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*The Institute of American Indian Studies at Brigham Young University**

PAUL E. FELT** and S. LYMAN TYLER***

Prior to the arrival of Europeans in the Americas during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, it is estimated that approximately 500,000 Indians lived in present Canada, approximately 1,000,000 in what is now the United States, and several millions in that part of the Americas now designated Latin America (Mexico, Central, and South America).

Today there are some 200,000 Indians in Canada, over a half-million in the United States and a good many millions, according to the way a particular country defines an Indian (usually the percentage of Indian blood), in Latin America.

Since the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints which sponsors Brigham Young University has historically encouraged its membership to entertain a particular interest in the American Indian, it may seem natural that this university chose to organize an Institute of American Indian Studies four years ago.

The institute's field of study includes all the Indians of the Americas: Their past, their present situation, and the prospect for the future. It is anticipated that the approaches of the various social sciences as well as the humanities and arts will eventually be utilized in assisting non-Indians to more fully understand the richness and variety represented in the many facets of the various Indian cultures.

To support the research necessary to accomplish the program as outlined, work is now in progress to broaden the scope of and to considerably enlarge the library collections that per-

*Because of the nature of their relationship to scholarly activities three Brigham Young University organizations have been invited to submit statements for this issue on their activity and growth: the University Library, the Institute of American Indian Studies, and the Institute of Government Service.

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tain to the Indians of the Americas. In addition to books, the journals of learned societies and manuscript materials are being sought that will enable scholars to do original research and will eventually result in publication. The distribution of these publications, with the improvement in understanding of the Indians by the non-Indian that will follow, will result in further demand for information and a continuing enlargement of the basic program.

The Institute of American Indian Studies exists primarily to serve the various agencies of the Church with programs that relate to the Indians of the Americas; to assist Brigham Young University and other units within the Unified Church School System to develop programs for the enlargement and improvement of educational opportunities for Indians; to cooperate with governmental agencies in their attempts to improve Indian adjustment to and a more satisfactory participation within the predominant society; and to work with Indian tribes or groups as they attempt to solve their own problems.

To illustrate more clearly, here are a few examples of the kinds of service the institute has been able to give:

Alcoholism. Various agencies within and outside the Church have clearly shown the need for the development of programs to combat the heavy inroads that alcoholism has made into both Indian and non-Indian societies. The institute has undertaken studies that it is anticipated will eventually result in a program to assist Indians and those who work with Indians to better understand problems connected with the use of alcoholic beverages. The film "Bitter Wind" depicting the results of excessive use of alcohol on a Navajo family grew out of a phase of this study.

Higher Education. Studies to determine what benefits Indians expect from education have enabled us to make recommendations that we anticipate will result in a greater ability to fit educational programs to the specific needs of Indian peoples. Based on these studies, the Indian Education Program at Brigham Young University presently offers an increased range of courses to Indian students, and still other courses to improve the training of both Indian and non-Indian who wish to work with Indians professionally are being enlarged.

Cooperation with Government. The institute is working with the Governor's Committee on Indian Affairs in the State of Utah to improve relations between Indians and the various state agencies that serve Indians. Consideration is also being given to programs that will call for an increase in inter-relationships between Indian communities and the adjacent non-Indian communities. Two surveys have been made by the institute to gather data essential to the progress of these programs.

Work with Tribes. Research has been undertaken to assist tribes in Utah and Arizona with intra-tribal programs and inter-tribal relations, and to develop programs involving the relations of tribes or tribal groups with both state and federal agencies. Historical research should soon result in publication of tribal histories, bibliographies, and accounts of the relations of Indians with government agencies.

Identification of Tribes and Groups. The first phase of a study to locate geographically, identify as to tribal affiliation, and determine the population, religious affiliation, political and socio-economic conditions of the various Indian groups throughout the Americas is in progress and some preliminary information has been made available.

Work with Church Indian Committee. Through the executive-secretary of the Indian Committee of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, various projects are undertaken to provide specific information useful to the agencies of the Church that work with Indians. An information sheet, *Indians of the Americas*, is distributed periodically to keep those who direct these agencies informed of current developments pertaining to Indians.

As the membership of the Church continues to increase in Latin America, undoubtedly the Institute of American Indian Studies will continue to be able to supply useful information concerning the Indian groups that the expanding organization will inevitably come in contact with. In the meantime those associated with the institute continue to gain experience through their research projects and current activities.