

Safford Church of Christ

3888 S Hwy 191, Safford, AZ 85546

4 January 15

Topics

A.M. Bible Class:

Day of worship (Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 16:1-4)

A.M. Lesson:

Christ in you: The hope of glory
(Colossians 1:27)

P.M. Lesson:

Our Lord's work on the Navajo Nation

Wednesday:

Singing

Pulpit Evangelist

Ken Knowlton: 428-3494

Elders

Greg Briggs: 428-8756

John Cunningham: 428-0895

Sunday Bible Class	10:00 A.M.
Sunday Morning Worship	11:00 A.M.
Sunday Evening Worship	6:30 P.M.
Wednesday Evening Class	6:30 P.M.
Thursday Ladies Bible Class	10:00 A.M.

I was glad when they said to me, "Let us go to the house of the LORD!" Psalm 122:2

Reading the Bible as Native Americans

George E. Tinker

Native American reading of the Bible presents an interesting challenge to the predominant, Eurocentric tradition of biblical scholarship. Western biblical scholarship has long struggled with the task of accurately and adequately translating a text from one language to another. Since languages are never simply codes for one another, there are always things one can say clearly in one language that may not be able to be said at all in another language. More recently, scholars have begun to understand that their task also includes the greater difficulty of translating from one culture to another culture. The lack of this understanding necessarily caused Christian missionaries, with the best of intentions, to function so genocidally with respect to Native American cultures. Today we are beginning to gain some clarity about the cultural otherness of the biblical text and, more important, the cultural otherness of exegesis and interpretation for modern

readers.

A Native American reading of the Bible will differ from usual Euro-American interpretations on at least three counts. First, the theological function of the Old Testament (OT) in a Native American context will differ. Second, the sociopolitical context of Native American peoples will characteristically generate interpretations that are particularly Native American. Moreover, the discrete cultural particularities of cognitive structures among native Americans will necessarily generate "normatively divergent" readings of Scripture.

Each Native American tribal community in North America had a relationship with God as Creator that was healthy and responsible long before they knew of or confessed the gospel of Jesus Christ. That relationship with Creator was solidified in the stories they told around the camp fires, in their prayers, and especially in their ceremonies. Many Native Americans Christians today would claim their own histories, cultural traditions, narratives, and traditional ceremonies as the appropriate traditional covenant (old testament) for their communities.

The imposition of the Hebrew Bible on Native American Christians as an old testament functions in two dysfunctional ways in native American communities. First, it functions to proscribe

(explicitly or implicitly) the validity of native American traditions. Second, it inherently prescribes replacing one's own history with someone else's history as a prerequisite for conversion.

The sociopolitical context of imperial Europe generated a colonial conquest interpretation of the Exodus account. This interpretation provided inspiration to John Winthrop and the seventeenth century Puritan conquerors of New England, who constantly saw themselves as a New Israel settling in a new promised land.

The Israelite conquest has little historical affinity with the Native American experience. To the contrary, the closest analogy to Native American history in the OT seems to be the experience of the Canaanites, dispossessed of their land and annihilated by a foreign invader.

The third difference in a Native American reading of the Bible has to do with more fundamental differences in the structures of cognition in a culturally discrete community.

A Native American Christian hermeneutic will press toward seeing Creation as the eschatological [end-times] basis even for the Christ-event. The fact that all Native American spiritual insights, and hence theology, must begin with Creation is reflected already in the basic liturgical posture of members of many North American tribes. Prayers are most often said with the community assembled into some form of circle—the circle being a key symbol for self-understanding in these tribes, representing as it does the whole of the universe and our part in it. All see themselves as co-equal participants in the circle, standing neither above nor below anything else in God's Creation. There is little sense of hierarchy in this cultural context, even of species, because the circle has no beginning or end. Hence, all the "createds" (two-leggeds, four-leggeds, wingeds, and living, moving ones) participate together, each in its own way, to preserve the wholeness of the circle. It is important to note that the formation of the circle is itself prayer, a prayer for the harmony and balance of creation, and in some ceremonies no words need be spoken.

Every Native American who prays [for his or her relations] knows that his or her relatives necessarily include the four-leggeds, the wingeds, and all the living, moving ones, including trees, rocks, and

mountains. The Native American concern for starting theology with Creation is a need to acknowledge the goodness and inherent worth of all of God's creatures. We experience evil or sin as a disruption in that delicate balance, which negates the intrinsic worth of any of our relatives.

Excerpted from Tinker's article in *New Interpreter's Bible Commentary*. Vol. I. Abingdon. 174-180.

Baptism:

- It is a place where the Corinthians shared in the deliverance of Israel from bondage (1 Corinthians 10).
- It is a place where the Galatians became "sons of God through faith in Jesus" (Galatians 3:26-29).
- It is a place where the Romans died with Christ and were risen to walk in new life (Romans 6).
- It is a place where the Colossians were circumcised by Christ (Colossians 2:11-12).
- It is a place where those in Jerusalem received remission of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38).
- It is a place where Peter tells his readers they were saved (1 Peter 3:21).

News

Area-Wide Singing

Hosted by: Salt River Church of Christ

Saturday, January 10, 2015

6:30-7:30 P.M. (Fellowship to follow)

contact: Josh Austin, 702-626-2171

Location: Salt River Community Center, 1880 North Longmore Rd., Scottsdale, AZ 85256

Prayer List:

Joy Gibson, Tatyana Knowlton,

Ken Cocke, Janet Radar, H.L.

Boling, Mike and Sandy Cavasos,

Nic and Ani Self.

