].
- STREET, S. 2012. Nanticoke history [personal interview] 8 Aug., Millsboro, DE.
- SUMMER INSTITUTE OF LINGUISTICS. 2015. [Available Online]: <http://www.sil.org/langculture> and <http://www.sil.org/language-culture-documentation> [Date of Access: 1 March 2015].
- SUNRAY, C. 2012. Racist tendencies common in too many tribes. *Indian Country Today*. [Available Online] <http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2012/05/23/racist-tendencies-common-too-many-tribes> [Date of Access: 10 December 2013].
- SWAN, D. C. (2007). Native American Church. (*In Oklahoma Historical Society's encyclopedia of Oklahoma history and culture*. [Available Online] <http://digital.library.okstate.edu/encyclopedia/entries/N/NA015.html> [Date of Access: 27 October 2014].
- TALBOT, S. 2006. Spiritual Genocide: the denial of American Indian religious freedom, from conquest to 1934. *Wicazo Sa Review*, vol. 21, no. 2 (Autumn). pp.7-39. University of Minnesota Press. [Available Online] <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4140266> [Date of Access: 7 December 2014]

- TALIMAN, V. 2011. Christian Crees tear down sweat lodge. *Indian Country Today*. 7 February. [Available Online] <http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2011/02/07/christian-crees-tear-down-sweat-lodge-15500> [Date of Access: 21 February 2011].
- TAYAC, G. & SCHUPMAN, E. 2006. We have a story to tell: The Native peoples of the Chesapeake region. Mark Hirsch, editor. Washington: The Smithsonian Institution National Museum of the American Indian. 25 p.
- THEOPEDIA. s.a. The regulative principle. [Available Online]: [http://www.theopedia.com/Regulative\\_principle](http://www.theopedia.com/Regulative_principle) [Date of Access: 26 February 2015].
- THOMAS, D. 2010. The regulative principle of worship. *Tabletalk magazine*. July 1. Ligonier Ministries. [Available Online]: <http://www.ligonier.org/learn/articles/regulative-principle-worship/> [Date of Access: 26 February 2015].
- TINKER, T. 2010. The romance and tragedy of Christian mission among American Indians. (In Young, A. and Zikmund, B. B., ed. *Remembering Jamestown: hard questions about Christian mission*. Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications. [Kindle ed.]. Available: [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com). part 1, ch. 1).
- TOENSING, G. C. 2012. NCAI: 'historic' unity vote keeps non-federally recognized tribes as full members. *Indian Country Today Magazine*. November 5. [Available Online] <http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2012/11/01/ncai-historic-unity-vote-keeps-non-federally-recognized-tribes-full-members-143427> [Date of Access: 9 December 2013].
- TWISS, R. L. 1996. *Christ, culture and the kingdom: presenting biblical principles for Native ministry that honor God, his people, and his creation*. Vancouver, WA: Wiconi International. 86 p.
- TWISS, R. L. 1998. *Dancing our prayers: perspectives on syncretism, critical contextualization and cultural practices in First Nations ministry*. Revised. 2002. Vancouver, WA: Wiconi Press. 45 p.

TWISS, R. L. 2000. *One church many tribes: following Jesus the way God made you*.  
Ventura, CA: Regal Books. 219 p.

TWISS, R. L. 2005. *Syncretism - a work in progress by Richard Twiss: reflections on the widespread concern about syncretism in Native North American and indigenous ministry*. [Available Online] <http://richardtwiss.blogspot.com/2005/01/syncretism-work-in-progress-by-richard.html> [Date of Access: 27 October 2014].

TWISS, R. L. 2010. *Living in transition, embracing community, and envisioning God's mission as trinitarian mutuality: reflections from a Native-American follower of Jesus*. (In Young, A. and Zikmund, B. B., *ed.* *Remembering Jamestown: hard questions about Christian mission*. Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications. [Kindle ed.]. Available: [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com). part 3, chapter 5).

UNITED METHODIST CHURCH. 2012. *The United Methodist Church repudiates the ancient Doctrine of Discovery*. [Available Online] [http://unyumc.s3.amazonaws.com/8900C008724A490D97978F6CFCD9B260\\_UMC%20Repudiation%20W%20\(2\).pdf](http://unyumc.s3.amazonaws.com/8900C008724A490D97978F6CFCD9B260_UMC%20Repudiation%20W%20(2).pdf) [Date of Access: 2- March 2015].

UNITED NATIONS. 1951. *Convention on the prevention and punishment of the crime of genocide*. Adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on 9 December 1948. No. 1021. United Nations Treaty Series. 12 January. [Available Online] <https://treaties.un.org/doc/Publication/UNTS/Volume%2078/volume-78-I-1021-English.pdf> [Date of Access: 15 March 2015].

UNITED NATIONS. 2007. *Declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples*. [Available Online]: [http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/DRIPS\\_en.pdf](http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/DRIPS_en.pdf) [Date of Access: 2 March 2015].

UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY. 2012. *Report of the Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples, James Anaya: Addendum – the situation of indigenous peoples of the United States of America*. August 30. Twenty-first session of the Human Rights Council. 50 p.

UNITED STATES. Archives. 1776. The Declaration of Independence. [Available online] [http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/declaration\\_transcript.html](http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/declaration_transcript.html) [Date of Access: 29 October 2013].

UNITED STATES. Archives. 2008. Indian census rolls 1885-1940. The U.S. National Archives and Records Administration [Available Online] <http://www.archives.gov/research/census/native-americans/1885-1940.html> [Date of Access: 12 Dec 2012].

UNITED STATES. 95<sup>th</sup> Congress. 1978. American Indian religious freedom act. Public Law 95-341-Aug.11.

UNITED STATES. Department of Commerce. 2010. American Indians and Alaska Natives in the United States wall map. Washington, DC: United States Census Bureau. [Accessible Online]: [http://www.census.gov/geo/www/maps/aian2010\\_wall\\_map/aian\\_wall\\_map.html](http://www.census.gov/geo/www/maps/aian2010_wall_map/aian_wall_map.html) [Date of Access: 23 March 2013].

UNITED STATES. Department of the Interior. 2008. National Park Service. Letter confirming Nanticoke Indian community thematic resource with original documentation. Federal register / weekly list notice. 18 Mar. 1980 Vol. 45, No.54. 17451.

UNITED STATES. Department of the Interior. 2013. Tribal enrollment process. [Available Online]: <http://www.doi.gov/tribes/enrollment.cfm> [Date of Access: 23 March 2013].

UNITED STATES. House of Representatives. 2012. Testimony of Chief Framon Weaver MOWA Band of Chotaw Indians. House Committee on Natural Resource Sub-Committee on Indian and Alaska Native Affairs Oversight Hearing on "*Authorization, Standards and Procedures for Whether, How and When Tribes Should Be Newly Recognized by the Federal Government.*" June 27. [Available Online] [http://democrats.naturalresources.house.gov/sites/democrats.naturalresources.house.gov/files/2012-06-27\\_IANA\\_HRG\\_WeaverTestimony.pdf](http://democrats.naturalresources.house.gov/sites/democrats.naturalresources.house.gov/files/2012-06-27_IANA_HRG_WeaverTestimony.pdf) [Date of Access: 12 December 2013].

URBAN INDIAN HEALTH INSTITUTE, SEATTLE INDIAN HEALTH BOARD.

2012. Addressing depression among American Indians and Alaska Natives: A literature review. Seattle, WA: Urban Indian Health Institute. [Available Online]: [http://www.uihi.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/Depression-Environmental-Scan\\_All-Sections\\_2012-08-21\\_ES\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.uihi.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/Depression-Environmental-Scan_All-Sections_2012-08-21_ES_FINAL.pdf) [Date of Access: 9 February 2015].

VANS MURRAY, W. 1893. A vocabulary of the Nanticoke dialect. Daniel G. Brinton, editor. Southampton, PA. (1996 Reprint from the Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society, Vol. XXI). 46 p.

VOGEL, V. J. 1990. American Indian medicine. *Civilization of the American Indian series*. Vol. 95. Tulsa, OK: University of Oklahoma Press. 622 p.

WALLACE, A.F. 1956. New religions among the Delaware. *Southwest Journal of Anthropology*, vol.12. no.1. Spring. Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press.

WALLACE, P.A. 1996. Conrad Weiser, 1696-1760: friend of colonist and Mohawk. Lewisburg, PA: Wennawoods. 648 p.

WARNER, L.S. & GRINT K. 2012. The case of the noble savage: the myth that governance can replace leadership. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*. Vol. 25, No. 7, November. [Accessible Online]: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09518398.2012.720736> [Date of Access: 22 March 2013].

WASHBURN, K. 2015. Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs address to the general assembly of the National Congress of American Indians. 24 February 2015. Washington, DC.

WATSON, B. A. 2006. John Marshall and Indian land rights: a historical rejoinder to the claim of “universal recognition” of the doctrine of discovery. *Seton Hall Law Review*, Vol. 36. Newark, NJ: Seton Hall University. [Accessible Online]

<http://heinonline.org.nwulib.nwu.ac.za/HOL/Page?handle=hein.journals/shlr36&page=&collection=journals#2> [Date of Access: 30 September 2013].

WESLAGER, C. A. 1943. Delaware's forgotten folk: the story of the Moors & Nanticokes. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press. 215 p.

WESLAGER, C.A. 2003. The Delaware Indians. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press. 546 p.

WESLAGER, C.A. 1983. The Nanticoke Indians – past and present. Newark, DE: University of Delaware Press. 295 p.

WILLIAMS, R. A. Jr. 1990. The American Indian in western legal thought: the discourses of conquest. New York, NY: Oxford University Press. 368 p

WILLIAMS, W. H. 2009. The garden of American Methodism: the Delmarva Peninsula 1769-1820. Frederica, DE: Commission on Archives and History of the Peninsula-Delaware Conference of the United Methodist Church. 225 p.

WITTSTOCK, L. W. AND SALINAS, E. J. 2006? A brief history of the American Indian Movement. American Indian Movement Grand Governing Council Website. [Available Online] <http://www.aimovement.org/ggc/history.html> [Date of Access: 26 November 2013].

WOOD, R. 2011. Overcoming syncretism by contextualization. *Contextualization of global missiology*, Vol. 2. No. 8, January. [Available Online]: <http://ojs.globalmissiology.org/index.php/english/article/view/452/1167> [Date of Access: 27 October 2014]

WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES. 2012. Statement on the doctrine of discovery and its enduring impact on indigenous peoples. [Available Online] <http://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/executive-committee/2012-02/statement-on-the-doctrine-of-discovery-and-its-enduring-impact-on-indigenous-peoples> [Date of Access: 20 march 2015].

- WORLD REFORMED FELLOWSHIP. 2011. Statement of faith. [Available Online]: <http://wrfnet.org/about/statement-of-faith#tradition> [Date of Access: 28 February 2015].
- WRIGHT, A. F. 1986. Vital records of Kent and Sussex counties, Delaware: 1686-1800. Berwyn Heights, MD: Heritage Books. 206 p.
- WRIGHT, L. 2012. Indian Mission Church. [personal interview]. 10 Aug., Millsboro, DE.
- WRIGHT, O. N. 2012. The experiences of a Nanticoke elder. [personal interview]. 10 Aug., Millsboro, DE.
- ZEBLEY, F. 1947. The churches of Delaware. Willmington, DE: Frank R. Zebley. [Available Online] <http://archives.delaware.gov/eBooks/ZebleyChurches.pdf> [Date of Access: 4 July 2014].
- ZINER, K. L. 2013. Narragansett Indians gather from far and wide in Charlestown for annual August Meeting and powwow. *Providence Journal*. 10 August. [Available Online] <http://www.providencejournal.com/breaking-news/content/20130810-narragansett-indians-gather-from-far-and-wide-in-charlestown-for-annual-august-meeting-and-powwow.ece> [Date of Access: 26 July 2014].