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A Study of the Cultural and Religious Behavior of the Navaho Indians Which Caused Animosity, Resistance, or Indifference to the Religious Teachings of the Latter-Day Saints

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A STUDY OF THE CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS BEHAVIOR OF THE NAVAHO INDIANS

WHICH CAUSED ANIMOSITY, RESISTANCE, OR INDIFFERENCE TO THE

RELIGIOUS TEACHINGS OF THE LATTER-DAY SAINTS

A Thesis

Presented to

The Department of Graduate Studies

in Religious Instruction

Brigham Young University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Religious Education

by

James D. Mathews

August 1968
PREFACE

The author first developed interest in this subject while laboring as a missionary among the Navaho Indians in the Southwest Indian Mission of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. In subsequent years, this interest increased while coordinating the religious activities of L.D.S. Indian students at Sherman Institute in Riverside, California, and at Intermountain Indian School in Brigham City, Utah.

After a long and sustained association with the Navaho people, the author noted areas in the Navaho-Mormon relationship which caused resistance to full acceptance of the church.

This thesis is an attempt to probe into these areas of conflict in hopes that they may be more readily dissolved in order that the Navahos may reach their full potential in the church, not only as individuals but as a great Lamanite nation.

Great appreciation and love is expressed to Elder Spencer W. Kimball of the Council of the Twelve Apostles of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints for his influence upon the life of the author and for his prophetic utterance, "the day of the Lamanite is here," which serves as a source of inspiration and encouragement in this latter-day work.

Gratitude is expressed to the many devoted colleagues in the Indian Seminary Program. Special thanks is likewise given to J. Edwin Baird, Supervisor of Indian Seminaries and Hal L. Taylor, former
Mission President of the Southwest Indian Mission for their contributions to the cause of the Lamanites.

Appreciation is expressed to instructors, associates, and all others who contributed directly or indirectly to the completion of this work.

Love is extended to the author's family for their patience and especially to his wife, Lynne, who has given wholehearted cooperation and assistance. She has also aided in the editing and typing of the manuscript.

Finally the author thanks his many Navaho friends, especially the youth, who have been a source of great joy and satisfaction in his life, and upon whose shoulders rest the responsibility "to build a nation in a day."
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

I. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints for many years have been in frequent contact with the Navaho Indians of the Southwest. Missionaries were sent among them in an effort to convert them to the teachings of the L.D.S. church. Early Mormon settlements were established on or near Navaho lands.

In recent years, thousands of young Navaho youth have been enrolled in the Indian Seminary Program of the church which has provided religious, social, and recreational activities for them while attending school. There also have been hundreds of others involved in the Indian Student Placement Program which has provided opportunities for Navaho children to be placed in foster homes for the duration of the school year in various western states.

Furthermore, in recent years many hundreds of Navaho people residing on and off of the reservation have been proselyted to the Mormon faith as a result of the church's vast missionary program and the creation of the Southwest Indian Mission. In spite of frequent contact with Navaho Indians by members of the church, there has continued to exist areas of conflict which have caused resistance toward the teachings of the Latter-day Saints.
Purpose

The purpose of this study was to determine the causes of animosity, resistance, and indifference to the religious teachings of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

II. JUSTIFICATION OF THE PROBLEM

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has enthusiastically pursued several programs which involve the Navaho people. Proselyting efforts of the L.D.S. missionaries have continued to expand and improve. Many additional Navaho students have been recruited and enrolled in the Indian Seminary Program and Indian Placement Program. Still others have been admitted to the Brigham Young University which has developed a unique program in Indian Education to help Indian youth succeed.

It is believed that there is justification for doing this research in order that it may serve as a guide in the development of curriculum to be taught to the Navaho youth who are enrolled in seminary, and to assist missionaries in lesson planning and presentation. It may also foster patience and understanding in the personal contact with Navaho people by missionaries, foster parents, seminary personnel, or others who may desire to work among them.

III. DELIMITATION OF THE PROBLEM

This study deals with the Navaho Indians of the Southwest area of the United States. The research was confined to the religious and cultural behavior of the Navahos and problems they have had in
accepting the teachings of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

IV. DEFINITION OF TERMS

**Navaho Indians.** A tribe of Indians living in the Southwest section of the United States mainly in Arizona and New Mexico.

**Lamanite.** Mormon terminology for the American Indian.

**Reservation.** A specified tract of land for the habitation and use of an Indian tribe.

**Latter-day Saints.** Persons who are baptized members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

**L.D.S.** Abbreviation for "Latter-day Saints."

**Mormon.** A nickname given to members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints because of their acceptance of the Book of Mormon.

**Southwest Indian Mission.** Geographical location of missionary activities of the church for proselyting purposes among the Indians in the southwest.

**Medicine Man.** One regarded by fellow tribesmen to possess the art of preserving or restoring physical health.

V. MAIN SOURCE FOR STUDY

The author has relied upon primary sources obtained from the Brigham Young University Library, Provo, Utah; Intermountain School Library and Brigham City Public Library, Brigham City, Utah; and L.D.S. Institute of Religion Library, Logan, Utah.
An additional source of information was a series of interviews with persons affiliated with Navaho Indians in education, business, and in the community. Navaho people who have become members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and Navahos who are non-members were also interviewed.

A questionnaire was administered to three hundred Navaho students attending Intermountain Indian School in Brigham City, Utah. These students represented Catholic, Protestant, and Latter-day Saint faiths. The questionnaire was designed to measure the spiritual tempo of the students, and to indicate areas of resistance to Latter-day Saint teachings.

Correspondence was helpful in acquiring information, advice, and suggestions from persons associated with Indian Education at Brigham Young University, Supervisor of Indian Seminaries, Mission President of the Southwest Indian Mission, and colleagues in the Indian work.
CHAPTER II

BACKGROUND OF NAVAHO-CHRISTIAN
CONTACTS AND RELATIONS

I. EARLY CATHOLIC CONTACTS

Christianity was introduced to the Navaho Indian nation two
centuries before Mormon history was ready to be written. As early
as 1630, a Franciscan missionary, Friar Alonso de Benavides gave
Europeans one of the first historical glimpses of "dineh" or The
People (indicating the Navaho nation).\textsuperscript{1} His missionary attempts
among the Navahos were an effort to create a compatible relationship
in order to win their loyalty to Catholicism and to maintain peace
between them and the Pueblo nation to the east.\textsuperscript{2}

By the mid-eighteenth century, a new zeal for missionary work
was manifest when Father John Menchero journeyed into the Moquis
(Hopi) and Navaho country. The expedition was successful in con-
verting several natives to the new faith of the Spaniards.\textsuperscript{3}

It was during this same period that a fascinating report was
brought from the Navaho country purporting the conversion of five
thousand Indians and the establishment of a great Indian kingdom.

\begin{itemize}
  \item[1]Edward H. Spicer, \textit{Perspectives in American Indian Culture
  \item[2]\textit{Ibid.}, p. 297.
  \item[3]John Gilmary Shea, \textit{History of the Catholic Missions Among the
  Indian Tribes of the United States} (New York: P. J. Kennedy, Excelsior
  Catholic Publishing House), pp. 82-83.
\end{itemize}
This fantastic story aroused the interest of the viceroy to such proportions that he ordered the founding of four missions among the Navahos.4

These early missions did not survive for long, but they were useful in maintaining contact with The People and partially Christianizing small numbers of them. "In the process, however, they became largely disassociated from their own tribe, so that to this day their descendants in the Canyonicito and Puertocito areas are called 'The People who are the enemies'."5

Undoubtedly the early padres felt the urgency to convert The People to the Christian faith since they characterized the Navaho religion as "heathen."6 Their dreams of a mass conversion and a Christian-Navaho nation were dampened nearly from the beginning as resistance was manifest among the Indians. The Navahos of Cebolleta contended they had no desire to become Christians; furthermore, they had never solicited the spiritual assistance of the Fathers. A gesture of friendship was indicated, however, when the Fathers were invited to remain among them if they so desired without fear or harm. Moreover, The Indians pledged that some of their children could have "water thrown upon them" and perhaps they would become believers and desire spiritual guidance from the Fathers, but as for

4Spicer, op. cit., p. 298.
6Tbid., p. 36.
themselves they were unapproachable and could not accept the tenets of this new faith.  

Some of the Navahos who lived in the vicinity of these early missions retained traces of this first Christian exposure, and possibly borrowed elements of the religion which appealed to them. For the most part, the Navahos clung persistently to their native religion and were considered too scattered and wild to receive more attention. These conditions brought a temporary halt to this missionary work.  

II. EARLY MORMON CONTACTS  

Mormon missionary activities among the Navahos began as early as 1858. During that year Jacob Hamblin, one of Mormonisms most colorful missionaries to the Indians, and a small party crossed through Navaho country to Hopi villages. It was contemplated to leave Samuel Knight, Benjamin Knell and Andrew Gibbons to labor among the proud and defiant Navahos. Their intentions were soon demoralized after attempting to communicate with a small number. They reaped nothing but silence and contempt. Furthermore, Tuba, the Hopi Chieftain, advised against it.  

7Spicer, op. cit., p. 299.  
In subsequent years other expeditions were made across Navaho country to the Hopi villages. In 1860, young George A. Smith, Jr., son of apostle Smith, was mortally wounded by unfriendly Navahos when he left camp in search of his horse which had strayed away. Such belligerent acts had been forewarned by a small group of friendly Navahos who had earlier joined the party.\textsuperscript{10}

Although there were some groups who were friendly to the Mormons, the hostile feelings of the warring bands were prompted in part because of the Mormon's frequent visits to the Hopis, traditional enemies of the Navaho people. Furthermore, a company of U.S. soldiers had visited in a few camps of the Navahos and prejudiced them against the Mormons.\textsuperscript{11}

Thus it is seen that the Navahos had a wide range of opinions concerning the Mormon people. This resulted probably because they were a nomadic people divided into many clans and governed by many petty chiefs.\textsuperscript{12}

Some Navahos grew increasingly bold as they carried out raids on Mormon settlements in southern Utah. Even during their exile at Bosque Redondo on the Pecos River in New Mexico, renegade bands

\textsuperscript{10}Kate B. Carter, "Pioneer Missionaries Among the Indians," (Salt Lake City, Utah: Daughters of Utah Pioneers State Central Company, April, 1937), pp. 3,4.

\textsuperscript{11}Bailey, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 230.

continued to harrass the southern settlers. These depredations prompted the settlers to post guards at strategic crossings of the Colorado. Fear from loss of property as well as loss of life itself, altered the attitude of the once friendly saints. Aware of the growing hostility among the settlers, Jacob Hamblin, faithful to his missionary calling, confided in a close associate, Major John W. Powell, that:

"... the Navahos are still the scourge of our frontiers. In another month they start crossing the river on their winter raids. It seems senseless to mount guard against them day and night. They're humans, as we are. They have hearts, and the deepest sort of intellects. Their hearts and their intellects must be reached. And it will be done, if I have to do it single-handed."

In November, 1870, almost single-handedly, Jacob Hamblin and party traveled to Fort Defiance, Arizona, "to reach their hearts and their intellects," and to negotiate a peace treaty with many leading figures of a schismatic Navaho nation to cease plundering the southern settlements. As the negotiations proceeded, he felt and communicated to his brethren that "the blessings of the Lord were over them in that his talk to them was probably the first the chiefs of the Navaho nation ever heard of a gospel discourse adopted to their circumstances."

Early attempts to convert the Navahos to Mormonism were limited to efforts to befriend them and to maintain peace. By March 1875, rewards for patience and long suffering were in evidence. The Indian missionaries received much gratification when twenty-six Navahos and

\[\text{13}^\text{Bailey, op. cit., p. 315.}\]
\[\text{14}^\text{Ibid., p. 310.}\]
\[\text{15}^\text{Corbett, op. cit., p. 302.}\]
one child were baptized, followed by 147 others.\textsuperscript{16}

Early in 1876, Mormon colonization expanded southward into northern Arizona. A number of small communities settled along the Little Colorado River which served as missionary outposts to the Indians.\textsuperscript{17} Other settlements such as Ramah, New Mexico,\textsuperscript{18} and communities northeast of the reservation in the San Juan Valley brought Navahos and Mormons into close proximity.\textsuperscript{19}

With the death of Jacob Hamblin in August, 1886, followed by the death of his devoted associates, the dream of a prosperous and fruitful missionary program among the tribes of the Southwest was shattered. Furthermore, when the Edwards-Tucker Law, which labeled polygamy as unlawful cohabitation, was passed, severe persecution was heaped upon the church. In addition, the hardships of the untamed frontier caused the Saints to focus their attention upon internal problems at home.

Proselyting activities among the Lamanites were sharply curtailed except for small sporadic efforts. This condition prevailed in the church for many years until the work among the Lamanites was

\textsuperscript{16}Ibid., p. 386.

\textsuperscript{17}Andrew Jensen, Encyclopedic History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Salt Lake City, Utah: Deseret News Publishing Company, 1941), p. 802.

\textsuperscript{18}Ibid., p. 690.

\textsuperscript{19}Kluckhohn & Leighton, op. cit., p. 122.
revived by President George Albert Smith in the 1940's.  

III. PROTESTANT EFFORT

As the American frontier moved westward, other Christian sects accepted the challenge to render service by bringing Christianity and civilization to the red man. They received considerable encouragement after General Ulysses S. Grant became President of the United States in March 1869, and adopted the "Quaker Policy" (called such because the Quakers received a considerable proportion of the appointments as Indian agents) as a probable solution to the unsolved Indian problem. This policy placed churchmen in positions within the Indian service to act as agents. Such a course of action was appealing to the humanitarians and appeared to be tolerable with the Indians, but it was not well received by all churchmen, especially the Catholics who felt it was discriminatory and anti-Catholic because of the small number of appointments awarded to them.  

After much discussion each church group decided on a geographical area. The Presbyterians were assigned the Navahos. In the 1870's, they established their headquarters at Ganado (Arizona), and for two decades controlled both the appointment of the Indian agents and the early reservation schools.  

20Spencer W. Kimball, "The Children of the First Covenant" (Address to Seminary and Institute Faculty, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, June 27, 1958), pp. 6, 7. (mimeographed).


22Spicer, op. cit., p. 320.
Other denominations came to establish missionary centers. Some did not endure. Since 1891, however, a sustained proselyting program has been maintained by numerous denominations. The principal leaders have been Catholics, Presbyterians, Christian Reformed, Methodists, Baptists, and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.  

During the last decade, the missionary zeal to win the Navaho nation to Christianity has been accelerated. The student roster for the school year 1967-68, at Intermountain Indian School in Brigham City, Utah, lists fifty-six different religious preferences for its 2,161 Navaho studentbody.  

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24 Student Roster 1967-68, Department of the Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Navaho Area; Intermountain School, Brigham City, Utah, (printed at AF Field Printing Plant, Utah Defense Depot, Ogden, Utah, November 1967).
CHAPTER III

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

There is considerable material available concerning the conflicts which have arisen in attempts to convert the Navaho people to the various Christian denominations. Through a review of literature, it was found that these conflicts are not necessarily limited to a difference of opinions in religious philosophy, as important as this may be. Much contention stems from more basic problems, such as preservation of self-identity, superstitions, lack of communication, conflicting moral standards, and prejudices caused by other Christian sects.

Very little has been written directly concerning the problems that confront the Latter-day Saints. However, it was discovered while considering the recorded evidence of Navaho conflicts with various denominations that many points of opposition were found to be similar to the problems confronting the Latter-day Saints in their proselyting and conversion efforts. A summary of these conflicting problems together with the limited material directly concerning the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has been considered here.

I. PRESERVATION OF SELF IDENTITY

The Navahos, like other American Indians of the Twentieth Century, have been engaged in a struggle to preserve their self-identity. Although white influences from government agents, traders,
ranchers, and missionaries have been extensive for many years, still numerous Indians, especially the older ones, are desirous that civilization pass them by.

Much has been said and written about minority groups in the United States. The depredations that exist have come to the attention of the American people. Many minority groups suffer from acute poverty, the lack of educational privileges, the lack of job opportunities, and the lack of proper health care and sanitation.

The American Indian, for the most part, stands quietly in the background while other groups demand social change. He becomes a silent sufferer. The grim statistics from the reservations indicate his dilemma.

For example, the median family income for reservation Indians last year was just under $1,500. That is less than half the median family income for Negroes, and far below the nearly $6,000 for all U.S. families, including whites.¹

Most Indians live in small dwellings of tarpaper shacks or hogans. Few of these homes have running water, electricity, or toilet facilities. "About ninety per cent of the housing is considered sub-standard,"² writes U.S. News and World Report.

The infant death rate among Indians is far above the U.S. population in general. Disease runs rampant on the reservation. U.S. News and World Report continues, "There were 285 cases of tuberculosis per 100,000 Indians, compared with thirty-seven in the general popula-


²Ibid.
tion. Deaths from tuberculosis were twenty-one per 100,000 Indians and only 5.7 per cent in the U.S. generally.

The former commissioner of Indian Affairs, Philleo Nash, called this situation "truly shocking." Says Mr. Nash: "Most reservations are places of little opportunity. Life on a reservation can be grim and harsh." Despite such conditions, the fact that most Indians are still segregated results largely from their own choice.

The Indians unlike other minority groups are satisfied to cling to their own culture. In contrast:

The Negro makes a thousand fruitless efforts to insinuate himself among men who repulse him; he conforms to the tastes of his oppressors, adopts their opinions, and hopes by imitating them to form a part of their community. . . . The Indian, on the contrary, has his imagination inflated with the pretended nobility of his origin, and lives and dies in the midst of these dreams of pride. Far from desiring to conform his habits to ours, he loves his savage life as the distinguishing mark of his race and repels every advance to civilization. . . . The Negro, who earnestly desires to mingle his race with that of the Europeans, cannot do so; while the Indian, who might succeed to a certain extent, disdains to make the attempt. . . .

Raymond Nakai, head of the Navaho Tribal Council posed a question often asked by the younger Navaho generation: "Is losing our identity bad or good? I don't know. Ask the Irish or the Swedes or any other minority group in America."

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3Ibid.


Another tribal official, Peter MacDonald, said, "We are caught between the old and new." He continued, "We want to have the best of modern society—the television and the automobiles—but we also want to cling to our old philosophies." He admitted that he occasionally visited a medicine man, "but only because my mother wishes it. She believes in the Navaho tradition and would be disappointed if I just ignored it altogether."7 Lloyd House, another progressive Navaho, explained, "Medicine men are still visited, but we know penicillin works better than a dance, and you can't sing away TB or cancer."8

There appears from time to time evidence among the younger Navahos that resistance to American culture is dissipating. The young continue to grow impatient with old traditions which they believe curtail growth and prosperity on the reservation.9

Sid Moody, Associated Press writer described what awaits the modern day Indian in an interesting commentary:

Two cultures beckon the American Indian. One, the romantic notion of the proud life of the brave warrior. The other, a red man in white man's clothes, doing a white man's work in a world of routine. The longing for one and the rejection of the other has brought the Indian to desperate times.10

White influence has been persistent and at times so overwhelming

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that many Indian nations have finally lost their ancient hunting
grounds, their economic religious and social structures have been
altered, and numerous other aspects of Indian life have decayed with
the advance of civilization. They struggle to salvage anything of
a proud past. They desire to maintain some cultural heritage they
can call their very own. And they resist strenuously anyone who
suggests further change of a heritage of which they feel proud.

**Government Education Policy**

The government education policy has been a deterrent to the
preservation of the self-identity of the Indian. The Pilgrim founders
and other European colonizers brought to America ideas of land owner-
ship, government, morality, and religion that were strange and
meaningless to the first inhabitants. After a time, these ideas
began to dominate and overrule Indian thought. Being a humane nation
and not completely determined to exterminate the Indians, the white
man tried to assume the responsibility of showing how these new ideas
operated. He desired to impart knowledge and skills that would
qualify the inferior Indian to exist side by side with his new
neighbors. In this way, a system of Indian education was instituted
nearly from the beginning of the frontier which persists even now.\(^{11}\)

Formal education for Navaho children began shortly after the
tribe returned from exile at Redondo Bosque (Fort Sumner) in the late
1860's. It started as a day school in Fort Defiance, Arizona, and
rapidly progressed to a boarding school. Subsequently, other boarding

\(^{11}\) Alexander H. Leighton and Dorothea C. Leighton, *The Navaho Door*,
(Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1944), pp. 41-42.
schools were established on the reservation, but many youngsters left
their homes to be educated in off-reservation boarding schools as far
away as Pennsylvania, Kansas, and California.\(^\text{12}\)

Allen L. Nephew, an Indian himself, maintained that many Indians
have resented the governments educational policy and practice of
placing Indian youth in federal boarding schools, often far away from
reservations and family influences. Some children have remained away
from their homes for ten years or longer. In some cases, they were
forbidden to speak their native language, disciplined in a military
fashion, and were compelled to attend various churches that were near
the schools.

Many Indians went away to school to be "educated for the white
man's world but there was no place for him there. Neither was there
a place for him in the tribe because he had become like a white man."\(^\text{13}\)

A high percent of Indian children returned home from federal
boarding schools and entered a life for which their education had given
them little preparation and many handicaps.

Lloyd House's father, a Navajo, has been grappling with that
problem most of his life. Years ago, President Theodore
Roosevelt decided that if we made these treaties with the
Indians, we better live up to them. One day when House's
father was 15 and herding sheep on the reservation, a black
car stopped and the driver waved him over and told him to get
in. He obeyed. The car stopped other places picking up
young Indians. The car became so full that House had to get
out and run behind it as the auto rolled off towards Gallup,
N. Mex. There the children were put in "long black things."

\(^{12}\)Ibid., p. 46.

\(^{13}\)Allen L. Nephew, "Christian Education and the American Indian,"
House's father came to learn these were railroad cars. The young Indians were taken to Phoenix and put in Indian boarding schools. Ten years later, the father came back to the reservation to put his white man's education to work. But there was no work, only the same pastoral life the Navajos had lived for as long as one could remember, "My father had enough education so he couldn't go back to eating mutton every day with his fingers," said his son. "And he wasn't educated enough to get by in the white man's world. So he's lived in the hobo jungles ever since, getting odd jobs. He's been an alcoholic for 55 years." 14

The Indian looks upon the white man's education as a process to annihilate his indigenous culture. As early as 1744, an attitude toward white man's education was established among Indians that has persisted for many years. Although teaching methods and educational facilities have greatly improved, the fact still remains that many Indian children are taken away from their home and family ties for at least nine months of every year to be educated in a situation that offers very little training in home responsibilities and family life.

"They come back and start a family, but they never had a normal family life themselves. They don't know how to set standards for themselves or their children or even what standards to set." 15 White man's education gives them enough that they cannot fit into their old ways and yet they are insufficiently prepared to compete in a white man's society.

In 1744, an analogy to this situation was voiced by the chiefs of six civilized nations as a reply to the Virginia Commissioners who were desirous to educate six of their Indian boys. They recapitulated

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15 Ibid., p. A 5.
their feelings toward white man's education by reminding the Commissioners that:

Several of our young people were formerly brought up at the colleges of the Northern Provinces; they were instructed in all your sciences, but when they came back to us, they were bad runners; ignorant of every means of living in the woods; unable to bear either cold or hunger; knew neither how to build a cabin, take a deer, or kill an enemy; spoke our language imperfectly; were therefore, neither fit for hunters, warriors, or counselors; they were totally good for nothing.16

Allen L. Nephew maintained that the Bureau of Indian Affairs seldom considers the Indians, but rather they consider the task.

Upon completion of the education of Indian youth, the government has pursued programs and policies with disregard to the welfare and interest of the Indian people by sending them to large metropolitan area for employment and integration into the main stream of American life. However, this process has further surpressed the native culture of the red man who is locked in a bitter struggle to preserve it.17

White Man's Christianity

White Man's Christianity has also served to surpress the self-identity of the Indian. Since the latter 1890's, a concerted missionary program has been directed to the Navahos by numerous denominations.18

16Spencer W. Kimball, "The Dawning of a Brighter Day," (Address delivered at the 127th Semi-Annual General Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints at the Tabernacle at Salt Lake City, Utah, Oct. 6, 1956), pp. 2, 3. (Mimeographed)

17Nephew, op. cit., p. 508.

The consensus of opinions among missionaries has been that the family life of the Indian was primitive; his religion was pagan; and his customs were heathen. "He had to be changed. He had to become a Christian." 19

A distinguishing characteristic of Christian missionary work has been liquidation of the native culture and denunciation of many tribal rituals. An example of this pattern was cited by Gladys A. Reichard who made a study of Navaho and Christian conflicts. She reported that:

Christian missionaries of all denominations in all world quarters have always been preoccupied with the sexual life of natives, most often mistaking marriage and family organization for sex and morals. Consequently, as a first cause they (with the possible exception of the Mormons) have assailed polygamy. 20

This course of action did not eliminate polygamy among the Navahos; it simply pointed to the necessity of going underground. On the surface it appeared that "the surplus women and children were supported by a conscientious man who lawfully ceased to be husband and father." 21

Clyde Kluckhohn, who has written extensively on The People, suggested that certain Protestant denominations "have consistently followed a policy of exterminating the native culture." School children who desired to attend Navaho ceremonials were forbidden to do so. This resulted in confusion for the younger Navahos who were

19Nephew, op. cit., p. 507.
20Reichard, op. cit., p. 69.
21Ibid., p. 70.
"caught between the expectations of their parents and the demands of the missionaries."\(^ {22} \)

Furthermore, the Christian missionary introduced a new form of liturgy. He utilized the organ and piano rather than a drum. He introduced the Bible which speaks of a promised land in a far away and strange country. The sacred land to the Navaho is four mountains in the vicinity where he lives, one of which may be seen from nearly any location on the reservation. The missionaries speak only of a male God, but in Navaho religious lore, they speak of Changing Woman as one of their principle dieties. Moreover, the white man's God is perfect, whereas, the Navaho insists that all things have an evil side as well as good.\(^ {23} \)

Oscar H. Lipps, an authority on Navaho culture, suggested that The People looked upon Christianity as a white man's religion which posed a threat to their native religion, and did little to meet their needs. Since Christianity originated with the white man and not the Navaho:

He will have none of the white man's religion, his own being good enough for him. He does not object to missionaries, but he wants them to come to him with a tool chest and a practical knowledge of agriculture by irrigation, and of stock raising. He protests that he knows nothing about 'that man up in the skies' and of that world where there will be no more work . . . but as to the Bible, he knew nothing about it and could not understand its teachings; it was made for white people and not for the Navajos.\(^ {24} \)


\(^ {23} \)Ibid., p. 133.

Some experts believe that a reconciliation can be made between the Navahos and Christianity. Such was the case of the coexistence movement brought about by John Slocum, a Squaxin Indian of Puget Sound. His followers later organized the Indian Shaker Church which is still in existence. The story is told how John died and was resurrected several times. The second time, he died was in 1882. After a day, his friends had come to assist in his burial. As his wife approached the corpse, she went into a fit of violent trembling. John then awoke and told of his glorious vision of God. He had been commissioned to encourage the Indian people to give up their evil ways especially the old dances, customs, and anything having to do with the medicine man. Indians were to trust in God and Jesus who would speak directly to them. This was a message to the Indian people and not for the whites. It was theirs. Something that could be called their very own.²⁵ It seemed believable and was accepted because it was for the Indians and was offered by an Indian.

The people continue to keep a wary eye on the various denominations, although many have affiliated themselves with different groups. "It is not known how many Navahos have become Christians in any deep-seated sense," said Edward Spicer. "Gifts of food and clothing and entertainment provided by Christian religious services are welcomed by Navahos, as is a good missionary who will assume the onerous responsibility of burying the dead, a task which Navahos have always abhorred."²⁶


Many church groups have recognized that missionary work among the Navahos is a long frustrating process. Betty Stirling who worked considerably with the Navaho Adventist Mission lamented:

After some eighty years of Protestant and Catholic Mission activity, possibly 5 to 10 per cent of the Navajos profess Christianity. At the most liberal estimate, if "sympathizers" are included, perhaps 25 per cent. After some forty years of off-and-on Adventist Mission work, what? A handful of baptized school children, a very few baptized adults, and a large number of "backsliders." No completely Navajo churches with Navajo leadership.27

The proselyting methods of Christian missionaries are viewed with suspicion and distrust among Navahos. Nephew drew a conclusion to this situation by saying, "It is a sad note that under white skin came the good news of The Great Spirits love for all men, as well as guns, whiskey, greed for land and a desire to extinguish a people."28

In an effort to preserve their self-identity, Navahos have, in recent years, attempted to counteract the advance of white man's Christianity by turning to peyotism and obtaining membership in the Native American Church. This cult was incorporated as a church in 1945 in Oklahoma. It spread to the Ute nation and ultimately to the Navaho.29

Peyote is described as a small, turnip-shaped cactus which grows wild in the lower Rio-Grande country. The small bulbs may be cut in pieces and brewed like tea. When peyote is taken in sufficient

28 Nephew, op. cit., p. 507.
29 Underhill, op. cit., p. 268, 269.
quantities it produces hallucinations. These hallucinations are usually manifest in spiritual experiences. Indians claimed to have seen God, Jesus, angels, "and had a conviction that they could live better."\footnote{Underhill, op. cit., p. 265.}

Those who become actively affiliated with peyotism are convinced that this religion is the one thing left that's really Indian, and not borrowed from the white man. This is clearly indicated in the following dialogue:

Q: How is it different from other Christian religions?
A: It's Indian.
Q: In what way is it Indian?
A: Well, because it's the herb . . .
Q: Anything else?
A: The meeting is pure Indian.
Q: What makes you say that?
A: We speak to Almighty God in our native tongue. God has given me His name in my language. And we have, of course, the tools that's used in there; that's all Indian. We have a drum, gourd, feathers, and we have fire in there, and we have cedar in there, smoke . . . .\footnote{Ibid., p. 267.}

Many Indians believe the Native American Church to be the Indian version of Christianity. Oliver La Farge, an expert on Indian cultures said, "Those who take up the cult often abandon their old religions, although some merge the two, and are usually immune to conversion to (white man's) Christianity."\footnote{J. S. Slotkin, Menomini Peyotism, (Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society, 1952), p. 617.}

II. SUPERSTITION REGARDING DEATH

The Navahos have many fears and superstitions. Their superstition regarding death may be a significant deterrent in their acceptance of Christianity. The resurrection of the dead could be agreed upon as a fundamental principle of the Christian faith. It implies that a man, having died, may in some future day come forth from the grave and appear to the living. The prime example of this principle is the resurrection of Jesus Christ.\textsuperscript{34}

To the Christian, the doctrine of the resurrection brings warmth to the heart and hope in immortal life. On the contrary, the Navaho would consider contact with the dead, however remote, the worst possible experience that could happen to an individual. A few progressive, educated Navahos admit the People must overcome this fear, "yet they confess that they cannot lay it aside, and they do all they can to get a white man to bury their dead. Fear of the dead, the 'ghost' amounts to a tribal phobia..."\textsuperscript{35} If a white man is not available to bury the dead, the Navahos will do it themselves. Usually a small number of persons are delegated to complete the task.

The Navaho insists that unless elaborate precautions are taken, the deceased may return as ghosts to haunt the living. This is true no matter how affectionate the person may have been while he was living. In death he is potentially dangerous. A ghost may be de-

\textsuperscript{34}\textit{The Holy Bible}, Luke 24.

\textsuperscript{35}\textit{Reichard, op. cit.}, p. 67.
scribed as the malignant portion of a dead person. It may return to
the living to avenge some neglect or abuse.

A likely place for a ghost to appear would be his burial place
or his former hogan. The Navahos have strong feelings about a person
dying in a hogan. If such fate should happen, the hogan would be
abandoned forever. It becomes known as a chindi bighan (devil house),
a likely place for the spirit to return to plague the living.

Ghosts appear after dark or just before the death of some
family member, in human form or as coyotes, owls, mice, whirl-
winds, spots of fire, or indefinite dark objects. They are
usually dark or black. They may change form or size before
one's eyes or make recognizable sounds (as of familiar birds
or animals) and noises of movement. Whistling in the dark is
always evidence that a ghost is near. Since ghosts appear
only at night, adult Navahos are afraid to go about in the dark
alone, and all sorts of night shapes and sounds are fearful.
Ghost may chase people, jump upon them, tug their clothes, or
throw dirt upon them. Their actions are not only frightening
in themselves but also are omens of disaster to come. When a
Navaho thinks he has seen a ghost or when one has appeared in
his dreams, he is sure that he or a relative will die unless
the proper ceremonial treatment is successfully applied.36

All Christian missionaries are faced with a common task of
convincing The People that the message of the resurrection is one of
comfort and good news.

The Mormons have their problem compounded, at least in this
area, because of the very nature of their restoration dogma. The
Latter-day Saints accept as a fundamental tenet of their faith the
story of the young boy prophet, Joseph Smith, who beheld God, the
Eternal Father, and His Son, the resurrected Christ in a glorious

36 Clyde Kluckhohn, Culture and Behavior, (New York: The Free
vision. But the Mormon's restoration theme goes beyond this.

It reports the fact that angels from the presence of God appeared to the prophet Joseph Smith. Again, the Latter-day Saints are thrilled to know that God has again spoken to man. That messengers have returned from the grave to instruct man in spiritual knowledge and to bestow priesthood authority is a message of hope. But to the Navaho who investigates Mormonism the message is not comforting. He finds such events abhorrent to his psychology, and he is thrown into open opposition with his cultural background.37

III. LANGUAGE BARRIER

The language barrier is a major contributor to misunderstanding. It is a breeding ground for resistance and indifference to the religious teachings of the Latter-day Saints as well as other Christian denominations.

The Navaho prides himself in the fact that despite overwhelming pressures and influences from the predominantly white culture, he has been able to maintain and perpetuate aspects of his culture and his heritage.

In a 1964 publication released by the Navaho Tribe Public Relations and Information Department, Window Rock, Arizona, the tribe enumerated the extent of retention of their culture by showing that:

The Navaho Indian Tribe presents one of the puzzles of America in the twentieth century. Other Indians have 'vanished.' Not

the Navaho. They now number nearly 97,000 and are increasing three times as fast as the rest of the United States population. Other Indians have lost their native language. Not the Navaho. Most adults speak only a few words of English.

According to a recent study, Indian education has taken gigantic strides in the past few years. Modern school facilities have sprung up on and off of the reservations for Indians. Qualified teachers have been more available. Teaching techniques have been improved. Audio-visual equipment has been developed and many other fine facets of the educational process have come into view. In spite of these advancements the cold facts indicate that illiteracy among The People is still the rule rather than the exception. The study continued by pointing out that seven out of ten adults are unable to read or write the English language, and that large numbers of Navaho children commence their formal education speaking only their native tongue.38

Clyde Kluckhohn maintained that Christian missionary activities and their influence have been sharply curtailed and reduced in status to social and medical services along with certain aspects of education. But the real purpose of conversion and conviction has been restricted to small numbers. Furthermore, he suggested that the effectiveness of purely religious activity has been limited in part by the fact that so few of the Christian missionaries have had any command of the language of The People.39


The idea of true conversion being restricted seems confirmed when considering the statements of two Navaho converts who seem to have embraced Christianity out of friendship to the missionaries and not because they understood the teachings of the church. One convert said:

I haven't learned anything yet—just how to sing two songs in our own language. They don't have any interpreters and I'm not educated, so I can't understand it. There used to be two boys who lived over near the Day School, and they used to come around, but they can't speak Navaho, so I couldn't understand when they explained—so they just sang songs.  

Another convert who was described as a staunch believer related his difficulty in understanding church doctrine:

Well, I didn't understand what they were talking about, but I just kept on going and watching that was all. I didn't understand English, but some of the Mormons there knew a little Navaho, and they told me a little about it—a few words.  

Many missionary groups have resorted to the use of interpreters in the presentation of their sermons, lessons, and other church liturgy. An L.D.S. writer has stated that one of the great difficulties that has been found in teaching the concept of Mormonism, has been the language barrier. For the most part the work has had to be carried on through an interpreter.  

However, interpreting between any two languages is a difficult

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41 Ibid., p. 42.

task and requires a highly qualified person to convey the true
message. "With Navaho and English, the problem is further compli-
cated by the fact that the words are used in a different order so
that a sentence has to be turned around before being translated."43

Many missionaries place the blame for unsuccessful results on the almost insurmountable language barrier. Very, very few
Christian missionaries actually, really speak Navaho. They may
know a little of the language, but not nearly enough to get
across the real meaning of a religion as different from the
Navajo as Christianity is. And unfortunately, good inter-
preters are hard to come by in any specialized field, and re-
ligion must be labeled a specialized field.44

Although the Navaho language is relatively complete and
descriptive, encompassing even modern English terminology for
inventions and technology such as air plane, car, locomotive, and
gasoline, theological concepts are remote and more difficult to convey.
Many theological terms are evasive and may convey concepts repulsive
to the Navahos. For instance, a word for "soul" was indispensable in
teaching Christian doctrine. A word meaning "that which stands within"
was adapted by the missionaries in order to explain the spiritual,
undying part of man. The Navaho religion rejects "life after death"
as connotated by the teachings of Christianity, and therefore the
literal definition of the term conveys a meaning which is rejected by
the Navaho.45 Even among English speaking Navahos, the problem is still


not completely solved, because much theological terminology is beyond their vocabulary and comprehension.

IV. CONFLICTING MORAL BEHAVIOR

An investigation of the conflicting moral behavior between Navahos and Christianity are numerous and complicated. In Christianity, moral behavior is based on laws given to the human family by a divine being or God. These laws include a system of rewards for righteousness and punishments for transgressions. Thus the Apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthians:

For we must all appear before the Judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. 46

The moral behavior of the Navaho, more accurately called rules of conduct, are contrastingly different. According to Navaho belief, there is no supreme law giver who is concerned with the morals of humans. 47

Whereas Christian standards provide rewards for obedience and punishment for sin awarded on the day of judgment according to their works in the flesh, 48 in Navaho moral psychology, there is an absence of anything resembling the Christian concept of sin, crime, or guilt. 49 Rewards or punishments come as a direct result of conduct. For

46 The Holy Bible, II Corinthians 5:10.
instance, the punishment for stealing comes only if one is caught and must return the goods or their equivalent. Some Navahos would say there has been no sin committed, hence, no guilt. 50

Their philosophy "it's all right if you didn't get caught" was illustrated in an interview with a Navaho Indian:

"Don't steal." The main reason given for obeying this prohibition is that you might get caught, and so get into trouble. Stealing is "bahazid" only because you might be put in jail. "No chance of getting away with it now days," Otherwise, the argument against stealing is that one would be shamed if one were caught. In the old days, "no dishonor was attached to a thief as long as he was not actually caught. The dishonor consisted in getting caught red-handed." If a thief "didn't get caught, he just kept it." 51

This philosophy may be carried over into other moral issues such as lying. Some Navahos would contend that "a person should lie if this will keep him out of trouble." 52

They likewise have a device to evade answering questions by saying, "I don't know." This phraseology is the Navaho's equivalent to a white lie. Slanderous gossip is a kind of lie that may have serious consequences. It is bahadzid (dangerous). Mr. Ladd suggested that "perhaps the most significant argument against lying is the same as the general one against stealing, namely, that if you are caught, you will feel ashamed before people." 53

The People, however, do have many rules to be observed. For example, there is a culturally accepted set of regulations to be

52 Ibid., p. 284. 53 Ibid., p. 242.
followed by persons who are involved in sexual promiscuity.

If a boy has seduced a girl, and a marriage is not desired by either of the families, the boy or his family must pay the girl's mother. They talk over that case and they say they'll pay for it, and tell the girl and boy not to do that any more. That payment will make the father and mother feel good about it. 54

There is also an accepted set of regulations to be followed by persons who commit adultery, but they have nothing to do with moral standards. 55

Sometimes the disapproval of people in general is cited against adultery. Such disapproval can be explained by the fact that a person who is a successful adulterer might be successful with one's own wife, or that a wife who commits adultery might seduce one's own husband. There is likely to be plenty of gossip about these matters. Nevertheless, the situation is complicated by the rather flexible marriage arrangements among the Navahos. Adultery may be the prelude to a new marriage, since there is almost complete freedom, theoretical at least, to separate and marry as one pleases. It is evident that the prohibition of adultery is binding only under circumstances. In general, it is considered wrong because it bodes trouble not only to the participants but to others as well... adultery is thought of as a kind of stealing. 56

In Christianity, sacred laws are regarded as coming from a divine creator. These laws are observed to express love and obedience to God or because of fear of a severe judgment.

The Navaho may also observe the law, but for another reason. He is desirous to remain socially accepted and remain out of trouble. Social acceptance, then, becomes a deterrent to evil behavior.

Kluckhohn and Leighton indicated how powerful social acceptancy is in the following account:

54 Ibid., p. 251. 55 Ibid., p. 43.
56 Ibid., p. 241.
Once a Navaho family in the Ramah region was converted to Mormonism. For a month they faithfully gave up the use of coffee. Their mentor had supplied them with quantities of Postum as a gift, and they appeared to be quite content with this beverage. But when the rumor began to go around that they no longer drank coffee because they were too poor to buy it, this they could not stand. Mormonism and abstinence from coffee both went by the board.\(^57\)

Missionaries working among the Navahos find it difficult and frustrating to contend against such attitudes and practices. However, such practices indicate clearly the reasons for resistance and indifference to Christian teachings.

V. PREJUDICES CAUSED BY OTHER CHURCHES

Prejudices caused by churches of conflicting doctrines have created confusion and doubt in the minds of the Navaho. In attempting to gain converts, some ministers and missionaries have used slander and gossip to further their own cause. Furthermore, missionaries of the many small churches dotting the reservation, although intensely involved in medical, social, educational, and proselyting programs, mainly present a theology based on hellfire and brimstone.\(^58\)

One minister contended that Navahos as human beings had to come to a state of realization of their sins. They had to "give themselves to the Lord before it was too late. Those who failed to see the light would be everlastingly lost—they would go straight to Hell."\(^59\)

Perhaps a legitimate reason for indifference toward Christianity is the confusion in the minds of the Navaho also caused by the diversity

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\(^{58}\)Reichard, *op. cit.*, p. 67.  
\(^{59}\)Rapaport, *op. cit.*, p. 19.
of the white man's religion. This has always been a puzzling thing.
In his own religion, no such conflict exists, but the "white man
[is] always wanting to reform the Indian, join this church, join that
church, he says. But which church?\textsuperscript{60}

The Christian Reformed Church has established numerous missions
across Navaho land; the Methodists are active in education and mission
work; the Presbyterian Mission at Ganado is widely known and respected;
and the Catholics have established many missions and provided educa-
tional opportunities for the Navahos.

But no denomination had wooed the Indians as people desirable
in themselves. None but the Latter-day Saints--the Mormon
Church--who believe the Navahos to be one of the lost tribes of
Israel,* and treat them with due respect. Navahos--and most
other people--treat the Saints with respect, too, and it is a
respect earned and kept because of the integrity of individual
members.\textsuperscript{61}

Not all people share the view that Mormons have wooed the
Indians as people desirable in themselves. William Brandon made the
following contrast:

The sects of the Shakers and the Spiritualists gave quite a
bit of attention to Indians, generally regarding them as
virtuous and mystically powerful simply because they were

\textsuperscript{60}\textit{Elizabeth Ward, No Dudes Few Women.} (Albuquerque, New Mexico:
The University of New Mexico Press, 1951), pp. 226, 227.

\textsuperscript{61}\textit{Ibid.}

*The Latter-day Saint scriptures do not imply that the Navahos or
any other Indian tribe are remnants of the lost tribes of Israel. How-
ever, the Book of Mormon indicates that some of the American Indians are
descended from the House of Israel namely through the tribes of Ephraim,
Manassah, and Judah. See \textit{Book of Mormon,} Alma 10:3, Helaman, 8:20-22.
Indians in contrast to the wicked Lamanites of the Mormons.\textsuperscript{62}

Christian churches continue to compete vigorously over prospective Navaho converts. Many missionaries speak out openly against each other and accuse each other of sowing seeds of falsehood.

Robert Rapaport reported the conversation of a minister who was attempting to win converts to his faith:

\begin{quote}
We heard that the Mormons are just robbing you... We aren't going to rob you, or reduce anything of your possessions. We just bring you God's word. Mormon's book is false religion. It's the story of Joseph Smith. Joseph Smith was crazy. Joseph Smith doesn't save a person. He just died the same as we do... In the Mormon Church, they're doing all kinds of things—drinking, dancing, movies, and other bad things.\textsuperscript{63}
\end{quote}

Prejudices caused by opposing religious factions can only encourage the confusion which results in resistance and indifference to the Christian faith.

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\textsuperscript{63}Rapaport, op. cit., p. 88.
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CHAPTER IV

RESEARCH RESULTS

The material in this chapter deals specifically with the problems that confront those in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints who are seeking effective ways to bring the Navaho people to a realization of their destiny. The information was obtained by interviewing individuals who were familiar with the Navaho culture and also those who were affiliated with Navaho Indians in education, church, business, and community. Interviews were likewise conducted with Navahos themselves who have become members of the L.D.S. Church, and also those who were non-members.

A questionnaire was prepared and administered to three-hundred Navaho students who attended Intermountain School in Brigham City, Utah. Its purpose was to secure opinions of Navaho youth and to assist in identifying areas of resistance to the Latter-day Saint teachings. It was also useful in determining how extensive various Navaho customs have been perpetuated into a newer generation.

The group surveyed consisted of both boys and girls of high school age. They came from numerous locations all over the Navaho reservation. This group was composed of Catholic, Protestant, and L.D.S. students.

Finally, the author drew upon his own personal experience as a missionary among the Navahos and many years of teaching in the Indian Seminary program of the L.D.S. Church.
I. PRESERVATION OF SELF IDENTITY

The Navaho Indian has been engaged in a struggle to preserve his self-identity. In a letter to the author, Hal L. Taylor, President of the Southwest Indian Mission, related an experience he had while visiting with an old Navaho woman who was a member of the Church. President Taylor asked her why she wasn't an active participant in Church affairs. She said:

Well, any true Navajo will never be anything but a Navajo, for they are born with their religion in their hearts and even though they may join other churches, it is only to keep other churches away from them and to become a little more acceptable to other people, but the true Navajo will never do anything religiously than what he was born with.

This appears to be a common attitude among Navahos. That they are born with their religion in their hearts and no matter what outside influences may attempt to change them indicates their struggle to hold on to a heritage of a proud past uncontaminated by the white man's world.

J. Edwin Baird, Supervisor of Indian Seminaries of the L.D.S. Church and former Southwest Indian Mission President has had considerable experience with Indians. He has maintained that the Navaho people "are very proud. This pride works in many cases as a hindrance against progress . . . " The Indian sand paintings, sings, medicine men, all proud memories from the past, in his opinion, serve only as

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a deterrent to their progress.

Families who cling onto the old sheep herd will apparently never get very far in playing their part in the world. This has a tendency to govern their lives to a great degree by dictating where they live and how they wander to keep up with the sheep herd. The Navajo people would be much better off at this point in the game if they could forget the reservation and their sheep herd, and move into localities where employment can be had. As long as they follow the sheep herd they will continue to be steeped in the Indian culture and the old reservation Indian culture. The celebration craze is altogether too strong to permit real progress and cultural advancement. The pattern of following rodeos, yeh-beshel dances, fairs, and various celebrations consumes altogether too much of their time and thoughts. This type of activity must be replaced by cultural, uplifting activities sponsored by communities, schools, and tribes.\(^3\)

Mr. Baird indicated that Navahos also "feel inferior. To feel the part of a second- or third-rate citizen is a terrible hindrance to progress and many Indian people have this feeling."\(^4\) The Navaho finds himself proud of a past which no longer exists and inferior in the present world in which he lives.

But the newer generation has felt that this pride doesn't have to deter progress. In an interview with Ken Nabahe he indicated that he was proud to be a Navaho because they have a unique way of life.

My home life was happy and uncomplicated. The teachings I received there have been useful in making my life happy and meaningful. I was taught to be generous and to rise early in the morning. I like the way Navahos value wealth. It isn't always determined in money like the white man does. Wealth to the Navaho means the surroundings of nature like the earth and mountains, herds of sheep and horses. Many Navahos didn't know they were poor until the white man told them.\(^5\)

Betty Henderson, a Navaho who recently graduated from Brigham

\(^3\)Tbid. \(^4\)Tbid. \(^5\)Personal interview with Kenneth Nabahe, July 12, 1968, Provo, Utah.
Young University, was also extremely proud of being a Navaho. She
said that they have a culture different from others.

Maybe there are some things the white people could learn
from the Navahos. It's true that lots of families have had
problems with drinking and divorce, but many others have strong
family ties—even stronger than the white people. We wouldn't
dare talk back to our folks like a lot of white kids do. And
we're taught to be concerned for each other. Here at school
we get together and help each other. I've noticed a lot of
white kids are too busy with their own grades and problems to
care much about other students. The Navahos have had many
hardships like the "long walk" (forced march into captivity to
Redondo Bosque) and the troubles since. But they have been
able to overcome these things and survive. I never want to see
the reservation go. I would like to see the Navaho people stay
together. They have stayed together in the past. They're the
only ones who have. We grow up feeling very proud of this.
Most of us come away to school, but we're all going back to
help our people.6

Elliot Henderson, a Navaho, said he would like to see the
Navahos stay together and retain their self-identity. He would like
to see the reservation remain. He believes the Navahos, especially
the younger generation, could make great progress as they develop
the reservation. He hopes that some day the reservation can be known
as the "Valley of the Lamanites."7

Many Navahos have considered any outside influence a threat
to their heritage and proud past. They hesitated to accept fully the
 teachings of the Mormon church, considering them also a threat to the
native culture of the Navaho. They were engaged in a struggle to pre-
serve their self-identity and resisted vigorously any attempts made by
outsiders to influence change or progress.

6Personal interview with Betty Henderson, July 14, 1968, Provo,
Utah.

7Personal interview with Elliot Henderson, July 14, 1968, Provo,
Utah.
The newer generation of Navahos seemed to feel that they can maintain their self-identity and still progress. Many felt that there is much good in their own culture, that all things about their culture do not have to be suppressed as the white men have so often tried to do. They were optimistic that the future holds many promising opportunities.

**Government Education Policy**

The government education policy which is operated by the Bureau of Indian Affairs (B.I.A.) has frequently been criticized as a deterrent to the preservation of self-identity, particularly in regard to federal boarding schools. Young Indian students were often sent to school far away from family ties and tribal influences. They were educated just enough to make them citizens of no-man's land. They couldn't go back to their old Indian customs and still they were not fully prepared nor accepted in the white man's world. Many, out of frustration, turned to alcohol and unrighteous living. Edgar L. Wight, a B.I.A. Official commented that the boarding school certainly isn't the final solution to Indian education, but it has provided an opportunity for many Indians to receive an education which otherwise would have been denied them. He felt that it is true that many youngsters were taken away from their homes, "but it must be remembered that many homes had decayed because of alcoholism and irresponsible parents."

The B.I.A. may have its shortcomings; however, it has been

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8Opinion expressed by Edgar L. Wight at Intermountain School, June 5, 1968.
instrumental in bringing thousands of Indian young people to the classroom for an education. The federal schools allowed time for religious education. To take advantage of this opportunity, the Indian Seminary program of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints evolved. This program of religious education has brought the gospel to thousands of Indian youth. The B.I.A. has also accumulated and tabulated thousands of Indian names which may in some future day provide valuable statistical information for genealogical research.9

Billy Katso, a Navaho who received most of his formal education in B.I.A. boarding schools outlined the strengths and weaknesses of this type of education:

**Strengths**
1. Provided opportunity for education.
2. Gave students a chance to travel around.
3. Environment taught students to get along with each other.
4. Gave students chance to work in towns.
5. Showed better way of life.
6. Took students away from alcohol and other bad influences on the reservation.

**Weaknesses**
1. Took students away from families for a long time.
2. Neglected students as individuals.
3. Students freedom seemed to be less.
4. Gave students a fair education but didn’t prepare them to live in society.
5. Didn’t give students a chance to attend school with people of other cultures since all were usually Navahos.10

The Navahos recognized the undesirable change in the lives of many of their youth imposed by the government schools. Many Indian mothers have been disgusted by the styles in dress that their daughters


10Personal interview with Billy Katso, July 14, 1968, Provo, Utah.
have adopted while away to school. When they returned home, there was a tendency for the children to rebel at their parent's authority. Some also scoffed at their native traditions and home living conditions. Although some good was accomplished by this type of education, many Navaho parents were hurt and embittered by the educational results.

It seems that the Navahos have viewed the Church with similar suspicion. This has added to the difficulty the missionaries have had in presenting the gospel to The People.

In spite of the educational problems of the B.I.A., still education is the key in bringing the Navaho people out of darkness—education in secular matters as well as spiritual.

Elder Spencer W. Kimball of the Council of the Twelve of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints said:

"I do not claim to know the answer to the Indian problem. With many years of intimate contact with it, I have come to some conclusions which seem to me to be right. I believe we shall never educate nor convert the Lamanites segregated on reservations. I feel certain that education is the answer—education in secular matters as well as spiritual. I believe that integration into our economy and community life is essential and I look forward to the day when there will be Indian girls as nurses in hospitals, teachers in schools, secretaries in offices, housekeepers in their own lovely and commodious homes; mothers of enlightened, clean, progressive children, and wives of Indian boys who also are clean, healthy, progressive and trained and who take their places in professions, business, industry, schools, government and community circles and who fill missions (as a few are already doing), marry their sweet Indian companion in the holy temple and become bishops, stake presidents, mission presidents and come to fill positions in ward, stake, and general boards. Is that not the way the Savior would have it?"

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11 Letter written by Elder Spencer W. Kimball to all Indian workers dated May, 19, 1963, Salt Lake City, Utah. See Appendix.
White Man’s Christianity

White man’s Christianity has attempted to suppress the self-identity of the Navaho. It has been shown that one of the distinguishing characteristics of Christian missionary work has been the liquidation of the native culture and denunciation of religious rituals. Many Navahos have considered Mormonism a part of the white man’s Christianity and have resisted its teachings along with other Christian churches.

Many Navahos, especially the older ones, would be satisfied to retain the old Navaho religion, but some feel it is no longer practical nor logical. They have been able to accept Peyotism because they believe it is part of their Indian heritage—an Indian church.

An increased number of Navahos have turned to Peyotism and affiliation in the Native American church in an effort to preserve their identity. President Hal L. Taylor said:

I feel that peyote is gradually moving in and changing a lot of the old traditional ways, but of course, some claim that this peyote is a part of their old religion, and by the way, this peyote is really taking over a goodly share of our members as well as the Indian people generally.12

On one occasion the author and a missionary companion came to a hogan where a Peyote sing was in session. A man stepped from the hogan and exclaimed that he had just seen Jesus. He said that he was like a man. He had arms and legs. He had a body. The light around him was brighter than the sun, and it hurt his eyes. Of course, this sounded correct in Mormon terminology and was very impressive. But then he con-

continued his description by saying that it bothered him a little that Jesus was only three feet tall.

While laboring at Shiprock, New Mexico, the author and his companion had nearly convinced a Navaho woman to be baptized. She had previously been affiliated with another church and her former minister was causing her much frustration. She decided to try and find out once and for all which church was right by turning to peyote. A vision was opened to her mind and in it she saw a great pit filled with hot coals. As her eyes penetrated the depths of the pit, she saw many Mormons. They were popping like pop corn. Shortly thereafter, the vision was closed and so was her investigation of the church.13

Elder Spencer W. Kimball of the Council of the Twelve summarized the Church's attitude toward peyote:

As to peyote, we have always discouraged it and felt that it not only might have a medicinal damage but that the way it is connected with the great American church and connected with the social activities which are not a very high level. Peyote then becomes an agency which is not designed to do much or any good.14

It seems that many Navahos have turned to Peyotism to counteract the advance of the white man's Christianity of which Mormonism was sometimes considered a part. However, many other Navahos have considered Mormons different from other white men. "They're almost like a different race of people," said Ken Nabahe. "In the Navaho language, the Negro is called nakai izinii. The Mexican is called nakai deneh."
The white man is a bilagaana, and Mormons are called gomali. This could be very advantageous to Mormon missionary work.15

As in many other things, Navaho thought has been rapidly changing with the new generation. Many Navahos felt that they can accept and live the gospel of Jesus Christ as it has been restored and still maintain their identity in a Navaho nation.

A young Navaho girl said that as she was growing up, she went to many different churches. As she compared these religions, she concluded that the Navaho religion was as logical as any of the others. However, when she became acquainted with the L.D.S. Church, she believed it to be more logical than any of the other religions. Navaho tradition then took a back seat.

I still like to go to different Navaho functions, such as the squaw dances, because this is where my family gets together—something like a family reunion. In the past, medicine man had a place in my life, but now I recognize that they didn't hold the Priesthood.16

Another Navaho was asked, "Do you feel a loss of identity being L.D.S.?"

No, definitely not. Since I've been exposed to both worlds, I enjoy the good from each. Also, since I'm L.D.S., I don't have to believe in the sing and the sand painting, but I can go and attend them and enjoy them for their artistic values. This is perhaps like a white man who goes to a museum to enjoy different forms of art. The Church has really given me a sense of destiny and purpose. It has given me direction.17

15 Personal interview with Kenneth Nabahe, July 12, 1968, Provo, Utah.

16 Personal interview with Betty Henderson, July 14, 1968, Provo, Utah.

17 Personal interview with Kenneth Nabahe, July 12, 1968, Provo, Utah.
Susie Little, a Navaho, commented:

I consider myself part of the new Navaho generation. When I was converted to the Church, I no longer felt the need for the Navaho religious traditions because the Church was able to fulfill my needs. As for preserving my Navaho identity, I am proud to be a Navaho and feel this is important, but I would first consider myself L.D.S.—a child of God.\(^18\)

George D. Durrant, curriculum writer for the Indian seminaries recognized that in their approach to converting Navahos to the gospel, the Church has taken away some of their religious traditions. But in teaching and curriculum building, he felt that the Church should constantly attempt to replace the bad Indian traits with the good, and in doing so, fill the gap. There is a need to constantly reinforce gospel principles by using old Indian traits, stories, and examples that are noteworthy and familiar to the Indian youth—bravery, courage, physical strengths, virtue, endurance, loyalty, sacrifice for a cause, and dependability.\(^19\)

White man's Christianity has been at fault in attempting to rob the Indian of his Navaho identity. Even the L.D.S. Church has attempted to change those things it felt would hinder his progress. Navahos continue to resist, but there are many who have felt that they can maintain their Navaho identity, even find greater meaning and purpose in life, through membership in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

A young Navaho serving in the mission field expressed her joy

\(^{18}\)Personal interview with Susie Little, July 12, 1968, Provo, Utah.

\(^{19}\)Personal interview with George D. Durrant, July 12, 1968, Provo, Utah.
in hearing the news that another Navaho missionary had been called from her home branch:

... I am so thrilled the Lord has called another missionary from our branch. Truly it is wisdom in the Lord that he calls those unarmished by the world with little education, little background of the gospel to thrust in their sickles in the last days. These are those who give all they have in this mission field and from whom the spirit radiates when they bear their testimonies ...

Two other short letters are reproduced here to express the feelings of some of The People as they embraced Mormonism:

Dear Sirs:

I received a letter from My Daughter, Inez Jane Wilson, asking my Permission to be Baptized. I surely do give my Permission, Because I, and my Wife were Baptized on April 21, at Gallup. It makes me happy that Inez Wants to be Baptized also. Thank you Very Much for teaching My Daughter the True Gospel. It is really a joy to me. May the Good Lord Bless you always.

Your Brother,

Kenneth Wilson

Dearest Daughter

You ask me that you want to be baptize of cause I want you to be baptize and I want all of you kids to be baptize in L.D.S. you and I know that the only true church is L.D.S. So Irene you have my permission to be baptize And I hope you all attend that church tell Peggy and Bessie that I said Hello to them

Well Irene Daughter try your best to attend your school your mother and I will be happy that you are baptized Your sister Vernetta and Fricilla are baptized last saturday.

Your Daddy

Billie Mitchell

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22 Letter written by Billie Mitchell to Irene Nelson, April, 1966. Letter is in possession of the author.
II. SUPERSTITION REGARDING DEATH

The Navahos have many fears and superstitions. Their superstition regarding death may be a determining factor why some of them resist the teachings of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

They seem to resist very much our idea of the resurrection. As you know, they loath death. One of our Navajo missionaries told me recently that he finally developed enough courage to touch a casket of a deceased Indian. He said he even got down in the grave and maneuvered the casket in its right position. He said that it was hard for him and he was sweating and was frightened, but even then he did accomplish that much. 23

The superstition regarding death is a good example of the type of belief that has curtailed the spiritual growth of the Navaho. While living on the Navaho reservation in New Mexico the author frequently came across hogans that had been abandoned. These hogans appeared to be suitable dwellings. However, the doors were torn off and the windows were smashed. It was learned that these hogans were called by the Navahos, chindii beghan (devil house). In other words, they were hogans where persons had died, thus the Navahos believed that the spirits would continue to linger there. Such hogans were abandoned forever.

The fear of a person dying in a hogan has amounted to a tribal phobia. When people became seriously ill, they were taken from the hogan.

An experience was recalled which happened on March 21, 1955,

at Borrego Pass, New Mexico. On that night the little Johnson girl became very ill with a high fever. The parents, fearing that she would die in the hogan, removed her to the shelter of a ledge in a nearby mesa. The night was unusually cold, and a thin blanket of snow covered the ground. The little girl died. It was learned that she had the measles and death was probably due to exposure. A small pine box was made, and the tiny body was removed from the ledge and buried in a shallow grave under a lonely pine tree not far from the Johnson hogan.

Stories like this could be told a hundred fold in Navaho country. They depict The People reacting to extremes to avoid contact or association with the dead.

The missionaries have assisted in dressing the bodies of the dead for a burial because so many Navahos prefer not to do it. They will if necessary, but they have been known to refuse to transport the corpse to the grave site in their pick-up trucks and refuse to accept ropes after they were used to lower the casket into the grave.

On Thanksgiving Day, 1955, near Shiprock, New Mexico, the author and his missionary companion spent much of the day digging a grave. Shortly after its completion an old Navaho man was seen throwing dirt back into the grave. An inquiry was made as to why he was covering up the grave that had taken all day to dig. He replied, "I'm covering up your tracks. You don't want the spirit to follow you home."

The possibility of the dead returning is a constant fear. Yet the paramount theme of the Gospel rings out, "He is risen." The message of the restoration also includes the appearance of Moroni who represents
a man who lived on earth, died, came forth from the grave, and appeared to the living. John the Baptist is another example of a mortal man who was beheaded. Yet he came forth from the dead and appeared to the living, placing his hands upon his viewers. This could horrify the Navahos who are steeped in tribal fears and superstitions regarding the return of the dead.

J. Edwin Baird has said:

Superstitious fears against evil omens, bewitchments, and hexes have altogether too much influence on many of their lives. These things have been built into their cultural patterns and are very difficult to eradicate. Of course, substantial progress has been made in overcoming this type of thing, but it still exists to a large degree.24

Lena Dean, a Navaho woman living on Intermountain campus, has become acquainted with many of the students attending school there. She said, "A lot of kids at Intermountain think that people can return in the form of ghosts."25

Another Navaho woman who was an instructional aid at a boarding school reported that students frequently came to her expressing fears and relating stories of the dead returning to them:

I work in those buildings and where the students are complaining I go over and stay two or three hours at night, but I've never seen any. Then we have meetings on it. The problem will be solved if you have meetings on it and explain to them in Navaho that they should go to bed and we will leave the lights on and you will be alright. In the spring, I had the same thing in building 43. They said there were people walking, people talking, and a man in a skin jump out the window and I stayed down there many a night on my own time, many an hour. We didn't


25 Personal interview with Lena Dean, June 16, 1967, Brigham City, Utah.
see anybody, so everybody just calmed down. Sometimes one of the students will come up and tell you about hearing these voices. One girl told me about how these people dressed in shabby clothes kept coming to her and wanting her to come with them.26

In a questionnaire administered to three hundred high school students, a response was given as to the current trends among Navaho youth. The results indicated that superstitions regarding the dead are declining in the new generation.

**TABLE I**

RESULTS OF QUESTIONNAIRE CONCERNING SUPERSTITIONS REGARDING DEATH

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Jesus was resurrected or came back to life:</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Cath.</th>
<th>LDS</th>
<th>Prot.</th>
<th>Total*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. This gives me hope in life after death.</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. This is a bad thing.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. This is frightening.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I do not really believe it.</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I believe:

| The dead may return to people as ghosts. | 23   | 18   | 29   | 19  | 15    | 20     |
| The dead are dangerous to living people. | 12   | 11   | 4    | 15  | 14    | 12     |
| Ghosts are old superstitions.            | 59   | 67   | 61   | 59  | 68    | 63     |
| Ghosts are good people.                  | 6    | 4    | 5    | 7   | 3     | 5      |

*Total indicates combined number of students answering questionnaire. Numbers are calculated according to percentage.

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26 Personal Interview with Emma Delgarito, June 28, 1967, Brigham City, Utah.
### TABLE I (Continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I would be mostly afraid of:</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Ca.</th>
<th>LDS</th>
<th>Prot.</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Seeing a dead person.</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Touching a dead person.</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Seeing a dead man come to life.</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Having a dead person speak to me.</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. None of these.</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>If a person died in a hogan, you should:</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Leave and never return.</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Clean the hogan good and stay.</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Wait five days then return</td>
<td>.65</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Get the medicine man and have a sing.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Other.</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TABLE I (Continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I believe:</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Cath.</th>
<th>LDS</th>
<th>Prot.</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. There is a life after death.</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. There is no life after death.</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. It is better not to think about death.</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. In life after death, but I am not sure.</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>It would be bad to:</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. See a ghost.</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Have a friend return to you after he had died.</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Walk through a graveyard at night.</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Whistle at night.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.67</td>
<td>.3</td>
<td>.9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. None of these.</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It seemed that in the newer generation there was a decline in accepting the superstitions of the past. These students are being educated. Their values are changing. Elder Spencer W. Kimball said, "... it has been difficult for them to erase from their minds and hearts the prejudices and superstitions of the past. Their superstitions are hard to get out of their minds and until they are educated, this will be a major factor."

III. LANGUAGE BARRIER

The language barrier, particularly among the older Navahos, is a severe handicap in missionary work. Little more than gestures of friendship can be made without a knowledge of the language.

One Navaho man who had fulfilled a mission for the Church said that one of the main handicaps that existed in the conversion of the Navahos was the language barrier. It was not only difficult to communicate and convey gospel terminology, but it was even harder to correct the concepts that had been taught by the other churches. He related the examples of the Catholics' mode of baptism by sprinkling, and the Protestants' concept of just simply believing in Christ in order to gain salvation.

Others in the Church who have worked among the Navahos have recognized the problem. "The language barrier seems to serve as a great deterrent, especially where Navajo is spoken in the home and

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27 Letter written by Elder Spencer W. Kimball to James D. Mathews, June 17, 1968, in Salt Lake City, Utah. See Appendix.

28 Personal interview with Kenneth Nabahe, July 12, 1968, Provo, Utah.
English is picked up only in the school as a second language.\textsuperscript{29}

Hal L. Taylor, in a letter dated August 15, 1967, said that one of the greatest obstacles to overcome in converting Navahos to the Church is "the problem of communication coupled with the blindness or inability that the Navajo people seem to have in understanding and accepting and living the Gospel.\textsuperscript{30}

Even young Navahos who return to their people as missionaries experience some difficulty in learning and conveying theological terms. One Navaho missionary said, "I've been speaking Navaho all my life, but I didn't realize how much I didn't know until I went to the language school in the mission."\textsuperscript{31}

Gordon H. Fraser, in a letter to his protestant colleagues, urged a more dedicated effort in studying the language. He wrote:

\begin{quote}
\ldots The Mormon missionaries are required to study the Navajo language at least two hours a day, and then use the phrases learned, even if imperfectly pronounced. We have difficulty in getting a small proportion of the evangelical missionaries to study the language two hours a week. The Mormons are working hard, using the Wycliffe methods, to prepare the Book of Mormon and their own primers in the Navajo language. While they are still a little behind in their accomplishments, they are catching up rapidly and we will have to look to our laurels \ldots \textsuperscript{32}
\end{quote}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{29}Letter written by J. Edwin Baird to James D. Mathews, May 9, 1968, Provo, Utah. See Appendix.
\item \textsuperscript{30}Letter written by Hal L. Taylor to James D. Mathews, August 15, 1967, Holbrook, Arizona. See Appendix.
\item \textsuperscript{31}Letter written by Emma Dugi to James D. Mathews, September, 1966, Chinle, Arizona. See Appendix.
\item \textsuperscript{32}Letter written by Gordon H. Fraser, November 1963, Flagstaff, Arizona. See Appendix.
\end{itemize}
Mormons have recognized that education seems to be the key to the language problem. On March 6, 1967, a special language school was organized at Brigham Young University for missionaries going to the Navaho people.

Bruce Cameron, assisted by Leon Simmon and a Navaho, George Lee, was given the assignment to teach the Navaho language to the missionaries. Approximately fifteen to thirty missionaries attended each session. The course consisted of twelve weeks of extensive training. During that time, the basic Navaho grammar was learned and the first four missionary discussions memorized. Small group sessions were held to view films and filmstrips in order to become acquainted with the Navaho culture.33

IV. CONFLICTING MORAL BEHAVIOR

Conflicting moral behavior is a major reason for resistance toward the teachings of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

One of the greatest obstacles in preventing them (Navahos) from joining the Church is their habits. With little else to do and limited associations or social contacts, it has been an easy matter for them to take on drink, and it has been difficult for them to leave it alone since it seems to drown many of their sorrows and their deprivations. They have little else to take its place in filling their lives. They are deeply entrenched in the liquor problem and also smoking and coffee have been very common among them. These things were always available.34

33 Memorandum from George D. Durrant to James D. Mathews, June 17, 1968, Provo, Utah.

34 Letter from Elder Spencer W. Kimball to James D. Mathews, June 17, 1968, Salt Lake City, Utah. See Appendix.
Many changes have taken place among the Navahos. The radio, T.V., and movies have introduced new and often radical ideas in moral behavior. Some observers suggest that because of the mass media which is becoming available, the Navahos are being exposed to and accepting the undesirable traits of the dominant culture. They see glamorous advertisements of people smoking and drinking. They view movies where delinquency is related to heroism and sexual promiscuity becomes an acceptable way of behavior in modern society. A short time ago, Navaho boys and girls were seldom seen necking and petting in public or sporting the fashionable styles of the day. But the casual observer can readily see civilization catching up with them.

Emma Delgarito, a Navaho woman, commented:

I have two girls staying in my home. They both belong to another faith. They said we would like to join the L.D.S. church, but they said that’s the hardest church rules to live by. The regulations and the church rules are awfully hard. That comes from the younger generation. I said, ‘What do you mean—the hardest?’ She said, ‘They don’t believe in smoking, they don’t believe in drinking.’ She didn’t even like the way we have to dress—no skin tight clothes and things like that.\(^{35}\)

People who have been acquainted with Navahos for many years, believe immorality among the younger generation is rapidly increasing.

It seems that their sexual behavior is quite different than the L.D.S. conception of this important principle of the Gospel. I have talked with some of the old-timers here like Don Smouse at Borrego Pass and others who claim that immorality as we look at it in the sex behavior area of morality was at one time closer to our code than at present. They used to look upon sexual experience before marriage as a very serious offense, and that a woman who had a child out of the Navajo marriage of wed-lock, was locked down upon. Now, this is a very acceptable

\(^{35}\)Personal interview with Emma Delgarito, June 28, 1967, Brigham City, Utah.
pattern of living and this makes it difficult for them to accept the strict standard of morality as taught by the L.D.S. Church. I have had a number of people tell me that the Mormon church is simply too hard to live and it seems to rob them of their freedom. They like to live close to nature and do those things which seem to be desirable in their sight.

An older Navaho commented, "I don't know what it is, but it seems like there is a lot of it [immorality] now on the reservation. When I went to school you hardly hear of anybody getting pregnant at school." 37

Stealing has been another area of moral conflict. Some Navahos have maintained that stealing and adultery were all right if you didn't get caught. There are those who continue to believe this philosophy. Parents have actually been known to encourage their children to steal. One person related the following experience:

I was an instructional aid supervising one of the boys dormitories at Intermountain School when one evening in May 1967, I received a long distance telephone call for one of the boys in my dormitory. After being paged, he answered the phone on another extension. I intended listening long enough only to make sure that the proper connection was made. However, the first comment made me extremely curious and I continued to listen. It was the boy's mother. She had called to give him instructions. "Since it is near the end of the year, you start taken everything you can and bring it home to us!" She continued to encourage the boy to steal anything that would fit into his trunk, then she concluded, "The white man has everything anyway." 38

Another Navaho said that she met two parents and actually saw and heard the parents tell their children to go and steal. She said


37Personal interview with Emma Delgarito, June 28, 1967, Brigham City, Utah.

38Person desires to remain anonymous.
that Navahos know better than to steal. They know it is wrong. "The way my granduncle told us is that during the days of Fort Sumner, the only way to survive from starving was to steal. But now, people can't say it's only a sin to get caught. I think it's just a person's idea." 39

Table II indicates the attitude toward stealing and lying in the younger Navajo generation:

**TABLE II**

**RESULTS OF QUESTIONNAIRE CONCERNING LYING AND STEALING**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I believe:</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Cath.</th>
<th>LDS</th>
<th>Prot.</th>
<th>Total*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The commandment &quot;Thou shalt not lie.&quot;</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. It is all right for Navahos to lie to white people.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Lying is never right.</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stealing is:</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Bad if you are caught.</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. All right if you steal from the rich.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.67</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.86</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Never good.</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. All right if you steal from the white man.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Don't know.</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Total indicates combined number of students answering questionnaire. Numbers are calculated according to percentage.

39 Personal Interview with Emma Delgarito, June 28, 1967, Brigham City, Utah.
V. PREJUDICE CAUSED BY OTHER CHURCHES

Prejudice caused by other churches has created suspicion and confusion in the minds of many Navaho people toward the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The Church has developed many fine programs to encourage Indian people in accepting the gospel. In doing so, other Christian faiths have looked upon the Mormon’s success with jealousy and sometimes even an earnest desire to curtail the Mormons in an effort to perpetuate their own theology.

One minister wrote to his colleagues:

The Mormons are spending millions to capture the tribe’s loyalty, while God’s people spend pennies by comparison, and we have to plead for workers and scrounge for second-hand equipment to get the job done—while the Mormons are catching up to us. They plan ahead diligently and have efficient training methods, whereas the evangelicals seem to have spent little thought and planning to cover the Indian fields, and have a definite resistance against systematic missionary training. Discouraged? Not for a moment! After all, the Mormons with all of their effort and money have not yet transformed a single life because they have no cure for sin. The Gospel does transform sinful men; and, even poorly trained missionaries, with the Word of God in their hands, can point men to the Saviour as the only Cure for sin.40

Because the Indians have, until this time, been more or less isolated without newspapers, magazines, television, and radio, “it has been easy for vicious priests or ministers or others to prejudice them.”41

It is true that the Church has focused much attention on the

40Letter written by Gordon H. Fraser, November 1963, Flagstaff, Arizona. See Appendix.

41Letter written by Elder Spencer W. Kimball to James D. Mathews, June 17, 1968, Salt Lake City, Utah. See Appendix.
Lamanite (Indian) peoples of the Western Hemisphere. Elder Spencer W. Kimball, of the Council of the Twelve, has reflected the Church's goals and attitudes toward Indian people:

This work in behalf of our Lamanite brothers and sisters must go forward. It cannot wait until all of the problems which pertain to our non-Lamanite members have been solved. The Indian people have waited long years for their restoration to the blessings of the gospel. We cannot deny them these blessings through our own indifference and disinterest. Brigham Young has said this in regard to the responsibility of Church members toward the Indian people. "Now if this people, male and female, feel to school them, spend time and pains to instill into their minds correct principles, to divide land with the, and clothe them, . . . and if they will no more exclude them from their houses and hospitality, and will go to work and restore them to knowledge of the truth, the Lord God will bless them, and they have nothing to fear. If you will live up to this you will rise, while those who do not will go down." President John Taylor said, "The work among the Lamanites must not be postponed if we desire to retain the approval of God. Thus far we have been content simply to baptize them and let them run wild again, but this must continue no longer; the same devoted effort, the same care in instructing, the same organization and Priesthood must be introduced and maintained among the house of Levi [Lehi] as amongst those of Israel gathered from the Gentile nations."42

The Navaho Indians of the Southwest have been involved considerably in Church programs. Missionaries have been sent among them in an effort to convert them to the theology of the Latter-day Saints. Thousands of young Navaho people have been enrolled in the Indian Seminary program of the Church. This program has provided religious instruction for all L.D.S. Indian students who wished to participate. Moreover, hundreds of other Navaho school children have been involved

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42 Letter written by Elder Spencer W. Kimball to James D. Mathews and colleagues, October 15, 1963, Salt Lake City, Utah. See Appendix.
in the Indian Student Placement Program. This unique program has provided opportunities for Navaho children to be placed in L.D.S. foster homes in several western states. Furthermore, the Brigham Young University has developed a fine program of higher education where Indian students can come to learn and succeed. This program has attracted a considerable number of Navaho students.

Because of the Church's goals and attitudes, accompanied with the zeal for seeking new converts, many Navahos have come to accept the teachings of the Church. However, there have been many who have not because of the prejudice caused in their minds by other churches.

In 1959, the Catholic mission at St. Michael's, Arizona distributed to a large segment of the student body at Sherman Institute a form letter that illustrated at least in part how prejudice can be planted in the minds of the Navahos. The letter stated that the Mormon church was only 130 years old, but the Catholic church was more than 1900 years old. It claimed that the day would soon come when the Catholic church would be the only church and that the people on the Catholic side would be very happy. But those people on the Mormon side would be very sad.⁴³

One Navaho convert said that other churches caused suspicion in the minds of the Navahos because they "told these people that the Mormons are here to grab your daughters."⁴⁴

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⁴³Letter from Father Valentine to the students at Sherman Institute, 1959, St. Michael's, Arizona. See Appendix.

⁴⁴Personal interview with Emma Delgarito, June 28, 1967, Brigham City, Utah.
The Navahos have resented any white man attempting to buy any land that is potentially useful to them. Another Navaho girl said, "Every time a white man tries to buy land around home [Shiprock] the minister tells the people he's a Mormon."\(^45\)

As religious education developed at federal boarding schools, it became necessary to state the religious preference of the student on the school application form. Government regulations stated that the preference may be changed by following specific instructions. As the L.D.S. student population began to increase at federal Indian schools, Church leaders felt the need for developing an Indian Seminary program. The number of L.D.S. Indian students attending schools who were enrolled in seminaries has increased from 1,300 in 1958 to more than 14,000 in 1968.\(^46\) The vast increase in the number of students attending the L.D.S. Indian seminaries may be directly contributed to the efforts of the Mormon missionaries. A change of the religious preference may be made on the application by the parent or guardian signing their desired preference in the presence of a government official. Usually the L.D.S. missionaries were responsible for persuading the parents to change the preference and then transporting them to the government official. If the student is twenty-one years or older, the change may be made at his own request. The sudden increase in the L.D.S. student population

\(^{45}\)Personal interview with Stella Claw, June 14, 1968, Provo, Utah.

was electrifying to Catholic and Protestant ministers. Many accusa-
tions of "sheep stealing" have been made against the Church. Ministers
guard their flocks zealously and if anything seems amiss, they have
made quick inquiry.

One minister in corresponding with the Superintendent of Sherman
Institute in Riverside, California wrote:

I have received word that Betty Lou Tracy, Inscription House
Trading Post, Tonalea, Arizona, has been compelled to change
from Protestant to L.D.S. religious classes against her wishes.
I am surprised to hear this, for the following reasons:
None of her family are Mormon,
Her registration on file in Tuba City is Presbyterian.
A correction of the change to L.D.S. was put in the hands
of Mr. Lee Payton by myself. Mr. Payton assured me that
he would personally see that it was sent on to you. It
should have reached you long before Betty was sent to the
L.D.S. classes.
The change from Presbyterian to L.D.S. was obtained by two Mormon
elders who signed up the father . . . with no government witness
present . . . As soon as Tom [father] understood what he had done,
he promptly went with me to the . . . school where . . . a govern-
ment teacher witnessed his signature on his application for a
change from L.D.S. to Protestant Evangelical . . . we are not
denominational, and we want to be sure that they get straight
Bible teaching as near the simple central Christian faith as is
possible . . . She wrote home objecting to the switch to L.D.S.
not very long ago. Perhaps you will understand one reason for
her thinking if you know that her cousin was brutally beaten to
death . . . by a Mormon . . .

It is noted that Betty Lou Tracy was not compelled to attend
the L.D.S. Church; in fact, she did not attend seminary during the
1959-60 school year nor participate in any L.D.S. activities. How-
ever, when she returned to Sherman Institute the following year her
application again read L.D.S. This time, on her own, she became very

47 Letter written by Rev. G. W. Mason to the Superintendent of
Sherman Institute, Riverside, California, April 7, 1960. See
Appendix.
active in seminary and Church activities, and later that year, she
was baptized into the L.D.S. Church.

Sectarian churches are extremely suspicious of L.D.S. activities. 
On April 5, 1966, Mr. Paul Felt and several students from the Brigham
Young University presented a film strip and brief presentation of the
Indian program at B.Y.U. to the students at Intermountain School.
The author was present to provide Mr. Felt with the proper audio-
visual equipment to help make the presentation more successful. At
the commencement of the program, the author was introduced along with
the guests from B.Y.U. Several days later, the superintendent of the
school received written objections as to the program and his presence
there.* One minister wrote:

This letter is in regard to the program presented by Brigham
Young University to the Junior Class in the Intermountain Audi-
torium this morning, April 5. When I was informed that B.Y.U. was
presenting a program at that time, I made an effort to drop in
toward the end of the hour, assuming that the program was of an
entertainment nature. To my surprise and chagrin, the program
was nothing more or less than an hour of advertising B.Y.U.'s
special features and soliciting prospective students for
B.Y.U. . . . Our objection is to the fact that our Christian
Reformed students were exposed to this "denominational" and
less than objective presentation on school time and under
school sponsorship. Included in our objection is the fact that
the local L.D.S. Indian Seminary leader and program were intro-
duced to the group . . . 48

Another objected saying:

. . . I feel it is wrong for a church school to present a
program of recruitment to the total student body . . . Both
in the introduction and in the film the L.D.S. church was

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48 Letter written by Rev. Alfred E. Mulder to the Superintendent
of Intermountain School, April 5, 1966, Brigham City, Utah. See
Appendix.

*Two letters concerning this matter are included in part; for
further information in additional letters, see pages 108 and 109 of
Appendix.
extolled. My conscience will not allow me to keep still. 49

As the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints continues to extend its influence upon the Navaho people, prejudice caused by other churches grows increasingly strong and serves as a deterrent to the Navaho's acceptance of the Church.

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49 Letter written by Rev. Agusta Jackley to the Superintendent of Intermountain School, April 6, 1966, Brigham City, Utah. See Appendix.
CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

I. SUMMARY

The Problem

The purpose of this study was to determine the cultural and religious behavior of the Navaho Indians which caused animosity, resistance, or indifference to the religious teachings of the Latter-day Saints. The findings of the study could, perhaps, aid in the development of lessons to be used in teaching Navaho youth in the Indian seminary program and the Indian missions. It may also assist members of the Church who are involved with the Navaho people, such as foster parents, missionaries and Indian seminary personnel, to more readily understand the problems that confront the Navahos in their acceptance of the Church.

Review of the Literature

The availability of material concerning the conflicts which have arisen in attempts to convert the Navaho people to Mormonism is extremely limited. This may be due to the fact that much of the literature was written prior to the development of the church's Indian programs. However, it was discovered in the review of literature that considerable material was available concerning the
conflicts which existed in attempting to convert the Navaho people to the various Christian churches. Many problems which have caused animosity, resistance, or indifference to various denominations were found to be similar to the problems confronting the Latter-day Saints in their proselyting and conversion efforts.

Five main areas of conflict have been considered in this study: preservation of self identity, superstition regarding death, the language barrier, conflicting moral behavior, and prejudices caused by other churches.

Procedure

The procedure used to obtain information concerning the cultural and religious behavior of the Navaho Indians which caused animosity, resistance, or indifference to the religious teachings of the Latter-day Saints has been varied. The author has relied upon written material obtained in various libraries. An additional source of information was a series of personal interviews and written correspondence with Navaho people and persons presently affiliated with Navaho Indians in the Church, in education, in business, and in the community. A questionnaire was administered to three-hundred Navaho students attending Intermountain Indian School in Brigham City, Utah. These students represented Catholic, Protestant, and Latter-day Saint faiths. The questionnaire was designed to measure the spiritual tempo of the students and to indicate areas of resistance to teachings of the Latter-day Saints.
Findings

The Navahos, like other American Indians are engaged in a struggle to preserve their self-identity. In the twentieth century, they have been exposed to numerous external influences which tend to suppress their indigenous culture. In an effort to retain their heritage, the Navaho people have resisted strenuously any attempts toward change. For many years the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was also viewed by many Navahos as an instrument of the white man to bring about this change. The newer generation seems to be optimistic. They feel that the future holds many promising opportunities. Many feel that they can enjoy the good things in both cultures.

Certain aspects of the government's educational policy have been criticized by the Indians and others who believed many young people were taken far away from home and tribal influences and poorly prepared to succeed in either culture. Furthermore, such methods of education have served to suppress the culture of the red man. However, the B.I.A. boarding schools have provided an education for thousands of Navaho youth. The government's efforts to gather the prospective school children together made it possible for the Church to organize classes in religious instruction, hence, evolved the Indian Seminary program of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

White man's Christianity has also served to suppress the self-identity of the Navaho people. Many missionary groups have carried out a plan of attempting to liquidate the native culture and denounce
many tribal rituals. In order to preserve their identity, many Navahos have turned to peyotism, a cult which they believe is of Indian origin. Mormonism was sometimes considered by the Navahos to be a part of white man's Christianity. However, many others have considered Mormons different from other white men. In the younger generation, many Navahos feel that they can accept and live the gospel of Jesus Christ as it has been restored and still maintain their identity in a Navaho nation.

The Navahos have many fears and superstitions. One particular superstition regarding death may serve as a deterrent in their acceptance of the teachings of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The doctrine of the restoration includes the appearance of numerous personages who returned from the dead and appeared to the living. The Navahos have considered the most remote contact with the dead to be abhorrent. However, among the younger Navahos there is evidence that through education and understanding they are rapidly turning away from this fear.

The language barrier among Navahos still remains a severe handicap in missionary work. Education seems to be the key in solving the problem. Recently the Church has developed a language training program at the Brigham Young University for missionaries who are going to serve among the Navahos.

It was pointed out that conflicting moral behavior was another cause for resistance and indifference to the teachings of the Mormons. Some of the habits of the Navahos prevent them from full fellowship in
the Church. Others rely on their old Navaho traditions claiming that
lying, stealing and adultery are permissible in some cases. And there
are those who believe that the commandments are too difficult to keep.
Even many of the younger generation are being taken in by fads in
dress and exposure to the undesirable elements in the white man's
culture.

Finally, prejudice caused by other churches has been a signifi-
cant factor which caused animosity, resistance, or indifference to the
Mormon church. Prejudice has increased as the church has focused more
attention on the Navaho people. As the Church continues to extend its
influence upon the Navaho, prejudice is expected to increase pro-
portionately.

II. CONCLUSIONS

Much has been said and written about the Great Society with its
civil rights, war on poverty, and foreign aid. The voices that should
be considered for these great social programs are too frequently un-
heard because of the clamoring of others.

The Navaho Indian is still underfed, underclothed, and under-
educated. In spite of his conditions, the Latter-day Saints foresee a
great tomorrow for him. He is a person of destiny. By divine revelation
the Lord said, "But before the great day of the Lord shall come, Jacob
shall flourish in the wilderness, and the Lamanites shall blossom as
the rose."1

1Doctrine and Covenants 49:24.
This study was attempted to show the unique problems that have caused resistance to the teachings to the Latter-day Saint church. The solution to their ills seems difficult and complicated. The scholars maintain that resistance stems from an effort to preserve the Navahos' self-identity and from certain fears and superstitions. The Navahos themselves may agree and add that their conflicts in moral behavior, language barrier, and prejudice caused by other churches have influenced their attitudes. However, in the final analysis, the problem of the Navaho becomes a spiritual matter.

According to the Latter-day Saint scriptures, particularly the Book of Mormon, the Lamanites were under a sore curse which was banishment from the presence of the Lord because of rebellion and rejection of the priesthood authority of their brethren. Consequently, scales of darkness covered their eyes which caused them to lose sight of the principles of salvation. After they had forsaken the gospel of Jesus Christ, a skin of darkness came upon them as a sign of the curse so they would not become enticing unto the Nephites. As a result of the curse the Lamanites became an loathsome, idle people full of mischief and subtlety.2

Furthermore, the Lamanites created a myth that they had been wronged by their brethren from the time they were driven out of Jerusalem to the time they had occupied the land of their first

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inheritance.  

This tradition which was a great lie according to the Lord was perpetuated upon the hearts of the children, and filled the world with confusion, and has been growing stronger and stronger, and is now the very mainspring of all corruption, and the whole earth groans under the weight of its iniquity. It is an iron yoke, it is a strong band; they are the very handcuffs, and chains, and shackles, and fetters of hell.

This seems to be the final barrier of resistance in accepting the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The abolishment of this great lie would possibly mean freedom for Indian Israel. The members of the Church who are engaged in the restoration of Lehi's seed must be desirous to reverse the curse of the Lamanite nation and bring them back into the presence of the Lord by turning the hearts of the children to their righteous father, and by re-introducing them to the priesthood of God.

The key to freedom is the gospel of Jesus Christ. Its teachings shall unlock the chains of bondage and cause the scales of darkness to fall from their eyes, and the mask that has disguised them for centuries shall disappear and they shall stand forth in their true identity as children of the living God.

Navahos must learn to live by the spirit of the Holy Ghost and to act in accordance to the whisperings of that small voice. Many Navahos follow the gospel plan, but few are capable of leading others.

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4 Doctrine and Covenants 123:7-9.
It seems that all spiritual motivation has to come from the missionaries or gospel teachers. In nearly all cases, the Navahos react to the suggestions and encouragements of others, whereas, if they could listen to the promptings of the spirit, their actions would be spontaneous and many of their ills would be cured.

The Navaho man must learn the meaning of Priesthood authority and how to use it properly. Through magnifying his priesthood, he could bless his children, heal the sick, and thus eliminate the need for sings, sand paintings, and the medicine man. He must become the Priesthood leader in the home where he can preside and accept the responsibility of directing the affairs of his family. Eventually, the day will come when Navaho children will have the privilege of attending a school near their home. The parents will then play their role of being the dominant influence in the lives of their children and in teaching them the Gospel.

It seems that Navahos are more receptive to change when it is offered by their own people, especially their leaders. In the past, the success of the Church has generally come among the women and children. If the People are to be won to the gospel of Jesus Christ, the loyalty of the tribal hierarchy must also be captured by the spirit of conversion. As the Church increases its influence among the Navahos, the work will be accelerated as Indian leadership is developed and placed into the Church's service. Young Navaho missionaries will play a valuable role in teaching the gospel to their own people and restoring the knowledge of their true identity.

The Navaho Indian does not generally have the wealth of the
world. His storehouse is not filled with material goods. His concept of time allows him freedom from the pressures of our day. Many look upon him with pity or disgust. Others try to change his ways. But there are many good things about his world. When the Savior calls, his storehouse of worldly goods will not hinder him. His obligations will not be tied to his wealth and he will be able to answer the call of the Lord.

The Navahos may become fine Latter-day Saints. However, like other people everywhere, they must come into the Church through the same narrow gate and tread along the same gospel path and endure to the end.

The members of the Church have been commissioned to help prepare the Lamanites to receive their great blessings, for the Lord God will proceed to do a marvelous work among the Gentiles . . . wherefore, it is likened unto their being nourished by the Gentiles and being carried in their arms and upon their shoulders . . . and they shall be brought out of obscurity and out of darkness; and they shall know that the Lord is their Savior and their Redeemer, the mighty One of Israel.5

The gospel must be offered to the Lamanites in its fullness. After the members of the Church have done all in their power to restore these great truths, they must turn to the Lord and pray with faith that He will in his mercy touch the hearts of the Lamanites by the power of the Holy Ghost. This is the only means whereby resistance can be overcome and the Lamanites restored to their proper place in the House of Israel.

5The Book of Mormon, I Nephi, 22:8,12.
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APPENDIX*

*All letters in the following appendix are carbon copies or originals that were sent to the author.
August 15, 1967

Mr. James Mathews
652 East Shamrock Drive
Brigham City, Utah

Dear Jim;

It has taken me quite a while to sit down and try to think through some of the questions which you asked me to answer in connection with your thesis. I hope you will forgive me for my procrastination, but somehow I am not able to keep up on the many responsibilities it seems to be mine. However, at this time, I will attempt to give you my feelings regarding these six questions.

1. What do you consider to be the greatest problem in converting Navajos to the church?

A. It is my opinion that the problem of communication is coupled with the blindness or inability that the Navajo people seem to have in understanding and accepting and living the Gospel. It seems that every move that they make is associated somehow with their old traditional and pagan ways. We come along with a completely different concept of life and expect them to change over to our way of life when we find that it is difficult even for our own people to live the Gospel like they ought to. Their culture, of course, suggests that why worry about tomorrow so long as we have what we need today.

You know how they look upon death, and here we teach them of eternal progression and of the value of saving and planning of tomorrow. We also speak so much about the resurrection and eternal life. I have found that the majority of these people either do not understand or are simply not interested.

2. Do you feel that it is possible to have an effective church organization under the conditions the Navajos are presently living? What do you feel is the solution?

A. I feel it is almost impossible to establish wards and stakes and promote the full church program under the present conditions of the Navajo people. As you mentioned, the problem of transportation is one of our greatest problems. The fact that we need adult leadership and example is one of our serious obstacles to a ward and a stake. We find that it is almost impossible to even get these strong young people coming from the Placement Program to participate with us in our summer program. It is
true that getting them to our services is a real problem, but even those who live near to our church buildings are often quite inactive. Unless some strong persuasive ways are used, we find these people hardly continue their church activity. We do have some exceptions and we have some strong young Latter-Day Saints, but generally speaking, when these young people get back to their homes, they tend to return to a lot of the ways of their parents.

I suppose that a part of the solution to this problem is that as education becomes a larger part of these people, and our effectiveness in proselyting and teaching is increased, and prosperity becomes increased so that they will have their own transportation, only then will we make any considerable amount of progress in the line of wards and stakes.

I have found that those who are really converted to the church have become so through dreams and visions, and other unusual spiritual experiences.

3. Do you know of anything in the Navajo culture and religious behavior that would cause animosity, resistance, etc. to L.D.S. teachings?

A. It seems hard for them to understand the apostasy and I have found that the older people quite resist the idea that their fathers, even back for a short period, have not found truths and that there is not something of real value associated with the medicine men. They seem to resist very much our idea of the resurrection. As you know, they loath death. One of our Navajo missionaries told me recently that he finally developed enough courage to touch a casket of a deceased Indian. He said he even got down in the grave and maneuvered the casket in its right position. He said that it was hard for him and he was sweating and was frightened, but even then he did accomplish that much.

I spent some time with one of our good old Latter-Day Saint women and asked her why she wasn't active. She said, "Well, any true Navajo will never be anything but a Navajo, for they are born with their religion in their heart and even though they may join other churches, it is only to keep other churches away from them and to become a little more acceptable to other people," but she said, "the true Navajo will never be anything religiously than what he was born with."

4. Do you feel there is significant change away from the native religion and traditions, etc.?

A. I feel that the young people are gradually moving away from these traditional things. In the last election, Nakai and those who represent a more progressive political stand were victorious against the old traditionalists, as they are called. It seems that according to accounts that I have read and learned of through talking with people about these things, that the the younger generation was the ruling factor in this election. It seems as though education becomes more prevalent that these people gradually move away to some extent from these old Indian ways. I feel that peyote is gradually moving in and changing a lot of the old traditional ways, but of course, some claim that this peyote is a part of their old religion, and by the way, this peyote is really taking over a goodly share of our members as well as the Indian people generally.
5. Are you aware of any moral attitudes such as sexual behavior, marriage, stealing, etc. that may cause them to resist L.D.S. teachings?

A. It seems that their sexual behavior is quite different than the L.D.S conception of this important principle of the Gospel. I have talked with some of the old-timers here like Don Smouse at Borrego Pass and others who claim that immorality as we look at it in the sex behavior area of morality was at one time closer to our code than at present. They used to look upon sexual experience before marriage as a very serious offense, and that a woman who had a child out of the Navajo marriage of wedlock, was looked down upon. Now, this is a very acceptable pattern of living and this makes it difficult for them to accept the strict standard of morality as taught by the L.D.S. Church. I have had a number of people tell me that the Mormon Church is simply too hard to live and it seems to rob them of their freedom. They like to live close to nature and do those things which seem to be desirable in their sight. I do not know enough about their attitude towards stealing and etc. to give any suggestions.

6. Do you feel our present missionary approach is sufficiently effective among the Navajos?

A. My answer is definitely no. I still do not feel that we have the means of communication. I think that some more work needs to be done in the area of visual aids but I think that our present lessons will give them an understanding somewhat of Mormonism, if we are able to communicate these concepts to them. I feel that we are falling far from accomplishing the job that has to be done.

I appreciate the work that is being done by the Indian Committee through the Seminary people developing what they call conversion lessons. These, I understand, will have flip chart pictures, filmstrips, and hand out pictures which will greatly increase our effectiveness as we proceed to teach these people. I feel that our missionaries must be spiritually minded and examples in every way of Mormonism, and as they teach the Gospel bear testimony with real conviction through the power of the Holy Ghost, these people can feel the influence of the teachings of the Gospel as given by the missionaries. We have been working on this, and our missionaries have made progress in using this type of approach, but they haven't yet arrived. So, I feel that there is much to be done in developing more effective proselyting methods in teaching families as much as possible. We are attempting to teach families more than we have ever done, but we still have a long way to go, especially in getting the fathers interested and interesting all these people which constitute a family. Because of the differences in ages and backgrounds it is difficult to interest all of them with our approach.

I am sure Jim, that I haven't given you anything particularly that you don't already know, having been a missionary here, and I have done this rather hurriedly so, of course, I have not exhausted any of these areas, but I have briefly given you my feelings on these important questions. I certainly appreciate the fact that you are working on problems such as these for your thesis, for these are the very problems which we face as Latter-Day Saints. Much work needs to be done through a study such as you are doing,
to assist in our very important responsibility to bring the Indian people to an understanding of the Gospel so that they can rise to their rightful place in the Kingdom of the Lord.

May the Lord continue to bless you in this great study.

Sincerely your brother,

Hal

Hal L. Taylor
Mission President
Mr. James Mathews  
652 East Shamrock Drive  
Brigham City, Utah 84302

Dear Brother Mathews:

I hoped to put a little more thought into this answer as to the cultural things which hinder the Navajo Indian students in their progress. I suppose I better get at it, so this is my answer even though it is a little shy of a deeply-studied consideration.

I believe the following things greatly hinder the Navajo youth in their progress towards adaptation into our American way of life:

1. The language barrier seems to serve as a great deterrent, especially where Navajo is spoken in the home and English is picked up only in the school as a second language.

2. The Navajo family construction which permits relatives to accumulate in the home of a successful family and thus serve as an undue financial pressure to their ability to support more than their own family. This built-in system of welfare, even though it may have many good features, can also bring about some rather disastrous effects on those who want to go forward in their progress. The fact that the student knows that he has a right to drop in on near relatives contributes too great of a protective relationship for his own good. He needs to learn to stand on his own two feet.

3. The built-in cultural concept that associates not go faster than the group in their progress seems to be a real hindrance to progress. It is very difficult for them to be different from others. Peer pressure is strong and is usually in the negative direction—that of holding people back rather than being an incentive for progress.

4. The reluctance of Indian people to argue a point or to speak up and be heard creates a great hindrance to progress. Instead of being heard it seems to be their custom to just shrink and be willing to take the consequences.
5. The Navajo people and, to a great extent, Indian people in general are very proud. This pride works in many cases as a hindrance against progress, especially when they are too proud to argue or too proud to stand up for their rights. This is a great negative pull against their progress and causes them to continue to be just "Indian."

6. Superstitious fears against evil omens, bewitchments, and hexes have altogether too much influence on many of their lives. These things have been built into their cultural patterns and are very difficult to eradicate. Of course substantial progress has been made in overcoming this type of thing but it still exists to a large degree.

7. Poverty is of course a key factor towards their progress. Many of the people live in such a small world that they are unaware of the things for which they should be striving. As one Indian said, when told he was poor, "I didn't know I was so poor until you told me."

8. Families who cling onto the old sheep herd will apparently never get very far in playing their part in the world. This has a tendency to govern their lives to a great degree by dictating where they live and how they wander to keep up with the sheep herd. The Navajo people would be much better off at this point in the game if they could forget the reservation and their sheep herd, and move into localities where employment can be had. As long as they follow the sheep herd they will continue to be steeped in the Indian culture and the old reservation Indian culture.

9. The celebration craze is altogether too strong to permit real progress and cultural advancement. The pattern of following rodeos, yeh-bashei dances, fairs, and various celebrations consumes altogether too much of their time and thoughts. This type of activity must be replaced by cultural, uplifting activities sponsored by communities, schools, and tribes.

10. To feel inferior, to feel the part of a second- or third-rate citizen is a terrible hindrance to progress, and many Indian people have this feeling.

11. Very little reading is done by the Navajo people. This pattern needs to change. They need to become a part of world and community happenings.
12. The great lack of the sense of responsibility creates a terrible hindrance to progress.

13. Alcohol persists as their great crutch and they resort to it too readily when confusion and frustrations stir within their lives. They do not readily face up to a situation but instead retreat and withdraw.

14. The fact that they have been brought up in a reservation, or one might say a concentration camp type of cultural background, for so many generations is probably one of the greatest reasons for their lack of responsibility and desire for leadership which exists within them.

15. Their unwillingness to want to cooperate with the white man on an equal basis is a hindrance. They have chips on their shoulders. And even though they have been mistreated in the past they have a tendency to blame and hate rather than to face the issue in the future and make a success of things.

16. Their lack of a good home influence where parents are helpful to the progress of their children and serve as reminders and motivators for children to do the best they can in schooling, attendance, and assignments is a terrible hindrance. In so many cases the parents feel inferior to the children and this produces frustration instead of confidence in the home environment.

17. Disease, accident, and early death certainly have their influence against progress. These conditions probably relate closely to the poverty conditions in which the Indian people live.

18. The tendency to use the reservation as a place of retreat is a deterrent to progress. When they get in debt or things go wrong, they go back to their place of safety.

19. The very fact that a reservation exists is a deterrent to Indian progress. They would be better off if there were not such a thing as a reservation.

20. The fact that they desire to retain their Indian nation and their special Indian identity and avoid taxation and the general laws and customs of the nation is a great deterrent.
These things probably prevail among the white people as well as among Indians. I love and appreciate the Indian people and do not want to sound as if I had only a negative approach. But you have asked for things I think deter them, and these are among the most important, in my opinion.

Sincerely your brother,

J. Edwin Baird
Supervisor of Indian Seminaries

JEB:1d
James Mathews
4423 Monticello Avenue
Riverside, California

Dear Brethren:

As we study the programs being developed for our Indian members among the stakes of the Church we are elated with the progress being made. Never satisfied with any accomplishment short of perfection, however, we believe there is yet much to be desired.

We are confident that, like all other members of the Church, the Lamanite people are intelligent and basically able, but they are like a boat at sea without sail or rudder unless they can be taught and trained. We know, as you do, that trainers must be unselfish and immune to discouragement. It is not always an easy assignment to labor with the Lamanite members, to give them the assistance they need; but the Lord has required this service of us. The same commission has been given us as was given to James Covill in the 39th Section of the D&C "Thou art called to labor in my vineyard, and to build up my Church, and to bring forth Zion, that it may rejoice upon the hills and flourish."

With the vigorous proselyting programs now being carried on in many of our stakes among the Indian people it is obvious that there must be a strong organization to receive and fellowship new members. May we suggest, therefore, that you give consideration to the following recommendations.

1. Where Indian branches are organized, the Branch Presidency should be composed of Lamanites, if this is at all possible, with capable individuals and stake organizations in the background training and inspiring where this is necessary.

2. Rather than rotating assignments, it might be preferable if one high councilor were assigned to supervise the work of the Indian branch continuously over a period of time, rather than to confuse the Lamanites with many strange people in constantly changing responsibilities.

3. If it is necessary to install other than a Lamanite as an executive in an Indian unit then he should preferably have two Lamanite counselors who will do practically all of the conducting of meetings and organizing under the direction of their trainer-leader who would remain in the background.
4. This same plan should be in operation in the auxiliary organizations serving Lamanite groups. The Lamanites themselves should be given the responsibility for leadership with the trained non-Lamanite helpers to give subtle and understanding assistance. For example, three Lamanite women could be assigned to the Relief Society Presidency with a wise, near-silent trainer in the background to coach them in their preparation and to help them with experiences that will build their confidence in their ability to organize and conduct. This process could continue until the Lamanites can fully control and direct the whole program independent of outside help.

5. Indian leaders should be encouraged to assume their total responsibilities as rapidly as possible, not only as to local meetings but as to stake conferences, leadership meetings, and other branch and stake activities as well. There must be no impatience and discouragement if there is only partial participation in this regard at first. The Lamanite members are making progress though it sometimes seems to be slow.

The strongest most versatile and imaginative people in your councils and quorums and auxiliary organizations should be called to assist in this service. Generally this policy has been followed, but in some areas worthy and devoted but less able and resourceful people have been called.

If reasonably good Lamanite leadership can be found, then they should be placed in positions of leadership with non-Lamanites to carefully assist and counsel.

If it takes months and even years to train Lamanite leaders in dependability, resourcefulness, and efficient operation, it still must be done for it is obvious that for others to continually carry this responsibility for them there will never come the transformation we are looking for.

Non-Lamanite leaders who are called to assist in this work must not become impatient with what appears to be a sub-standard performance on the part of the Lamanite leaders. It is often the tendency for the non-Lamanite members to rush in and rescue a Lamanite leader when he appears to be in an embarrassing position and about to fail. The Indian members will never learn to accept their full responsibility if we insist on shouldering this responsibility for them. Preference should be given to Lamanite members when talks are being assigned in Sunday School and Sacrament meetings. Lamanite members should plan and conduct the meetings, lead and accompany the singing, teach the classes, do the home teaching, and, in short, do all the branch work that is possible even though it might be done less expertly at first.

Stake music leaders possessed of much patience could give free music lessons until every Indian youth can use the baton in the leading of singing and until many can play the piano well enough for the accompaniment of congregational singing.
A member of the Stake Presidency could well take the Indian work as one of his most demanding and important responsibilities and to give tireless attention to the needs of these people, remembering constantly the parable of the ninety and nine and the one lost sheep.

No complaining, selfish, impatient people should be assigned to this responsibility. They must be people who will not begrudge time, funds nor energy expended. They should understand that it means in Churchill's words: "blood and sweat and tears" and that it may mean time and means and energy spelled with capital T's and M's and E's. These people should be committed to a sizeable challenge. Do not ask them--call them by the authority of your own position; let them know it is hard work, a long pull, a never thankless service, but one to be richly rewarded by the Lord who demands such service of us.

And may we urge that a conscious, continuing effort be made to indoctrinate the good leaders and the people of your stake, that the Lord is greatly displeased should any discrimination be found and should any people feel superior. We have believed that your people have generally felt kindly toward the Lamanites - "the strangers within thy gates" - but we must be constantly ready to defend the program and the Lamanite people and treat them with understanding, not disdain; with acceptance and not mere tolerance (See Alma 5:54).

This work in behalf of our Lamanite brothers and sisters must go forward. It cannot wait until all of the problems which pertain to our non-Lamanite members have been solved. The Indian people have waited long years for their restoration to the blessings of the gospel. We can not deny them these blessings through our own indifference and disinterest. Brigham Young has said this in regard to the responsibility of Church members toward the Indian people "Now, if this people, male and female, feel to school them, spend time and pains to instill into their minds correct principles, to divide land with them, and clothe them, ... and if they will no more exclude them from their houses and hospitality, and will go to work and restore them to knowledge of the truth, the Lord God will bless them, and they have nothing to fear. If you will live up to this you will rise, while those who do not will go down". President John Taylor said, "The work among the Lamanites must not be postponed if we desire to retain the approval of God. Thus far we have been content simply to baptize them and let them run wild again, but this must continue no longer; the same devoted effort, the same care in instructing, the same organization and Priesthood must be introduced and maintained among the house of Levi as amongst those of Israel gathered from the Gentile nations."

May the Lord bless you as you dedicate yourself to this important work.

Faithfully yours,

THE INDIAN COMMITTEE

Spencer W. Kimball
LeGrand Richards
Boyd K. Packer
Mr. James D. Mathews  
P.O. Box 671  
Brigham City, Utah 84302

Dear Brother Mathews:

I am sorry that I have been so slow in answering your letter but I have been tremendously tied and much out of town.

I am not sure that the work has gone slowly among the Navajoes when we think of it in a relative vein. I am sure, however, that it has been hampered and delayed by misunderstandings and prejudice. Someone said that "every time a white man touched an Indian, he skinned him," and the Indian has become very suspicious and has little confidence in the white man generally. The uneducated person is often critical and prejudiced. This is true of the Indians and especially since they have until this time been more or less isolated without newspapers, magazines, television, radio, communications. It is has been easy for vicious priests or ministers or others to prejudice them.

One of the greatest obstacles in preventing them from joining the Church is their habits. With little else to do and limited associations or social contacts, it has been an easy matter for them to take on drink, and it has been difficult for them to leave it alone since it seems to drown many of their sorrows and their deprivation. They have little else to take its place in filling their lives. They are deeply entrenched in the liquor problem and also smoking and coffee have been very common among them. These things were always available.

Prejudice is a major factor and since they have been confined in the past to the reservation and limited in their contacts, it has been difficult for them to erase from their minds and hearts the prejudices and superstitions of the past. Their superstitions are hard to get out of their minds and until they are educated, this will be a major factor.

I do feel that we are making progress and especially with our Indian Student Placement Program and that eventually, we will be able to 'leaven the lump'.
As to peyote, we have always discouraged it and felt that it not only might have a medicinal damage but that the way is connected with the great American church and connected with the social activities which are not on a very high level. Peyote then becomes an agency which is not designed to do much or any good.

With kind wishes.

Faithfully yours,

Spencer W. Kimball

SWK:vs
May 21, 1967

Dear Bro. Mathews,

I saw Eunice Smith the very day she came back from school and gave me the latest report on William George. I think that it was so wonderful of him to save some money towards his mission. I am so thrilled that the Lord has called another Missionary from our branch. Truly it is wisdom in the Lord that he calls those untarnish by the world with little education, little background of the gospel to thrust in their sickles in the last days. These are those who give all they have in this Mission field and from whom the spirit radiate when they bear their testimonies. How grateful I am for your unselfish service to the young Indian Israel and your love for them. To answer a call is a tremendous responsibility and with this responsibility grows a testimony that makes you tremble. It's a feeling that makes one's heart swell for the people and a desire for them to have that same joy.

I can hardly wait to see Elder George and watch him grow and use his talents. Badly do this people need someone shorn speak their language. It's a very difficult mission but a great privilege to labor among the chosen people of the Lord. I am so happy that I have accepted this call. You have done a great deal encouraging me to accept the call when everything was so uncertain. Just think you have four Seminary students whom you have taught on the Mission today. These are the lives you have influence, Sisters Mary Sandoval, Emma Dugi, Elder George and me. Sister Sandoval and Dugi sent their love to you and family.

I have been transferred from Sanders to Gonodo about three weeks ago. I am just now getting use to Ganado, a good area. This coming Friday we are going to baptize seven people. Inspite of all, I greatly missed Sanders, a wonderful place, had much success there, the Lord has blessed me so much. My health is good, working with some top missionaries in the district. I regret that the months are going so fast for me, already a year and there's so much that I still want to do for these people.

It is my prayer that the Lord will continue to bless us in working with Indian Israel - in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Sister Chavez
Box 311
Ganado, Arizona
It is reported that there are now 300 Mormon missionaries working on the Navajo Reservation. This is more than the combined forces of all the Protestant groups. Add to this the more than 100 Mormon trading post operators, most of whom are elders or bishops, and you have a working force capable of saturating the reservation with their propaganda in a short period of time.

The Mormon missionaries spend most of their time visiting in the camps and contacting the Indians as they come into the trading posts. They major in getting the children signed up for released time religion classes, so that the schoolrooms become their chapels. They don't worry too much about the adults because they know that if they get the children now, they will have the tribe in another two decades.

Our Protestant missionaries seem frustrated if they do not have chapels in which to preach to congregations, hence they spend much time getting allotments of land and building chapels while the Mormons are out calling in the hogans. The results are that in 10 years the Mormons have attracted more followers than the Protestant missionaries have in 60 years.

The Mormon missionaries are required to study the Navajo language at least 2 hours a day, and then use the phrases learned, even if imperfectly pronounced. We have difficulty in getting a small proportion of the evangelical missionaries to study the language two hours a week. The Mormons are working hard, using the Wycliffe methods, to prepare the Book of Mormon and their own primers in the Navajo language. While they are still a little behind in their accomplishments, they are catching up rapidly and we will have to look to our laurels.

The Mormons are spending millions to capture the tribe's loyalty while God's people spend pennies by comparison, and we have to plead for workers and scrounge for secondhand equipment to get the job done—while the Mormons are catching up to us. They plan ahead diligently and have efficient training methods, whereas the evangelicals seem to have spent little thought and planning to cover the Indian fields, and have a definite resistance against systematic missionary training.

Discouraged? Not for a moment! After all, the Mormons with all of their effort and money have not yet transformed a single life because they have no cure for sin. The Gospel does transform sinful men; and, even poorly trained missionaries, with the Word of God in their hands, can point men to the Saviour as the one Cure for sin.

Will you help us in 3 great efforts? 1) To train Indian
believers in the Word so that they can be the real missionaries to their people; 2) To train white missionaries in the Navajo language and in the art of teaching native workers and doing necessary field work with the Indian missionaries; and 3) To get our Navajo publication work under way so as to saturate the literate Navajo population with a valuable Christian literature in their own language.

Gordon H. Fraser
Southwestern School of Missions
Dear Brother

The questions in your letter of May 13 are not easily answered. They reach out into many realms and there are numerous implications.

I appreciate your genuine interest in the red men of whom there are many in your area. I realize the difficulties and am sympathetic with the problems.

We have a definite responsibility to the Lamanites and a very definite one to our own families. It is my conviction that the end will not come--that the closing scene will not be ushered in--that the Lord himself will not come in His Glory until a substantial part of the Lamanites have had the gospel preached to them. We are nearing the end of the dispensation and approaching the culminating scenes. We are in the last days. Time is short. I believe we have hardly scratched the surface in the work of proselyting and converting the Lamanites, though we have made some progress in the past decade. We have today thousands of Indian Latter-day Saints and tens of thousands of other Lamanites in the Church.

To be more specific: The Church encourages with all its strength the marriage of our young people within the Church, among the faithful in the Church, in their own race and, as nearly as practicable, within the same general background as to education, wealth, customs, and traditions.

Because Japanese, or Mexicans, or Indians live in the same community is no reason why there need to be inter-racial marriages. Because there are numerous Gentiles in the community is no good reason why there should be inter-faith marriages. Because the sophisticated learned live in the same area as the crude, ignorant, illiterate is no reason why they should inter-marry. I realize that the proximity does increase the likelihood.

As we educate and proselyte our good people of other races the Lord in His final instructions reiterated in the vision to Peter, proclaimed the doctrine of teaching the gospel to every creature in every nation, tongue, kindred and people. As we educate and proselyte these good people of other races, we should teach and train them to find suitable companionship in dating and marriage within their own races. It is not a matter of superiority in morals, spirituality, or wealth, or even sophistication, as it is a matter of common backgrounds creating a situation where there will be found the fewest hurdles toward total compatibility and happiness.

It would not be wrong in the sense of sin or crime for this Lamanite and this non-Lamanite to marry, but it may be against the best policy and to that end, the Church has continually discouraged inter-race marriage. If there are such, we perform them in our temples and extend to them every blessing of the gospel, but still discourage them.
It is my feeling that the destiny of the Indian will eventually bring him into an integrated association in communities with the white men as the Gentiles have invaded our communities or as we have invaded theirs. I firmly believe that tomorrow there will be no reservations and that the Indian, Japanese, the Mexican, the Chinese, the Spanish Basque, the Italian will be living side by side with us, like the Catholic, Protestant and Jew are now our neighbors. I doubt if we can change the trend, if we tried, except for the moment.

The day approaches when these red and brown and yellow children will enjoy the same educational and spiritual privileges with our own children.

In our extensive placement program, these Indian children in the many communities participate in activities in the organizations. I know of almost no inter-race marriages yet. If we the leaders and their natural parents and their foster parents teach and train them to look for their happiness with those of their own race in marriage, then watch dating, encouraging it in proper channels, we hope that inter-race marriages might be avoided.

It is our feeling that as the program grows and more and more Indian children are located in the community and area, that they will prefer to marry each other; and now that there are thousands of Indian members in the Church, it will be increasingly easier for a young Indian youth to find a faithful, Indian Latter-day Saint of his own background, standards, sophistication, and thereby will come happy marriages.

If and when the Indian youth is as well trained, as successful in business and professions, as sophisticated and integrated into our way of life, if there should be an exception, it would not be the calamity that inter-faith marriage often is in losing the member who so married outside.

I do not claim that I have fully answered the question you propounded. I do not claim to know the answer to the Indian problem. With many years of intimate contact with it, I have come to some conclusions which seem to me to be right. I believe we shall never educate nor convert the Lamanites segregated on reservations. I feel certain that education is the answer—education in secular matters as well as spiritual. I believe that integration into our economy and community life is essential and I look forward to the day when there will be Indian girls as nurses in hospitals, teachers in schools, secretaries in offices, housekeepers in their own lovely and commodious homes; mothers of enlightened, clean, progressive children, and wives of Indian boys who also are clean, healthy, progressive and trained and who take their places in professions, business, industry, schools, government and community circles and who fill missions (as a few are already doing), marry their sweet Indian companions in the holy temple and become bishops, stake presidents, mission presidents and come to fill positions in ward, stake and general boards. Is that not the way the Savior would have it? Is there not another way to protect the Indian child and the White child rather than eliminating the programs which might help them.

When you have read this letter, if you feel that there are phases which
we have overlooked or which have not been given proper evaluations, we shall be
glad to have your comments. I am not more interested in an Indian boy or girl
than I am a White American or Canadian one, but I believe we must not think of
superior races, but superior opportunities. I realize, too, that we have not come
from the horse-and-buggy days in a day and neither can they emerge from illiteracy
to sophistication in a day. And never can they without our help. They cannot lift
themselves with their bootstraps but we, their nursing fathers and mothers, must
carry them on our shoulders till they can walk straight and tall.

Thanks sincerely for your inquiry and I hope the above thoughts may be
helpful in your determinations.

Sincerely,

Spencer W. Kimball

SWK:vs
Hello there,

**Easter Sunday is the greatest day of the year.** On the first Easter Sunday Jesus showed that He was really God. By His own power Jesus came back to life on the first Easter. Jesus became one of us earth's people to help us get to heaven.

We all know how Jesus was born on Christmas in Bethlehem. When Jesus grew up He started to teach the people how to be good. Many bad men did not like what Jesus said. They wanted to get rid of Jesus. They told the people that Jesus was bad! He should be put to death. They thought they would get rid of Jesus by having him killed. Jesus let them do this. He could have stopped them. He did not want to. He let the bad men nail Him to the cross. Jesus said He was coming back to life again. The bad men nailed Jesus to the cross on Friday. Jesus really died. Jesus came back to life the next Sunday, because He was God. Easter Sunday is the day when Jesus came back to life.

The bad men were also very mean to Jesus. They whipped Him very hard and made fun of Him. Jesus suffered this because of our sins. He wanted to show us how bad sin really is. Our sins made Jesus feel bad more than those bad men. The persons who get drunk or eats peyote hurts Jesus more than the bad men. Those people who do not come to Church, or who tell lies, or who steal— all of them made Jesus suffer. Jesus will forgive everyone their sins if they are sorry for them. They must also stop doing these sins.

Jesus came back to life again after He had died on the cross. By doing this Jesus showed us He was really God. Since Jesus is God we must do what He wants us to do. Jesus was born in Bethlehem; He died on the Cross; and He came back to life again to help us get to heaven. He did something else to help us get to Heaven. He started a Church. He did not start all the different kind of churches that we see. He started only one Church. That one Church is the Catholic Church. The Catholic Church is the only one that goes all the way back to the time of Jesus. The presbyterian Church is only about 400 years old. The Baptist Church is only about 350 years old. The mormon church is only 130 years old. The peyote church is only about 50 years old. But the Catholic Church is more than 1900 years old.

Some people say that all churches pray to the same God. Therefore they are all the same. That is not true. We do all pray to the same God. But we do not all pray to the same God in the same way. Since there is only one God, God wants us all to pray to Him in the same way, not in different ways. God does not want all different kinds of ways of praying to Him. He wants only the one that Jesus started. God could
stop all these different Churches right now if He wanted to, but he is letting them go on to see which people obey Him and which ones do not. The day will come when there will be only the Catholic Church. When that day comes, those people who are on the Catholic side will be very happy. Those people who are on the protestant or peyote or mormon side will be very sad that they were not on the Catholic side.

I just sent a letter out today to all of your mothers and fathers. The main thing that I wanted to tell them was about the Easter services which we are having this year at Greasewood. We are going to have what is called the Easter Vigil services. They will start about 11:00 at night on the Saturday evening before Easter Sunday. It will be something like midnite Mass on Christmas. I do hope that a lot of the people will be able to come.

All of you should be praying really hard now for your relatives back on the reservation. There are so many now who are starting to drink too much. The only way that these people can be helped is by God. We have to get God's help by praying. You should especially pray for them when you go to Mass on Sunday. If you have been baptized and made your First Communion, take every chance you can of receiving Jesus in Holy Communion. After you have received Jesus, ask him to bless all your relatives and friends. Ask Him to help those who are drinking too much. It seems that almost every family has someone who drinks too much.

In certain places peyote is really getting the people. Those people too need our prayers. Peyote is no good for them. But many don't seem to think that. I am sometimes afraid that some people will not know how bad peyote really is until it is too late. Some even say or think that God wants them to use peyote. God never said that. God would never tell us to use something like that which makes us dizzy and makes us see things. It can even hurt our health and make us sick. You have the good luck to go to school have the duty to pray for those who are doing wrong. Many of them do not know that it is wrong.

It won't be too long and school will just about be over. It will be good for you to get back to your mother and father, your brothers and sisters and your other relatives. When you get back home you must try to teach them some of the things that you have learned at school. You should mainly try to teach them everything you have learned about God.

I have not figured out exactly what we will be doing this summer at Greasewood, but we will have the summer school at Greasewood and Cornfields. There will probably be one night for dancing and movie another night.

We have a new club started at Greasewood called the Legion of Mary. We have one group for the big people. They have their meeting every Thursday evening. We also are starting a group for the children,
Their meeting is on Friday night. The main thing that this club is supposed to do is make the members better Catholics. When they have become good Catholics they are supposed to help to make other people good Catholics. The members of this club are really helping the priest and sisters help all the people get to heaven. Maybe we can have something like this for you when you get home during the summer.

There is not much other news to write about. It sure would be nice if you get home for Easter. That is impossible for most of you. I will be looking forward to seeing you in the summer. If I have the chance I will write you a letter again before school closes. I also want to wish you a happy Easter. The Sisters too wish you a happy Easter. May God bless you and make you good Catholics.

Your Friends in Jesus and His Mother, Mary
Father Valentine and the Sisters
Superintendent
Sherman Indian Institute
Riverside, California.

Dear Sir:

I have received word that Betty Lou Tracy, Inscription House Trading Post, Tonaquita, Arizona, has been compelled to change from Protestant to LDS, religious classes against her wishes. I am surprised to hear this, for the following reasons:

None of her family are Mormon.
Her registration on file in Tuba City is Presbyterian.
A correction of the change to LDS was put in the hands of Mr. Lee Payton by myself. Mr. Payton assured me that he would personally see that it was sent on to you. It should have reached you long before Betty was sent to the LDS classes.

The change from Presbyterian to LDS was obtained by two Mormon elders who signed up the father, Tom Tracy, in his camp with no government witness present to sign at the time he did. This information is supplied by a sister of Betty who lives in Tom's camp, speaks English well and was present, she says, when this occurred.

As soon as Tom understood what he had done, he promptly went with me to the Inscription House Trailer School, where Annie B. Fennell, a government teacher, witnessed his signature on his application for a change from LDS to Protestant Evangelical. At the time, I did not know that she had been going to the Presbyterian Chapel, or I would have so registered her. We register all our young people Protestant Evangelical as we are not denominational, and we want to be sure that they get straight Bible teaching as near the simple central Christian faith as is possible.

If it is necessary for Tom Tracy to appear before a government school official for the third time to witness a fourth application, I know that he will be quick to do it. It does seem rather excessive effort to make sure that Betty gets to go to the Christian classes that both she and her father desire. She wrote home objecting to the switch to LDS not very long ago. Perhaps you will understand one reason for her thinking if you know that her cousin was brutally beaten to death in a hogan but a few hundred feet from her father's by a Mormon, the husband of Betty's cousin.

I trust that if Betty is not already back in Presbyterian classes, I will hear soon that she has been so changed.

Sincerely yours

Rev. G. W. Mason, Supt.

P.S. Would you please let me know the different categories of religious training available to the students at Sherman? Thank you!

G.W.M.
April 15, 1960

Rev. G. W. Mason, Supt.,
Inscription House Navajo Mission
Tonalea, Arizona

Dear Rev. Mason:

Reference is made to your letter of April 7, 1960, regarding the church registration of Betty Lou Tracy. Official regulations require that our school records show the actual or desired church affiliation of each student. The appropriate church representatives are then notified accordingly. Encouragement is given to student to attend the church indicated on their application. Students eighteen years of age or older may attend the church of their choice.

No change is authorized without the written approval of the parents concerned. When such written notice is received our school records are adjusted accordingly and the notice of the change is sent to the church representatives concerned.

If an error has been made in Betty Lou Tracy's case, we shall be happy to change our records and notify the ministers concerned on receipt of an official statement from her parents. There are three main categories of religious training at Sherman Institute. They are: Catholic, Protestant, and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. The Protestant program is assisted by many of the local Protestant Church groups.

All three church representatives meet weekly to discuss problems of common interest.

If we can be of further help to you please feel free to write.

Sincerely yours,

Myrthus W. Evans
Superintendent

cc: Mr. Lee Payton
Rev. E. Smith
Elder Mathews
School Office
April 5, 1966

Miss Wilma Victor
Superintendent
Intermountain Indian School
Brigham City, Utah

Dear Miss Victor:

This letter is in regard to the "program" presented by Brigham Young University to the Junior Class in the Intermountain Auditorium this morning, April 5. When I was informed that BYU was presenting a program at that time, I made an effort to drop in toward the end of the hour, assuming that the program was of an entertainment nature. To my surprise and chagrin, the program was nothing more or less than an hour of advertising BYU's "special features" and soliciting prospective students for BYU.

I do not debate the merits or de-merits of BYU's educational program for Indian students. Our objection is to the fact that our Christian Reformed students were exposed to this "denominational" and less than objective presentation on school time, and under school sponsorship. Included in our objection is the fact that the local L. D. S. Indian Seminary leader and program were introduced to the group. My personal feeling is that a college program such as presented here should be shown only to students of the particular religious group, and preferably in the religious group's own facilities.

Please receive this letter as a courteous but emphatic protest.

Sincerely yours,

Rev. Alfred E. Mulder
My dear Miss Victor,

For several years I have heard complaints from both students and staff concerning the presentations that B. Y. U. made to our student body. Because I was getting it second hand I ignored it. This year I was present. They presented a film strip on the virtues of B. Y. U. The film was very well done. There were many aspects of it which were very misleading.

i.e. They are the only school doing something about higher education for Indians.

i.e. There is complete religious liberty on the Campus

i.e. A degree is granted for a technical education

i.e. Each Indian student has a professor with whom they have continual association.

Aside from these things concerning the film, I feel it is wrong for a church school to present a program of recruitment to the total student body.

Anxious as I am for our youth to get a higher education (if I were willing to grant that their program was a superior program) I feel it is definitely proselytizing and should not be on a government school campus.

Both in the introductions and in the film the L. D. S. Church was extolled. My conscience will not allow me to keep still.

I am writing this so that you may keep it on file.

Gratefully,

Augusta Jackley
Protestant Center
April 11, 1966

Rev. Alfred E. Mulder
Christian Reformed Church
Brigham City, Utah

Dear M. Mulder:

I am sure your letter of concern regarding the program presented by Brigham Young University expresses your feeling of interest in the group of students you serve.

It has been the policy of the school to permit universities and colleges to present their programs to students who would benefit by becoming college-oriented. We feel it is desirable for our students to be aware of the types and kinds of programs offered at any college or university interested in explaining their program to them.

I am enclosing copy of a letter I received from Dr. Paul E. Felt, Director of Indian Affairs at B. Y. U. I hope you will accept his explanation in all good faith, as I did.

I appreciate your interest in the students and hope that it will continue in an over-all program that will be beneficial in the development and growth of the students, both spiritually and academically, while here at school and after graduation.

Sincerely yours,

Wilma L. Victor
School Superintendent
April 7, 1966

Miss Wilma Victor
Superintendent
Intermountain School
Brigham City, Utah

Dear Miss Victor:

I am in receipt of a carbon copy letter to you from Rev. Alfred Mulder in regards to the program presented by Mr. Paul Felt from the Brigham Young University on Tuesday, April 5, 1966. I am surprised at Rev. Mulder's objection. I assure you that there was no attempt to religiously proselyte his students or anyone else. The program was strictly educational. It was designed to inform students, regardless of religious faith, of the Indian orientated programs available at B. Y. U.

Of course B. Y. U. is interested in soliciting prospective students to their campus, so are other schools. How can anyone object to that? I am sure that any other university that requested time "to solicit students" would be welcomed on the Intermountain campus.

My only reason for being in attendance at this meeting was to provide Mr. Felt with the proper audio-visual equipment to help make the presentation more successful. Since I, therefore, happened to be with the group from B. Y. U., I am sure it was only out of sheer courtesy that I was introduced to the students.

If there is any question about the film strip presentation, I would be glad to review it with you. I personally feel that Mr. Mulder's protest is based on other things and not the educational destiny of the Indian youth.

Please accept my kindest regards.

Sincerely yours,

James D. Mathews, Principal
Intermountain L. D. S. Indian Seminary
A STUDY OF THE CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS BEHAVIOR OF THE NAVAHO INDIANS

WHICH CAUSED ANIMOSITY, RESISTANCE, OR INDIFFERENCE TO THE

RELIGIOUS TEACHINGS OF THE LATTER-DAY SAINTS

An Abstract of
A Thesis
Presented to
The Department of Graduate Studies
in Religious Instruction
Brigham Young University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Religious Education

by
James D. Mathews
August 1968
An Abstract of a Thesis

A STUDY OF THE CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS BEHAVIOR OF THE NAVAHO INDIANS WHICH CAUSED ANIMOSITY, RESISTANCE, OR INDIFFERENCE TO THE RELIGIOUS TEACHINGS OF THE LATTER-DAY SAINTS

The purpose of this study was to determine the cultural and religious behavior of the Navaho Indians which caused animosity, resistance, or indifference to the religious teachings of the Latter-day Saints.

Members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, for many years, have been in frequent contact with the Navaho Indians. Thousands of Navaho youth have been enrolled in the Indian seminary program of the Church. Hundreds of other students have been involved in the Indian student placement program and the Brigham Young University Indian education program. Furthermore, the Church has contacted much of the population of the Navaho tribe through its vast missionary program. In spite of these vigorous attempts to convert the Navahos to the Mormon faith, areas of conflict have continued to exist.

The availability of material directly concerning the Mormon's problem in converting Navahos was extremely limited. However, an extensive survey of literature was made to determine and identify the causes for resistance in accepting Christianity in general. This survey revealed many parallels similar to the conflicts which have arisen in the Latter-day Saint Church. Additional information was
received from personal interviews and written correspondence with Navaho people and persons affiliated with them in the Church, in education, in business, and in the community. A questionnaire was administered to three hundred Navaho students to determine their opinion concerning areas of resistance.

Five problem areas were studied and identified as being the main obstacles in the Navahos' acceptance of the Church. The Indian's struggle to preserve his self-identity has been a major contributor to contention. He has felt that the white man has attempted to take away his native culture—the good with the bad.

The second area of resistance considered was the Navaho superstition regarding death. It appeared that Navahos are deeply fearful of any possibility that the dead can return to the living. Yet the whole restoration theme of the gospel proclaims the appearance of many resurrected beings.

The language barrier was also considered to be a severe handicap in converting Navaho people to the Church. The key to the solution of this problem was found to be education.

It was pointed out that conflicting moral behavior was another cause for resistance and indifference to the teachings of the gospel. Some of the habits of the Navahos prevent them from joining the Church. Others rely on their old Navaho traditions claiming that lying, stealing, and adultery are permissible in some cases.

In addition, prejudice caused by other churches was found to be a significant factor which has caused animosity to the Mormon church. Prejudice has increased as the church has focused more
attention on the Navaho people. As the church continues to extend its influence, prejudice is expected to increase proportionately.

The most significant barrier of resistance is rejection of Priesthood authority by the unrighteous sons of Lehi and the ultimate great lie perpetuated upon the heads of the children. Those who are engaged in the restoration of Lehi's seed must be desirous to reverse the curse of the Lamanite nation and bring them back into the presence of the Lord by turning the hearts of the children to their righteous fathers and re-introducing them to the Priesthood of God.

As a result of this study, a contribution perhaps could be made in the development of lessons to be used in teaching Navaho youth in the Indian seminary program and the Indian missions. It may also assist members of the Church who are involved with the Navaho people, such as foster parents, missionaries and Indian seminary personnel, to more readily understand the problems that confront the Navahos in accepting the principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

APPROVED:

[Signature]
Chairman, Advisory Committee

[Signature]
Member, Advisory Committee

[Signature]
Chairman, Major Department