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WHO WILL BRING WITH THEM A BOOK  
AND WILL TEACH YOU.

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## PREFACE

I began this study in pursuit of the following research questions:

*"What effect did Pauline theology have on the Indian? What effect did the native populations have on Protestant legalism? To what extent did Protestant theology mold the actions of Europeans toward the Native Americans?"*

I believe that the last question should be modified to ask, *"To what extent did Protestant as well as Indian theology mold the actions of Europeans and Indians toward each other?"* At the outset of this project I approached the study with the

stereotypical presupposition that the culture of the Native American was destroyed by encroaching white culture. This is clearly evident from this statement from the original prospectus' abstract:

*"A study into the effects of Protestant philosophy on the North American Indian is necessary to fully understand this phenomenon, **the apparent annihilation of a culture.**"*

After exploring the story of the contact between the indigenous people of the Columbian Plateau, Northwest Plains, and Protestant Christianity, I believe that culture was not annihilated but was and is unfolding. This is true of both the Indian and white cultures involved in this paradoxical relationship of conflict and growth.

This treatise is an examination of the historical interaction of the religious and prophetic substance of two very different, yet very similar cultures. It is a rhetorical perspective of the history of the Northwest plains and Plateau. The story begins at the time of the first contacts between Plateau Indians and arriving whites, culminating in the supposed end of the Ghost Dance in 1890, at Wounded Knee.

The literature utilized in this study has been selected because of its historical breath and inclusiveness, rather than compiling a long list of primary documents. So much qualitative historical research and writing has been done in this area that it makes it the ideal place and period for analysis that goes beyond finding what happened and into the realm of how, possibly why, but most importantly, where are we to go from here.

This re-accounting has a particular point of view. The story is observed from the perspective that the substance of a culture is formed by the symbols it embraces, or maybe better said, culture is its identification with symbols. I have employed a Burkean perspective where symbols: words (predominately the religious Word), myth, metaphor, and analogy are "*consubstantial*" with reality. Identification with a symbol or set of symbols is to share in and assume the substance inherent in those symbols. This is the depth of "*symbolic interaction*". The symbols a person or people identify with will become their history. This is an examination of that phenomenon in the story of the Plateau and Plains tribes, prophets, and prophecies and their association with Protestant Christianity.

I also have utilized Burke's concept that life is "*dramaturgical*" and that there are two fundamental frames of reference by which all men act on the stage of life, the "*comic frame*" and the "*tragic frame.*" Rather than viewing the contact as the dominant European culture destroying the native culture, I have taken the position that the comic frame of the native culture was replaced by the tragic frame of the European culture through their symbolic interaction. However, the season of tragedy that grips the stage after 1890 is not the end of the story, for a

comic season may be dawning.

Within this frame I am viewing history as being rhetorically constructed not only after the acts but also before the acts. When history as a discipline embraced anthropology as a tool, and terms such as ethnohistory were coined, a rhetorical approach to history was invited. Burke begins a section in **The Rhetoric of Motives**, entitled "Realistic Function of Rhetoric," with the sentence: "*Gaining courage as we proceed, we might even contend that we are not so much proposing to import anthropology into rhetoric as proposing that anthropologists recognize the factor of rhetoric in their own field.*" Rhetoric is a factor in historical study, and it is the central factor in this venture.

The purpose of this study then, is to examine the possibility that the prophetic utterance of the Plateau and Plains people (particularly among the the Nez Perce and Sioux) and the prophetic literature of the Protestant Judeo-Christian have been locked together in the formation of this history. Secondly, to examine the analogous nature of the history of the Plateau and Plains to the Biblical texts in order to better understand what effect the process of rhetorical identification has had, and is having, on the history and culture of the native and white.

My goal in no way is to rewrite history or to create any kind of social change in Native and white relations. My goal is simply a deeper understanding of the interaction of two cultures that for two centuries have been prophetically identified with one another, factionalized and divided from one another, while acting on the same stage. Burke wrote:

*"Dramatism, as so conceived, asks not how the sacrificial motives revealed in the institutions of magic and religion might be eliminated in a scientific culture, but what new forms they take."*

## Introduction

### Coyote and the Shadow People

Coyote [*itsaya' ya*] and his wife were dwelling nearby. His wife became ill, and she died. Then Coyote became very, very lonely. He did nothing but weep for his wife.

Then the death spirit [*pa yawit*] came to him and said, "Coyote, do you pine for your wife?"

"Yes, friend, I long for her most painfully," replied Coyote.

"I could take you to the place where your wife has gone, but, I tell you, you must do everything just exactly as I say. Not once are you to disregard my commands and do something else."

"Yes," replied Coyote, "yes, friend, and what could I do? I will do everything you say."

Then the ghost [*ts' a' wtsaw*] told him, "Yes. Now let us go."

Coyote added, "Yes let it be so that we are going." They went.

Then he said to Coyote again, "You must do whatever I say. Do not disobey."

"Yes, yes, friend. I have been pining so deeply, and why should I not heed you?" Coyote could see the spirit clearly. He appeared to be only a shadow. They started and went along over the plain.

"Oh, there are many horses hereabouts; it looks like a roundup," exclaimed the ghost.

"Yes," replied Coyote, though he really saw none. "Yes there are many horses." They arrived now near the place of the dead.

The ghost knew that Coyote could see nothing, but he said, "Oh look, such quantities of serviceberries! Let us pick some to eat. Now when you see me reach up, you too will reach up. When I bend the limb down, you too will pull your hands down."

"Yes," Coyote said to him, "so be it; I will do that." The ghost reached up and bent the branch down, and Coyote did the same. Although he could see no berries, he imitated the ghost in putting his hand to and from his mouth in the same manner of eating. Thus they picked and ate berries. Coyote watched him carefully and imitated every action. When the ghost would put his hand into his mouth, Coyote did the same.

"Such good serviceberries these are," commented the ghost.

"Yes, friend, it is good that we have found them," agreed Coyote.

"Now let us go." And they went on. "We are about to arrive," the ghost told him. "There is a long, a very, very long lodge. Your wife is there somewhere. Just wait and let me ask someone." In a little while the ghost returned and said to Coyote, "Yes, they have told me where your wife is. We are coming to a door through which we will enter. You will do in every way exactly what you see me do. I will take hold of the door flap, raise it up, and, bending low, will enter. Then you too will take hold of the door flap and do the same." They proceeded in this manner to enter the lodge. It appeared that Coyote's wife was sitting near the entrance.

The ghost said to Coyote, "Sit here beside your wife." They both sat. The ghost added, "Your wife is now going to prepare food for us." Coyote could see nothing, except that he was sitting on an open prairie where nothing was in sight. Yet he could feel the presence of the shadow. "Now she has prepared our food. Let us eat." The ghost reached down and then brought his hand to his mouth. Coyote could see nothing but the prairie dust. They ate. Coyote imitated all the movements of his companion. When they had finished and the woman had apparently put the food away, the ghost said to Coyote, "You stay here. I must go around to see some people." He went out, but he returned soon. "Here we have conditions different from those you have in the land of the living. When it gets dark here, it has dawned in your land; and when it dawns for us, it is growing dark for you."

Now it began growing dark, and Coyote seemed to hear people whispering, talking in faint tones, all around him. Then darkness set in. Oh, Coyote saw many fires in a longhouse. He saw that he was in a very, very large lodge, and there were many fires burning. He saw the various people. They seemed to have shadow-like forms, but he was able to recognize different persons. He saw his wife sitting by his side. He was overjoyed, and he joyfully

greeted all his old friends who had died long ago. How happy he was. He would march down the aisles between the fires, going here and there, and talk with the people. He did this throughout the night. Now he could see the doorway through which he and his friend had entered. At last it began to dawn, and his friend came to him and said, "Coyote, our night is falling, and in a little while you will not see us. But you must stay right here. Do not go anywhere at all. Stay right here and then in the evening, you will see all these people again."

"Yes friend. Where could I possibly go? I will spend the day here." The dawn came, and Coyote found himself alone, sitting in the middle of a prairie. He spent the day there, just dying from the heat, parched by the heat, thirsting from the heat. Coyote stayed here several days. He would suffer through the day, but always at night he would make merry in the great lodge. One day his ghost friend came to him and said, "Tomorrow you will go home. You will take your wife with you."

"Yes, friend, but I like it here so much. I am having a good time, and I should like to remain here."

"Yes," the ghost replied, "nevertheless, you will go tomorrow, and you must guard against your inclination to do foolish things [*ha' ynaim waku*]. Do not yield to any queer notions. I will advise you now what you are to do. There are five mountains. You will travel for five days. Your wife will be with you, but you must never, never touch her. Do not let any strange impulses possess you. You may talk to her but never touch her. Only after you have crossed and descended from the fifth mountain, you may do whatever you like."

"Yes, friend," replied Coyote. When dawn came again Coyote and his wife started. At first it seemed to him that he was going alone; yet, he was dimly aware of his wife's presence as she walked along behind. They crossed one mountain, and, now, Coyote could feel more definitely the presence of his wife. She seemed like a shadow. They went on and crossed the second mountain. They camped at night at the foot of each mountain. They had a little conical lodge which they would set up each time. Coyote's wife would sit on one side of the fire and he on the other. Her form appeared clearer and clearer.

The death spirit who had sent them now began to count the days and to figure the distance Coyote and his wife had covered. "I hope he will do everything right and take his wife through to the world beyond," he kept saying to himself.

Coyote and his wife were spending their last night, their fourth night camping. On the morrow she would again assume fully the character of a living person. They were camping for the last time, and Coyote could see her very clearly, as if she were a real person who sat opposite of him. He could see her face and her body very clearly, but he only looked and dared not touch her. But suddenly a joyous impulse seized him; the joy of having his wife again overwhelmed him. He jumped to his feet and rushed over to embrace her.

His wife cried out, "Stop! stop, Coyote! Do not touch me. Stop!" Her warning had no effect. Coyote rushed over to his wife, and just as he touched her body, she vanished. She disappeared, returned to the shadowland.

When the death spirit learned of Coyote's folly, he became deeply angry. "You inveterate doer of this kind of thing! I told you not to do anything foolish. You, Coyote, were about to establish the practice of returning from death. Only a short time from now the human race is coming, but you have spoiled everything and established for them death as it is."

Here Coyote wept and wept. He decided, "Tomorrow I shall return to see them again." He started back the following morning. As he went along, he began to recognize the places where his spirit friend and he had passed and now he began to do the same things they had done on their way to the shadowland. "Oh, look at the horses; it looks like a roundup." He went on

until he came to the place where the ghost had found the serviceberries. "Oh, such choice serviceberries! Let us pick and eat some." He went through the motions of picking and eating berries. He went on and finally came to the place where the long lodge had stood. He said to himself, "Now, when I take hold of the door flap and raise it up, you must do the same." Coyote remembered all the little things his friend had done. He saw the spot where he had sat before. He went there, sat down, and said, "Now, your wife has brought us food. Let us eat." He went through the motions of eating again. Darkness fell, and now Coyote listened for the voices. He looked around; he looked here and there, but nothing appeared. Coyote sat there in the middle of the prairie. He sat there all night, but the lodge didn't appear again nor the ghost ever return to him.

## Introducing A Tragic Pose

One can browse through almost any shopping mall in the United States of America, and it will not be long before a store facade will appear that sells "*Native American*" art and artifacts. There, among the pristine paintings of mythical, New Age Indian maidens, unicorns, and fluffy white medicine wheels, one is sure to find a statuette of the bent over Indian, sitting on a bent over horse, mourning the tragic demise of the native tribes and their way of life. This is most likely the only symbol in the shop that bears any relationship to a true Indian reality. There are few greater tragic stories than the destruction of the native peoples and culture of the western hemisphere; it is a tragedy that invokes as much catharsis as the criminal's execution of the embodiment of truth itself, Christ, at the hands of His own tribe.

As Coyote sits in the middle of the prairie, searching for the return of the spirit, so also has the American Indian waited and searched for decades. After the defeat of Chief Joseph of the Nez Perce and Sitting Bull of the Lakota Souix, the Native American's struggle for freedom has been a rhetorical war. Chief Joseph began this struggle when the Nez Perce surrendered at the battle of the Bear Paws on October 5, 1877. One of the officers who witnessed the surrender, Lieutenant Wood, described the scene:

*"Joseph's hair hung in two braids on either side of his face. He wore a blanket...and moccasin leggings. His rifle was across the pommel in front of him. When he dismounted he...walked to General Howard and offered him the rifle. Howard waved him to [General] Miles. He then walked to Miles and handed him the rifle. Then Chief Joseph stepped back and began his formal speech."*

He spoke as follows:

*"Tell General Howard I know his heart. What he told me before I have in my heart. I am tired of fighting. Our chiefs are killed. Looking Glass is dead. The*

*old men are killed. It is the young men who say yes and no. He who led the young men is dead. It is cold and we have no blankets. The little children are freezing to death. My people, some of them, have run away to the hills and have no blankets, no food, no one knows where they are, perhaps freezing to death. I want time to look for my children and see how many of them I can find. Maybe I shall find them among the dead. Hear me my chiefs, I am tired; my heart is sick and sad. From where the sun now stands, I will fight no more forever."*

For the next 27 years, until his death from "a broken heart" as he sat before his tipi fire on September 21, 1904, Chief Joseph took up a diplomatic, rhetorical fight that would eventually find him in Buffalo Bill's half-dollar show at Madison Square Garden. As a tragic symbol of a vanquished hero, Chief Joseph became the archetype of the noble, patriot chief. He died sitting with Coyote awaiting the return of the spirit of his people.

Sitting Bull's death at the hands of his own people (Christian Indians) on December 15, 1890, which led to the massacre at Wounded Knee and the oft cited demise of the Ghost Dance three weeks later on December 29, holds the same tragic power. Not only did the great chief die a tragic death, but the Ghost Dance also is said to have ended. The dance was the spiritual hope of the Indian nations. Of Sitting Bull's death, James M. Walsh, a North-West Mounted Policeman wrote:

*"I am glad that Bull is relieved of his miseries even if it took a bullet to do it. A man who wields such power as Bull once did, that of a king, over a wild and spirited people cannot endure abject poverty slavery and beggary without suffering great mental pain and death is a relief...Bull's confidence and belief in the Great Spirit was stronger than I ever saw in any other man. He trusted to him implicitly...History does not tell us that a greater Indian than Bull ever lived, he was the Mohommat of his people the law and king maker of the Sioux."*

Sitting Bull followed the instructions of the spirit, longing, just as Coyote pined for his wife, for the return of the native way promised in the Ghost Dance. Yet, like Coyote, he only saw its shadow. But, even though shadows are mostly ignored, every shadow has a substance bathed in light casting the shadow. For the most part, observers have embraced the tragic frame of reference which has the American Indian waiting destitute on the prairie with Coyote, longing for the return of the spirit world. It is hard to view the history of the Native and European cultural interaction as anything other than a tragedy. Nevertheless, tragedy must not always remain such. Northrop Frye described tragedy in this manner, "*the tragic story has a comic sequel,*" therefore "*tragedy is really implicit or uncompleted comedy.*"

This is a bold claim to make, that the tragedy of the Native American's experience



in the coming of the whiteman is a tragic act in a larger comedy, yet it is the central thesis of this paper. Comedy is not a label that leaps into one's mind when approaching the subject of Indian/white historical interaction. How could anyone see anything comic in this story? However, I believe there is a prophetic/rhetorical framework in the history of the Northwest and Plains Indian that clearly embraces a comic perspective, and that the current tragic perspective is but a passing season. It is a season that will pass with the return of the comic trickster Coyote, a coming that the prophets constructed rhetorically as the season of comic innocence wained and the season of tragic experience dawned. The hope of Coyote's comic feast has been kept alive in the heart and words of native prophets throughout this winter of tragic cultural interaction.

## Chapter 1

# Dancing Prophets

"And if you say in your heart, How shall we know the word which the Lord has not spoken? When a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord, if the thing follows not, nor comes to pass, that is the thing which the Lord has not spoken, but the prophet has spoken it presumptuously: you shalt not be afraid of him." (Deuteronomy 18: 21-22)

"Soon there will come from the rising sun a different kind of man from any you have yet seen, who will bring with them a book and will teach you everything, and after that the world will fall to pieces." (Silimxnotylmilakobok, the Spokane Prophet)

Words of prophecy began to unfold two centuries past on the Columbian Plateau. The cultural collision of white and red amid the superlative scenery of this high plateau was preceded by words spoken through prophets. Some of these prophets walked the prairies, mountains, and valleys of this pristine land; others spoke from far distant lands and times. Their words became a blueprint of history; they prophesied the destiny of a people, "*Noon Nee-mee-poo*" (the Nez Perce).

The story of the Nez Perce has been told and analyzed from many points of view. Missionaries have crafted the story with heroes of the gospel fighting the wilderness and the darkness of heathenism. Others have configured the story with Indian heroes and patriots defending their homeland from greedy invaders and culturally destructive religious propagandists. Civilization verses savagery has most often been the conflict in the stories. The villain, or scapegoat, is determined in these accounts by whether the author views progress as the road to freedom, or noble savages as true freemen. For anthropologists, the sociological conflict transformed the simple, animistic, and primitive culture of the Plateau into a complex and political acculturation. The inevitability of imperialistic assimilation has often been the theme, with class conflict, "*Manifest Destiny*," and the European super culture directing the drama. In all these accounts religion is a

positive or a negative force in the presentations, but it seldom has taken a leading role.

Recent work suggests that religion may have played a more central role in the outcome of the collision of Indian and white relations. Robert Berkhofer's work causes one to rethink entrenched stereotypes of the nature of Indians. He has suggested that historical analysis must be conducted from the terms of the participant's beliefs, rather than from the biases and judgments of modern values and stereotypes. Åke Hultkrantz has dispelled the Darwinist doctrine that the more "*barbarian*" and "*savage*" a people are, the less developed spiritually they are. On the contrary, Native American religion is now known to be richly capacious and complex; spirituality was central to native behavior and lifestyle.

Studies of the religious experience incurred on the Plateau have been conducted by anthropologists and historians. Deward Walker has conducted extensive studies on the Nez Perce. He views the desire for power and leadership among the participants as the controlling factor in the events. Conflict arises over religious and political experiences which result in schisms among the people. Walker maintains that these divisions among the Nez Perce have accelerated the acculturation process. His analysis is structural in nature, placing emphasis on how the acculturation process affects religion among the people. It is also a functional examination in that it examines what religion did for the people. Recently, substantivist religious analysis has begun to be employed.

Ethnohistorian Christopher Miller has interpreted the "*complex history of Indian-white contact on the Plateau as it was experienced and understood by the participants.*" Departing from traditional methods, he juxtaposes the two culture's millennialist beliefs. Miller's story is one of self-fulfilling prophecies. Miller asserts that the "*Prophet Dance*" visions of the Plateau Indians and the Americanized evangelical millennialism of the white missionaries were originally viewed by the participants as harmonious, but he asserts that in reality, the visions were contradictory and on a collision course to cataclysm. In Miller's account, the Indian "*Dreamers*" come to an end with Chief Joseph. With the Indian prophets defeated, the way is clear for the work of white "*Manifest Destiny*" to overcome the Plateau culture, and the Indian's world truly falls to pieces. The millennialist prophecies of peace and harmony that both white and Indian prophets anticipated has yet to be manifest. Miller describes the people of the Plateau as looking for the day of the white prophets to end when the "*people will again have the chance to live together with father sun and mother earth as was intended before the prophets met.*" This idea of an inescapable tragic end of the past culture and a needed rebirth of native harmony with the cosmos is currently a most popular vision. It is the central rhetorical concept of the revivalist social movement currently taking place in the Native American community, at least in the politically-correct, academic/electronic community.

These works are representative of the evolution of modern historical thought and

methodology. As the decades have progressed in the writing of history, each generation has added different models and explored more complex historical processes. With each new model, history is viewed from a different frame of reference. It may not be as important which frame or model is the most accurate and reliable (the debates are endless), rather, it is in the viewing of the many that clearer patterns emerge, develop, and mature. To view the diamond from all sides is a richer experience than to presume the rock is one or two dimensional. Without the work of Berkhofer, Hultkrantz, Walker, and Miller this study into the prophetic nature and its role in the history of the Nez Perce would be impossible.

Using Miller's **Prophetic Worlds** as a springboard, this study will utilize the theories of Kenneth Burke to provide the foundation for moving from an extrinsic view of this history into the symbolic, metaphorical, and analogous view of prophetic religion. Burke's theory is based in "*symbolic interaction*" and what is labeled the "*dramatistic perspective*." Essentially this was said best by Shakespeare, "*All life is a stage*." Burke describes the play being enacted on the stage of history as being either comic or tragic in nature. For a definition of the different frames of reference embodied in comedy and tragedy we will look to the medieval master Dante.

In *Dante's Epistle to Cangrande*, a letter that Dante Alighieri wrote to the Lord Can Grande della Scala, Vicar General of the Principate of the Holy Roman Emperor in the town of Verona and the municipality of Vicenza, he dedicates his comedy to the Vicar and describes the purpose and form of his **Divine Comedy**. Dante makes two declarations concerning his work; first it is polysemantic, that is of many senses; secondly, it is a comedy and not a tragedy.

As for the work being polysemantic, he describes it as having two senses. First it is literal, "*that which comes from the letter*," and secondly, it is allegorical, "*that which is signified by the letter*." He compares this to the nature of Scripture to describe what he intends his work to be. As the Scripture is layered with meaning, so also is his comedy. Dante writes, "*The subject of the whole work, taken only from a literal stand point, is simply the status of the soul after death...If the work is taken allegorically, however, the subject is man, either gaining or losing merit through his freedom of will, subject to the justice of being rewarded or punished*." This concept of a multi-layered meaning in religious and artistic text is also true of the Native American oral history and religious narratives. Coyote's stories, for example, are metaphorical and the trickster Coyote is truly a comic figure.

Dante states that his **Comedy** is just that, a comedy in the form of fictive poetry. Comedy is defined by Dante as coming from the words "*komos*" (village) and "*oda*" (song). Whence, comedy is a sort of country song, a kind of poetic narration. He writes, "*comedy begins with harshness in some thing, whereas its matter ends in a good way...It differs, therefore, from tragedy in matter, by the fact that tragedy in the beginning is admirable and quiet, in the end or final exit it is smelly and horrible*." Tragedy gets its name from "*tragos*" (goat) and "*oda*," therefore, 'goat-

song'. "That is smelly like a goat," states Dante. He says that they differ in their way of speaking. "The tragedy is elevated and sublime, the comedy loose and humble." By this definition: comedy is in the beginning horrible and smelly, hence "Inferno;" and in the end it is good and graceful, "Paradise." As to comedy's manner of speaking, it is easy, common and humble. Dante asserts that his work is obviously a comedy, hence its title. These concepts of the comic frame and the tragic frame, along with a multi-layered symbology are central to an understanding of Burke's reflections.

The use of Kenneth Burke's theories of rhetoric are many, varied, and for most people, esoteric, obscure and unsystematic. In a poem about himself and his work, Burke writes, "What then in sum/ Bedevils me?! I'm flunking my Required Course/ In Advanced Burkology." Rather than embark on a lengthy Burkean system, we will briefly describe the underlying philosophy of Burke's view of society, and then discuss how this view can be applied to native spiritualism and Protestant Christianity in a very revealing manner.

Burke began by asserting that language is the creative force in society; that it is through our symbol system that we create and obtain identity. Symbols are "consubstantial" (of the same substance) with existence. He also believed that artists (those whose business it is to manipulate symbols) can provide revealing insights into society. For Burke, life is a stage, and the play of history that has been acted upon the stage has been a tragedy, at least in the western European frame of reference. The major tenants of this tragic frame he describes in this poem:

*"Here are the steps*

*In the Iron Law of History*

*That welds Order and Sacrifice*

*Order leads to Guilt*

*(for who can keep commandments!)*

*Guilt needs Redemption*

*(for who would not be cleaned!)*

*Redemption needs Redeemer*

*(which is to say a victim!)*

*Order*

*Through Guilt*

## To Victimage

*(hence: Cult of Kill)."*

Because of the concept of law and order there exists guilt. All who are guilty need redemption, and this is obtained by finding a "scapegoat" to transfer one's guilt to. Dante defined tragedy as a "goat-song" in his letter to Cangrande. Mankind needs someone to blame. Burke asserts that this idea of guilt is inherent in language. It comes from the concept of the negative. The idea of "not" or "nothing" only exists symbolically in language. The concept of "it is not" leads directly to the moralized "thou shalt not." Since man is moralized by the negative, the concept of hierarchy exists; mankind is trying to move up the ladder of perfection through action. It is these symbolic acts that Burke sees as the root of the tragic frame. These acts are motivated by the desire for perfection which cannot be achieved, and therefore, a scapegoat is sought. Burke sums this idea up in the poem below.

*"Man is*

*the symbol-using (symbol-making, symbol-misusing) animal*

*inventor of the negative (or moralized by the negative)*

*separated from his natural condition by instruments of his own making*

*goaded by the spirit of hierarchy (or moved by a sense of order)*

*and rotten with perfection."*

Because the human being must deal with the guilt of imperfection, and they are entrenched in symbology, the easiest method of handling the guilt is to transfer it to someone or something else, a scapegoat. The scapegoat becomes the symbol of guilt. Hence, the origin of fighting and war. For example, in Nazi Germany the Jew became the scapegoat, the obstruction to order, the one outside the camp who bore the guilt. This description of Burke's theory is admittedly reductionism, but for the purpose of this analysis it is sufficient. From this basic frame of reference Burke concludes that if humans could simply change the nature (or genre) of the play of life from a tragedy to a comedy life would be much more sane. Men and women could then view their acts from a comic frame, learn from them, but have no need to kill because of them.

Aristotle's definition of comedy says that comedy deals with "Some defect...that is not painful or destructive." With the tragic flaw, fate demands payment. With the comic defect, there is no penalty. On the surface, it would seem, that comedy is the more desirable frame of reference, but the relationship between the two is paradoxical. It is the paradox of life, the paradox of the seasons. "As the seasons join to form the natural order, it is argued, so tragedy and comedy join in a larger

*and more complex vision...Comedy is, as anthropological observation or mere metaphor, the 'completed ritual' -- the feast that follows the Sacrifice,"* writes Scott Shershow. Northrop Frye describes it this way, *"the tragic story has a comic sequel,"* therefore *"tragedy is really implicit or uncompleted comedy."* To uncover the dramatic frame of reference of a history and its people is to understand the motive, the driving force, the season of the age. This primal source of drama is central to the seasonal rituals of our past. Comic and tragic seasons come and go. In our hearts we might prefer the innocence of comedy which is paradoxically the completed game, the finished ritual. The celebration of spring may seem more joyous than the reverent acknowledgment of winter, but one cannot remain in comic innocence, one cannot deny the tragic experience; nevertheless, in all our experience we long for the innocence again. The only avenue to this redemption is the catharsis of the scapegoat. This paradox of the dramatic attitude of history is central to an understanding of Kenneth Burke's rhetorical construction of history.

What Burke has described in his meditations is clearly the most elementary basis of Pauline theology. The law died with the perfect scapegoat, Jesus Christ, and now the just shall live by grace through faith. Or in Burkean terms, the tragic frame caused by order or law (the knowledge of good and evil and the need to assign blame) died or ended when the perfect scapegoat took the blame. Now, those who are willing to allow their blame to fall on Christ can live their lives apart from the law, or if you will, on the stage of a comedy rather than a tragedy. In the comedy as defined by Dante, the beginning is horrible the end is paradise. In the Christian comic frame, the acts by which one fails to obtain perfection no longer demand payment. Christ has paid; sin is viewed not as a tragic flaw but as a comic defect, something revealing to be learned from but no longer to be held ultimately accountable. This is the life of faith where the result is peaceful and quiet, a Sabbath keeping (or rest) according to Paul, or as he writes to the Romans, *"Sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace."*

Although the white missionaries who came to the Plateau possessed the Word of Christianity, the underlying motivational frame of American Christianity was tragic. It had been 300 years since Martin Luther's reformation feast. The comedy of Luther's *"Table Talks"* had passed, and the austere religious law and order of civilization was in season. Reinhold Niebuhr wrote: *"A comprehension of the meaning of life and history from the standpoint of the Christian revelation includes an understanding of the contradictions to that meaning in which history is perennially involved."* The history of Christianity and Western thought revolves around the struggle between law and grace, the Inquisition frame as opposed to the Reformation frame. To the Indian, whose archetype was derived from the comic trickster Coyote, the contradictions of white man's Christianity based in law and civilization were bewildering. Coyote taught through the example of his exploits the wise and foolish actions of life. Even if he died he lived on. Coyote's world had no ultimate judgment of the law. Coyote sought no scapegoat, but the

Dreamer Prophets who entered the stage began to foretell a coming winter; their dreams ushering in an autumn stage.

These contradictions in the motivational frames of reference of Pauline Christianity, late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century American Christianity, and the "Dreamer" religion of the Plateau people were the foundation of what Christopher Miller calls the *"Surface similarities between these very different nineteenth-century religious movements [which] led the Prophets of each to conclude that the other was in complete agreement and was progressing toward the same final goal."* This is very true; the Dreamers introduced new concepts into the native culture that were similar to Christianity. The Dreamer cult paved the way for the tragic frame which was soon to arrive with the missionary. The Dreamers were the oracle of the tragic prophecy. Nevertheless, the underlying motivational frame between mythological-symbolic Christianity (Paul's comic revelation of the prophets) and the Indian "Dreamers" was not different, but entirely timely and compatible. Denise Carmody sums up this relationship well, writing:

*The cultures that European dominance altered or tried to replace were usually damaged seriously, if not destroyed outright. While some rabid Christians might argue that destruction was proper and good, because such cultures were the works of Satan, they are not the majority of commentators or the most representative. Inasmuch as theologians have developed a consensus that God works through native cultures, inspiring them to grace, the cultural imperialism that Europeans often visited on the natives now strikes most Christian theologians as ill-advised, if not seriously sinful. Saying this does not imply that Christians should abrogate their conviction that explicit faith in Jesus the Christ is the greatest of cultural gifts. It does imply Christians being considerably more humble about the offices of Christ's church than has been the norm throughout most of Christian history.*

Miller's **Prophetic Worlds** lifts the veil for the first look into the parallels in prophecy between the people of the Plateau and the Bible carrying missionaries, but it is only a peek into the prophecies. Miller describes the confrontation of prophets, but here, we will examine the prophecies themselves. What is the relationship of prophecy to the events, and what part is played by the prophetic book that was so sought after? How are the events interpreted by the one player on the stage of history that has for many decades not been considered a player? The Word of the player's prophets is addressed here, along with the effect that Word had on the events, and what that Word has to say to the missionaries of religion and science today. The question is not whether the myths of Christianity or the myths of the Native American are *"fantastic nonsense? but rather -- Can the scientific method and outlook really answer the questions all human beings really must ask, namely, What are we? Where are we going? How are we to arrive there?"* Miller writes, *"As though in compliance with prophecy, the Indian world cracked and then fell to pieces, leaving its occupants struggling to find a place in the world*

*that survived.*" One might say the same of the post-modern era. For, as human kind searches for a place of meaning in the world they have created with their own hands, our technological culture dismisses prophetic myth in its quest to further embrace the "*progressive*" myth. The supreme being of rationalism would have humankind replace Coyote and Yahweh, but humans still have need of a tragic scapegoat as they try to regain their comic innocence. Burke addresses this modern parallel in describing his dramaturgical perspective of reality:

*"Dramatism, as so conceived, asks not how the sacrificial motives revealed in the institutions of magic and religion might be eliminated in a scientific culture, but what new forms they take."*

Whomever the goat and whatever form the comic Coyote takes, if the Prophets are right, the Great Spirit will return once more preceded by the comic frame and maybe not only to the Nez Perce. The Prophecy says:

*Coyote and myself will not be seen again until the Earth-Woman is very old. Then we shall return to earth, for it will require a new change by that time. Coyote will precede me by some little time; and when you see him, you will know that the time is at hand.*

The future will validate the prophets or prove them false. We can only delve into history and juxtapose what has already passed alongside with what the Prophets have said. We may then judge for ourselves how powerful their words are.

The antecedent to the pronoun "*myself*" in the above prophecy is the Great Spirit. This concept of a Great Spirit was an idea which was relatively new a generation before the time of this prophecy. The arrival of a Supreme Being and the Christian God to the Plateau preceded actual contact with the white man. The Words of this Great Spirit reached the Plateau people taking up residence in their hearts. The Plateau people incorporated these new ideas into their existing religious and political culture, thereby transforming their world as they began a search for a clearer understanding of this God. Their search brought the white missionary who came to save and civilize these spiritually savage heathen. The first half of this paper is an examination into the effects of the Words of prophecy on the people of the Plateau prior to the arrival of the missionary, and then, how those Words were affected by those missionaries when they finally arrived. It is not a new story; it is an eternal story that has been playing on the stage of Judeo-Christian migration for centuries. It is the story of the law struggling against the spirit, and the spirit lusting against the law. It is the innocence of comedy, encountering the tragedy, which sees the comic coming from afar.

The story of the Nez Perce for the past two centuries parallels a prophetic pattern that is inherent in the entire book of prophecy, the Bible they sought to understand. The prophets said that it would teach the people everything and then their world would fall to pieces. This tragic prophecy came to pass. The



power of the prophet's Word and the Book divided and separated with amazing accuracy according to the pattern written and spoken. The history of the Nez Perce within the past two hundred years is a mirror image of a history which was promised to Abraham and played out in his generations. It is a capsulated version of the age old prophetic struggle in the division of the promise to Abraham. The story of the Noon-Nee-mee-poo is an allegory played out on the stage of history that is clearly a tragedy. As with all tragedy there is much to learn; there is a catharsis to experience, to share in. But in a greater sense, it is also an implicit or uncompleted comedy; there is a feast that follows the sacrifice. If the rhetorical frame continues to unfold, there is a new season to anticipate, the metaphor calls for the completed ritual, and the firstfruits of that season are to appear with the return of the trickster Coyote. Will we recognize him when he returns? If history is not about predicting the future, it is certainly about understanding the present, about recognizing the signs of the times. If analogy is the weakest form of argument, it is the strongest tool of understanding.

## CHAPTER 2

# BEFORE THE TIGERS OF CHURCH AND STATE

"In the five hundredth year, in the seventh month, on the fourteenth day of the month, of the lifetime of Enoch, in that parable, I saw that the heaven of heavens shook; that it shook violently; and that the powers of the Most High, and the angels, thousands, and myriads of myriads, were agitated with great agitation. And when I looked the Ancient of days was sitting on the throne of His glory, while the angels and saints were standing around him. A great trembling came upon me, and terror seized me. My loins were bowed down and loosened; my reins were dissolved; and I fell on my face. The holy Michael, another holy angel, one of the holy ones, was sent who raised me up. And when he raised me, my spirit returned; for I was incapable of enduring this vision of violence, its agitation, and the concussion of heaven.

Then holy Michael said to me: 'Wherefore art thou disturbed at this vision? Hitherto has existed the day of mercy; and He has been merciful and long-suffering towards all who dwell on the earth. But when the time shall come, then shall the power, the punishment, and the judgment take place, which the Lord of the spirits has prepared for those who prostrate themselves to the judgment of righteousness, for those who abjure the judgment, and for those who take His name in vain. That day has been prepared for the elect as a day of covenant; and for sinners as a day of inquisition.

In that day shall be distributed for food two tigers; a female tiger, whose name is Leviathan (Church) dwelling in the depths of the sea, above the springs of waters. And a male, whose name is Behemoth (State) which possesses, moving on his breast, the invisible wilderness. His name was Dendayen (Judge) in the east of the garden, where the elect and righteous will dwell; where he received it from my ancestor, who was a man, from Adam the first of men, whom the Lord of spirits made. (Enoch 59:1-9)

Bob Dylan summed up the world we live in well when he said, *"We live in a*

*political world, everything is hers and his. You climb into the flame and shout God's name, but you don't even know what it is.*" The white, Western European world is a political world. It is a world dominated by law, property rights, and innumerable levels of bureaucratic structure; it is a world of who things belong to, who is right and who is wrong. Burke described it well when he wrote that *"man is...separated from his natural condition by instruments of his own making, goaded by the spirit of hierarchy (or moved by a sense of order) and rotten with perfection."* It is a man-made religious and political world that calls on God but seldom hears what He has to say.

In this ancient Hebrew prophecy, the patriarch Enoch sees the birth of the political and religious institutions that have come to dominate Western society. The tigers of church and state are given as food to satisfy the hunger for perfection that comes with the judgment of the tragic frame. Founded upon the law and judgment of the Judeo-Greco world, the European state and church are political worlds. The aboriginal world of the Columbian Plateau was not such a world.

Anthropologist Deward Walker writes, *"Like Coast Salish societies, aboriginal Nez Perce society obviously was marked by a poverty of political institutions."* Whether the absence of political institutions is a form of poverty is questionable, yet the Nez Perce world, prior to white contact, had little political structure. Society was organized around small-scale, kinship oriented groups. These villages or camps had a headman, called in Nez Perce *"mí-ohat mí-ohat"*, as leader. He was not subject to any outside authority. Village decisions were made by *"mí-ohat mí-ohat"* and his sub-chiefs in consultation with the rest of the village.

Villages often gathered into loose and fluid bands. These bands consisted of villages grouped according to geographical area, ethnic lines, and task-oriented groups. A band might be distinguished at one time of the year by the river valley in which they camped, but at another season by a particular task-oriented group such as buffalo hunters, fishing bands, berry and root gathering bands, or war bands. At the band level a council of village headmen and other eminent individuals made decisions. A leader who had demonstrated superior war ability, or the headman of the most powerful village, may have a great influence on the band's decisions and be chosen as a temporary band leader. This leader, called in Nez Perce *"mi-yó-hat"*, was often chosen to lead in multi-band regional gatherings, or chosen to lead in times of war.

In order to maintain leadership, both *"mí-ohat mí-ohat"* and *"mi-yó-hat"* depended upon the opinion of the people and their own persuasive abilities and reputation. If an individual or group disagreed with the leadership, they simply left the village or band to live elsewhere, or they chose a different leader. Rather than political units, the Nez Perce world revolved around kindred, geographical, and task-oriented subdivisions.

Neither "*mí-ohat mí-ohat*" nor "*mi-yó-hat*" possessed the influence and power of the village spiritual leader, the shaman or "*tiwét*". The heart of the society was spiritual, and spiritual power held prominent position for the Plateau Indian. Not only did spiritual endowment give the shaman the most influential position in society, it also determined the position of every individual in the village and band. Central to the Nez Perce spirituality was the "*wé-ya-kin*". This term refers to the vision quest and guardian spirit which was sought and obtained by most Nez Perce. For an adult Nez Perce the "*wé-ya-kin*" was essential for success in life.

"*Wé-ya-kin*" gave selected humans spiritual powers that were manifested in outstanding traits and skills. The Nez Perce's relationship with the spirit was a living and active alliance. The quest for vision and spirit was undertaken early in life, usually between the ages of five and ten. The gifts and powers given to the youth would enable him or her to excel in certain tasks. For example, if a spirit appeared in the vision as an animal, the child might receive special powers relating to the nature of the animal. If the spirit appeared as a bear, he may endow the vision follower with the fierce nature of a warrior, or as a buffalo with special ability in the buffalo hunt. Whatever the spirit, a bond was formed which determined the person's identity and manifested itself in his or her personality.

The individual not only received special endowments from the spirit that would determine his or her calling, nature, and personality, they were also given a song by the spirit. The song would be sung at the winter or medicine dance which was the primary celebration of the guardian spirit. Each possessor of a "*wé-ya-kin*" also had a sacred bundle, the "*ipétes*". This sacred bundle, like the song, was very personal, and it was used whenever the individual appealed or desired access to the spirit. The individual nature of the spirit relationship, along with the spiritual and physical endowments and manifestations of the "*wé-ya-kin*", constituted the very warp and fiber of Nez Perce identity.

Walker states that one of the most important functions of the spirit relationship was the rationalization of ability or success. This functional view of what religion did for the people is not so important to us here as is what the spirit relationship created in the people. The participant was not rationalizing the world; rather, the spiritual relationship defined the manner in which the Nez Perce experienced the world. This spirit connection and dependence did not justify the person's actions but impelled his or her actions. It defined reality for the Nez Perce and gave them identity.

With the spirit relationship central to Nez Perce life, the shaman occupied a significant role in the village. It was believed the shaman watched over the individual's quest for "*wé-ya-kin*" supernaturally, interceding if anything went wrong. The shaman often introduced the young "*wê-ya-kin*" to the spirit dance and gave instructions in the use of the song. If an undesirable spirit was knowingly obtained during the vision quest, the shaman would be called to remove or deactivate it. Other duties of the shaman dealt with healing, removing

curses, weather control, and prophecy.

To the European the Indian way of life appeared savage and primitive; yet this stereotype is inaccurate. The Nez Perce world prior to first white contact certainly had little political structure, but this was due to its spiritual nature. Leadership did come through the structures of law; leaders proved their ability through deeds which were accomplished through the endowment of spiritual power. Value was not attached to political structures or ideals, but rather on spiritual relationships. People with special endowments of the spirit, shamans, held great prestige in the community because they helped to guide the people in spiritual matters. Individual spiritual substance was the heart of the people. It was into this individualized spiritual world that the God of the white man was soon to arrive. Yet, before Christianity reached the Plateau, a transformation of the spiritual nature of the people would take place that ideally prepared them to accept the Words of the prophesied Book.

### CHAPTER 3

# VISIONS AND DANCE OF THE FIRSTFRUITS

But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. (I Corinthians 15:20)

An annual festival held at the band level by the Nez Perce known as the firstfruits ceremony, has traditionally been associated with what Deward Walker describes as a *"syncretic cult movement that swept the area just before the Nez Percés came into continuous, firsthand contact with Euro-American culture."* The characteristics of this cult movement are primary to an understanding of the Nez Perce's early desire for and acceptance of Christianity.

The name of this cult is remembered as "*tulí-m* ." Today it is known as the Prophet Dance. It involved a circular dance and an inspired leader who received visions and prophesied. The focus of the ceremony was on a creator spirit or god who was above all other spirits. The confession of sins and prophecies of the ultimate renewal of the world were also primary features of the ceremony.

The origin of this cult movement has spurred controversy among scholars for half a century. In the early 1900's, Leslie Spicer hypothesized that this Prophet Dance was aboriginal and originated among the Indians of the interior Plateau. Almost a decade later, W.D. Strong, suggested that the Prophet Dance was akin to a protohistoric ghost-cult that arose in reaction to epidemics that devastated the region in the century prior to white contact. This position was in opposition to M. Herskovits who had used Spicer's theory somewhat dogmatically in 1938.

*"The supposition that the nativistic movements which since 1870 have appeared among the Indians of various parts of the United States constituted cults of despair, and represented reactions against social and political forces with which these natives could not cope, is sharply challenged [in Spicer's Prophet Dance]...What has been thought by many persons to have been a purely contra-acculturation phenomenon is shown actually to have arisen out of deep-seated aboriginal patterns which, even before the coming of the whites, had through intertribal acculturation come to be an integral part of the culture of at least the Indians of the Northwest, from whence the cult spread in its better-known revivalistic form first to California and then to the Plains."*

In 1959, David Aberle proposed that the Prophet Dance may have been a reaction to indirect contact with Euro-American culture predating the direct contact with whites. Holding to the idea that it was some negative change in conditions that caused the cults to arise, he postulates three types of deprivations that could be possible explanations. The first is simply a general worsening of conditions, a *"We are worse off than we once were"* attitude. This could have been caused by new diseases, and the encroachment of Eastern tribes due to white displacement. Secondly, exposure to new wants could have triggered the cult. Seeing other tribes with trade goods, arms and horses that they did not possess would be a form of deprivation. Thirdly, a shift in status among the tribe itself due to the acquisition of new goods might explain the new behavior. These goods may have created new inequalities among the people resulting in feelings of deprivation. Aberle also states that just hearing of a strange, materially and magically powerful new group that was approaching would have a powerful effect on the tribe. These conditions *may* have given rise to cult movements says Aberle. Nevertheless, he is clear that it is not his intent to assert that deprivation or prior information are the causes for the cults, only that they are possibilities and should not be ruled out.

In the argument of what caused the cult to arise, whether it was a product of diffused cultural intrusion prior to actual contact or it sprang up from aboriginal roots, both sides agree that it began because of stress creating occurrences. Christopher Miller asserts that cultural changes caused by the arrival of the horse, along with climatic changes placed new stress on the people. The changes that occurred were the result of cultural distortion that turned the Plateau world upside down. The balance between the physical and spiritual world was so disturbed that the formation of new thought patterns was necessary to give order and meaning to the people. According to Miller the cultural stress grew so great that the existing cultural structures could no longer deal with the anxiety, and tension; the existing *"mazeway"* broke down and the *"Plateau prophets were born."*

Miller speculates that this breakdown may have occurred between 1770 and 1800 when a volcanic eruption deposited up to 6 inches of ash across the region. Prophet Dance ceremonies were associated with this ash fall.

*"They beat drums and sang, and for a time held the praying dance almost day*

*and night. They prayed to the 'dry snow,' calling it 'Chief and 'Mystery,' and asked it to explain itself and tell why it came."*

After this ash fall, the Prophet Dance became a frequent religious ceremony whereas previously the winter guardian spirit dance held religious primacy. As previously stated, among the Nez Perce these Prophet Dances came to be associated with "*kéuyit*", a firstfruits celebration. In Hebrew prophecy, the concept of firstfruits, with its corresponding ceremonies, plays an important role in Paul's interpretation of the Bible's prophetic plan. The traditional feast of firstfruits symbolizes a joy and thankfulness for the coming abundance of the harvest season. In the Hebrew frame, the festival takes place in the spring during the season of Passover. It is the celebration after the lamb is slain. It is the day Christ arose from the dead. It is the celebration of the newness of life. It is the end of tragedy, the comic fulfillment. The Nez Perce Dreamers celebrated the season of a new Chief; the tragic chaos of inferno's ash gave way to a new birth. It seems that this plan and its patterns were rapidly approaching the Nez Perce; a new Chief occupied supremacy.

## CHAPTER 4

# A NEW CHIEF

Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars' hill, and said, Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious. For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you. God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us: For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring. Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device. And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead. And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked: and others said, We will hear thee again of this matter. So Paul departed from among them. (Acts 17: 22-33)

The visionary Prophets of the new "*tulí-m*" cult announced a new creed that included an original supernatural creator named "*Chief*". Prior to the arrival of Chief, the Nez Perce believed the world had always existed and would always be for the Plateau people. These unusual visions proclaimed that with the help of the

familiar Coyote, not only had Chief created the world, he had also predestined it to his purpose and would one day return and make it right:

"I will send messages to the earth by the souls of people that reach me, but whose time to die has not yet come. They will carry messages to you from time to time; and when their souls return to their bodies, they will revive, and tell you their experiences. Coyote and myself will not be seen again until the Earth-Woman is very old. Then we shall return to earth, for it will require a new change by that time. Coyote will precede me by some little time; and when you see him, you will know that the time is at hand. When I return, all spirits of the dead will accompany me, and after that there will be no spirit land. All the people will live together. Then will the Earth-Woman revert to her natural shape, and live as a mother among her children. Then things will be made right, and there will be much happiness."

This idea of a supreme being, who reveals himself in visions, who promises to return at the end of time and is associated with firstfruits festivals is most compatible with the Hebrew-Christian God, whose Words were soon to arrive on the Plateau. Yet, these concepts were not completely unknown nor unheard of among Native Americans, and neither was complete religious transformation.

Prior to Columbus' arrival to the New World, the Inca, of what is now Peru, experienced a remarkable religious transformation. Their traditional sun worship was transposed when a supreme being was revealed to the people by the Prophet Pachacuti Inca Yupanqui (1438-1471). The tradition tells of Pachacuti's search for a creator. He reasoned that "*Inti*," the sun god, could not be all powerful since he never rested and the smallest cloud could cover his light. In his search he recalled, Viracocha, an almost extinct god from whom his father claimed to have received counsel once in a dream. In his father's dream, Viracocha claimed to be the creator of all things. Apparently Pachacuti decided that his father had discovered someone worth investigating and searching after. He proclaimed to the nobles and the priests of the sun that this forgotten god was the supreme creator. This new but ancient god was called "*Teqzi Viraqochan Pachayachachi*," fundamental god, creator of the world. Rather than "*Inti*," it was Viracocha's statue of pure gold that dominated the "*Sun Temple*" in Cuzco. He was honored as the highest of gods and the prayer below was offered to him by the high priest during the great sacrificial ceremonies:

*"Oh Viracocha, Lord of the world,  
whether you are male or female,  
you are for certain the one  
who reigns over heat and creation,  
the one who can work charms with his saliva.  
Where are you?"*

*I wish you were not concealed from these your sons!*

*Perhaps you are above, perhaps you are below us,*

*perhaps you are far away in space.*

*Where is your mighty tribunal?*

*Hear Me!*

*Perhaps you dwell in the celestial waters*

*or in the waters beneath the world*

*and on their sandy shores.*

*Creator of the world,*

*Creator of mankind,*

*great among our ancestors,*

*before you,*

*my eyes grow faint*

*although I long to see you--*

*for if I see you,*

*get to know you,*

*listen to you*

*and understand you,*

*you will see me*

*and get to know me.*

*Sun and moon,*

*day and night,*

*summer and winter,*

*they wander not in vain*

*but in prescribed order*



*to their determined place,*

*to their goal.*

*They arrive*

*to wherever*

*you lead*

*with your royal staff.*

*O hear us,*

*listen to us,*

*let it not be*

*that we tire*

*and die.*

*O victorious Viracocha,*

*ever-present Viracocha!*

*You are unequalled on earth.*

*You exist from the beginning of the world*

*to its end.*

*You gave life and courage to man when you said*

*'Let this be a man,'*

*and you gave the same to woman when you said*

*'Let this be a woman.'*

*You created us and gave us a soul.*

*Watch over us that we may live in health and peace.*

*You who may be in the highest heavens*

*among storm clouds*

*give us long lasting life,*

*and accept our offering,*

*O Creator."*

Pachacuti's renovation of the Inca's religion was not precipitated by any cultural intrusions or social cataclysms. Many have concluded that it was induced for political goals, since the reform took place mainly among the elite or nobles of Inca society. Nevertheless, Åke Hultkrantz points out that gods who are worshipped are seldom produced intellectually, but are revealed in visions received by prophets. It is known that Pachacuti had visions and it was in his father's vision that Viracocha had appeared earlier. Hultkrantz states that this cult must have been inspired by extraordinary religious experiences, while drawing from older traditions. Who was this ancient Viracocha? Myths tell how he taught the original people to cultivate the soil and practice several arts before he wandered out to sea. Concerning this myth, Hultkrantz declares that narratives of this type, of a culture hero who begins things and then disappears often with the promise of his return are, "*fairly common among the Algonkin and Salish tribes of North America.*" The Nez Perce are a Sahaptin people who dwell between the Algonkin to the east and the Salish to the west.

In contrast to the Plateau tribes, whose concept of the great spirit does not seem to have appeared until the "*tulí-m*" cult, the concept of a supreme spirit among the Algonkin is undoubtedly pre-Christian. A northern Algonkin band, the Mascouten, prayed to the "*Great Spirit*" before and after the hunt, and also offered him firstfruit sacrifices. It is possible that the creator spirit concept of the "*tulí-m*" cult had similar origins, migrating through the Algonkin to the Salish.

Whether the "*tulí-m*" cult originated from a combination of cultural stress and cultural migration of ideas, or some unknown supernatural source, it is clear that prior to the white man's arrival, a supreme creator being arrived (or returned) to the Plateau. The Nez Perce embraced a Chief God. This "*Chief*" chose from among the people certain ones who received revelatory visions. Also, the people worshipped him with firstfruits offerings. The "*tulí-m*" cult established the ideal seedbed for the arrival of the ancient Hebrew God, His Book, and His Messiah.

## CHAPTER 5

**"...WHO WILL BRING WITH THEM A  
BOOK AND WILL TEACH YOU  
EVERYTHING..."**

Therefore write all these things that you have seen in a book, put it in a hidden place; and you shall teach them to the wise among your people, whose hearts you know are able to

comprehend and keep these secrets.

(II Esdras 12:37-38 NRS)

In Deward Walker's description of the *"tulí-m"* there are clear Christian influences such as the observance of a Sabbath. And although there is evidence to support the pre-Christian concept of a firstfruits, revelatory, supreme creator being, other characteristics of the cult demonstrate clear Christian influence and must therefore be assumed to have arrived through primary cultural contacts.

In her book, **The Nez Perces Since Lewis and Clark**, Kate McBeth notes that *"there are two events in Nez Perce history, so well known that even the children can tell about them."* They are the arrival of Lewis and Clark in 1805, and the delegation of four Indians sent to St. Louis in 1831, asking for Christian teachers and their Book. In the interval of twenty-five years which separated these two events, the Nez Perce adopted a recognizable form of Christianity with little to no direct white intervention.

Lewis and Clark make no reference to any Christian religious forms of worship in their accounts. There are however many observations of uncommonly hospitable and ethical behavior. Of the people living in the Kamiah Valley of the Clearwater River, Clark wrote:

*"Those people has shown much greater acts of hospitality than we have witnessed from any nation or tribe since we have passed the rocky Mountains. in short be it spoken to their immortal honor it is the only act which deserves the appellation of hospitality which we have witnessed in this quarter."*

Alvin Josephy writes in his history:

*"The longer the explorers were with the Nez Perces, the Higher grew their regard for them. They found the people industrious and able, cheerful 'but not gay,' somewhat reticent and reserved, with a dignified, proud bearing and high ethical standards. Gass (a member of the Lewis and Clark expedition) called them 'the most friendly, honest, and ingenious' of all tribes."*

The Nez Perce were an extraordinary people. Their cultural values caught the attention of the first "different kind of man from any you have yet seen," from the "rising sun," but Lewis and Clark were not the men "who will bring with them a book." It was still to be many years before the actual book arrived. Twenty-five years later the Nez Perce would still be waiting for it, but the Words of the book were soon to arrive. Yet, the Words did not come to the Nez Perce through the white man: they first came from the Indian.

A band of Iroquois arrived on the Plateau about 1820 and decided to stay. Led by a Catholic Indian named Old Ignace, the band settled among the Flathead, a tribe with close ties to the Nez Perce that often camped along the Clarkfork just

northeast of the Nez Perce. Old Ignace had come from the Catholic mission at Caughnawaga and was eager to share his knowledge of Christianity with new bands. His teachings spread across the Plateau attached to the Prophet Dance cult. Before Old Ignace's arrival there is no mention of Christian rites and practices attached to the Prophet Dance. Until he arrived on the Plateau, a basic spiritual structure was in place for the acceptance of the Judeo-Christian God but there was neither a Sabbath-keeping, nor Christian type prayers associated with the cult.

A few years prior to the Iroquois arrival, David Thompson, a trader, explorer, and devout Christian had come to the Plateau to establish a trading post for the North West Company. During an expedition in 1811, he had observed the Prophet Dance ceremony many times. From band to band he was greeted with the dance after having requested to see the dance at the first village he visited. In his description of the rite there is no mention of Christian practices. Yet, by the early 1830's, most traders and explorers describe morning and meal prayers along with a scrupulous keeping of a Sabbath.

Alvin Josephy states that in their astonishment and enthusiasm the more devout trappers failed to realize that the Indians had adopted the practices as an addition to their own beliefs hoping to increase their power and welfare. The trappers *"often jumped to the conclusion that the Indians were ripe for conversion."* Josephy's assertion seems to take the position that the two things, desire for power and being ripe for conversion, are mutually exclusive. On the other hand, the judgment as to whether the Indians were ripe for conversion to the white man's version of Christianity is most probably a logical choice, given their behavior. One thing is certain, the band's religious behavior had undergone a distinct metamorphosis.

Old Ignace was not the only source of Christian teaching that came to the Plateau through the preaching of converted Indians. In 1825, two Indian children from the Plateau were brought to the Red River School, an Anglican mission near present-day Winnipeg, Manitoba headed by the Reverend David T. Jones. The man responsible for these two children's enrollment was the young George Simpson. He had been placed in charge of fur trading operations on the Plateau for the Hudson Bay and North West fur companies who had merged in 1821. Motivated by pressures from London's Church Missionary Society and his own ambition to incorporate white customs, dress, and trade goods into the Plateau bands' culture (he hoped this would facilitate trade on the Plateau), Simpson decided to have pupils brought to the Red River School. He wrote:

*"The praiseworthy zeal of the Missionary Society in the cause of Religion I think would here be soon crowned with success; they would not only have the satisfaction of ameliorating the condition of an immense savage population but of extending Christianity **to regions where there is not even the idea of the existence of a Supreme Being.**"*

Simpson, nor any other white of that time, could of course have any idea that the bands of the Plateau had a relatively new and clear idea of a Supreme Being, and not only an idea but a growing hunger to understand Him.

Given the nature of the *"tulí-m"* cult, it is no wonder that the Indians were eager to give up their sons to be taught at the white mission school. Simpson offered Alexander Ross the post of schoolmaster at the Red River settlement. He wrote Ross, who was unhappy as a leader of the trapping brigades,:

*"I could wish that two Indian boys of about eight years of age of the Spokane and Nez Perce Tribe were got from their relations for the purpose of being educated at the School and taken out with your Family; a present to the value of o 2.3 or 4. might be given to the friends of each as an inducement to part with them."*

Whether Ross offered any money to the Indians for the two children he took to the school is unknown, but when he first approached the Salish Flatheads concerning the matter, he was met with indignation. *"They had asked him if they 'were looked upon as dogs - willing to give up their children to go they knew not whither,' but when he told them they were going to a minister of religion to learn how to know and to serve God, they said he might have 'hundreds of children in an hour's time:' and he selected two, being the sons of the most powerful Chiefs in that part of the country."* Josephy inserts this observation concerning the encounter in his history:

*A more precise account of what Ross had told the Salish Headmen would be interesting to read, for it is certain that they could have had no clear idea of the white man's religion, nor a realization that Ross meant to end their sons' attachments to their own spiritual beliefs and shamanistic practices...Ross must have given the headmen the belief that their sons were being accorded the privilege of receiving the secrets of that power for the use of their people.*

Rather than Ross having given the Indians this idea, Ross was more likely surprised himself at the eagerness they displayed for the knowledge of the men from the God of the "rising sun." After the Spokane and Flathead Chiefs each placed one of their sons in the care of the whites, two Nez Perce leaders arrived at Simpson and Ross' camp having traveled over 200 miles to see the *"Master of Life's Sons."* It is clear that the Plateau inhabitants believed that this was the long awaited opportunity to get the book that "would teach them everything."

The boys that were entrusted to Simpson were the sons of War Chiefs, or in Nez Perce, *"mi-yó-hat"* (band leaders). Simpson noted in his journal:

*"Baptized the Indian boys, they are the Sons of the Principal Spokane and Coutonais (spelled Kutenai today) War Chiefs, men of great Weight and Consequence in this part of the country. They are named Coutonais Pelly and*

## *Spokan Garry."*

The boys traveled with Simpson to the school and began their studies of reading, writing, history, geography and, of course, the Scriptures. Two years later the boys had progressed so well in their studies that they were baptized again on June 27, 1827, by the Reverend Jones having met the rather stringent requirements of admission to the church. After four years of instruction the boys returned to their Plateau families, each carrying a leather-bound copy of The King James Bible. The book the people of the Plateau had so coveted first arrived in the hands of the sons of chiefs.

Garry and Pelly's return clearly caused an explosive revival all across the Plateau. Miller writes that their preaching *"spread the Christianized prophet dance to corners of the Plateau where it had not been practiced before and reinforced its strength everywhere else."* Indians of the Plateau traveled great distances to hear Garry preach, read from the Bible, and see the celebrated book. Garry told them of the Father God and Jesus, Heaven and Hell, the Ten Commandments, the Sabbath, and morning, evening and before meal prayer. He also spoke of the concepts of brotherly love toward both Indians and whites, and the idea that making war was wrong except in self-defense. Garry and Pelly's influence was recorded as far as northern British Columbia. In the winter of 1835-36, John McLean, the Hudson Bay's northern trader at the Stuart Lake outpost reported that:

*"Two young men, natives of Oregon, who had received a little education at Red River, had, on their return to their own country, introduced a sort of religion whose groundwork seemed to be Christianity, accompanied with some heathen ceremonies of the natives. This religion spread with amazing rapidity all over the country. It reached Fort Alexandria, the lower post of the district, in the autumn 1834 or 1835..."*

Spokan Garry's influence also traveled south into the heart of the Nez Perce. Warren Ferris, an American Fur Company trader, wrote in 1831 about his encounter with a band that included many Nez Perce.

*They "have received some notions of religion either from pious traders or from traders or from transient ministers who have visited the Columbia. Their ancient superstitions have given place to the more enlightened views of the Christian faith, and they seem to have become deeply and profitably impressed with the great truth of the gospel. They appear to be very devout and orderly, and never eat, drink, or sleep without giving thanks to God."*

Washington Irving relates an account of the trapper Captain Bonneville, who described to Irving the amazing piety he observed in his first encounter with a small band of Nez Perce from the upper Clearwater region. Bonneville asked the band to join his hunting party, when:

*"To his surprise they promptly declined...It was a sacred day with them, and the Great Spirit would be angry should they devote it to hunting. They offered however, to accompany the party if it would delay its departure until the following day; but this the pinching demands of hunger would not permit, and the detachment proceeded. A few days afterward, four of them signified to Captain Bonneville that they were about to hunt. 'What!' exclaimed he, 'without guns or arrows; and with only one spear? What do you expect to kill?' They smiled among themselves, but made no answer. Preparatory to the chase they performed some religious rites, and offered up to the Great Spirit a few short prayers for safety and success; then, having received the blessing of their wives, they leapt upon their horses and departed, leaving the whole party of Christian spectators amazed and rebuked by this lesson of faith and dependence on a supreme and benevolent Being. 'Accustomed,' adds Captain Bonneville, 'as I had heretofore been, to find the wretched Indian reveling in blood and stained by every vice which can degrade human nature, I could scarcely realize the scene I had just witnessed. Wonder at such unaffected tenderness and piety, where it was least to have been sought, contended in all our bosoms with shame and confusion, at receiving such pure and wholesome instructions from creatures so far below us in all the arts and comforts of life... (The band was successful and returned laden with buffalo which they shared)...A futher and more intimate intercourse with this tribe gave Captain Bonneville still greater cause to admire their strong devotional feeling. 'Simply to call these people religious,' says he, 'would convey but a faint idea of the deep hue of piety and devotion which pervades their whole conduct. Their honesty is immaculate, and their purity of purpose, and their observance of the rites of their religion, are most uniform and remarkable. They are certainly more like a nation of saints than a horde of savages.'"*

Bonneville also commented somewhat impatiently that the Nez Perce would not take vengeance upon the Blackfeet for raiding their camps and taking their horses. When Bonneville once harangued them, saying that unless they took some action against the Blackfeet they would cease to be considered men and the Blackfeet could send their children and squaws against them, an Indian arose and said, *"It is bad to go to war for revenge. The Great Spirit had given them a heart for peace, not for war."*

These early descriptions of native piety and religious-cultural transformations indicate the profound effect the Words of the white man's book were having on the Plateau people. Yet, no white man had directly ministered the Christian Gospel to the bands of the region. So far, the message had come through the mouths of Indians, and the ideals and concepts had simply been incorporated into the existing religious and cultural matrix. The journey of these beliefs traveled into the heart of the Nez Perce bands by yet an even more indirect path than that of Anglican trained Pelly and Garry. The message traveled south through a Nez Perce Indian who heard Gary preach.

These pious Indians described by Bonneville and other American traders in the Southern Plateau came from the Clearwater bands of the Kamiah Valley. This was the home of the Nez Perce Indian, "*Hol-lol-sote-tote*" who was given the name Lawyer by trappers early in the 1830's. It is said that he was given this name because of his shrewdness and argumentative abilities. The earliest reference to his name was by William Marshall Anderson who had traveled through the region in 1834. He wrote in his journal: "*Ol-lot-coat-sum, the talker -- The Whites knew him by the name of Lawyer.*" His name is appropriate and possibly prophetic -- for, not only was it through Lawyer that the Kamiah Band most likely received their first words of the Book "that would teach them everything." It is also through Lawyer that the Nez Perce would receive the first white missionaries who would bring with them the book of the "*Law*" that would begin the fulfillment of the words, "the world will fall to pieces."

Clifford Drury writes of Lawyer:

*"If Joseph is known as the War Chief of the Nez Perces, Lawyer, because of his consistent policy of cooperation with the Government, should be remembered as the Peace Chief...He served during the critical years when the Nez Perces were making the transition from a semi-nomadic way of life to becoming an agrarian culture. The story of his life becomes a commentary on the history of the Nez Perces."*

Lawyer was the son of Twisted Hair, a Nez Perce leader who aided and sustained Lewis and Clark in 1805. His mother was a Flathead. He first heard the message of the Book from Spokane Garry in the spring of 1830 while visiting the Flatheads. Lawyer spoke both the Nez Perce and the Spokane (Flathead) languages, so he was able to understand when Garry read and taught from the Bible. Upon his return to the Kamiah Valley, Lawyer taught his people what he had heard and spread the revival into the heart of the Nez Perce land. The people were so aroused that a delegation was sent to St. Louis in the summer of 1831 to ask that Bibles and missionaries be sent to teach them.

Asa Smith, a Congregationalist missionary describes these events as related to him by Lawyer:

*"I have recently been making inquiries of the natives concerning the origin of their notions of the christian religion & of the object of those who went to the States as it was said in search of Christian teachers. Untill about ten years ago as near as I can learn from them, they knew nothing of the christian religion or of the Sabbath. My teacher [the lawyer] tells me that they had indeed before this seen a flag flying at the Forts of the H.B.C. on certain days & that the men were shaved & dressed different than usual & were engaged in horse racing and gambling, but they knew not then that it was the Sabbath. They had also I think before this seen some white men in the mountains (Catholics) who had told them some things, & before or after this some had learned to make*



*the cross, (probably afterwards) 7 they had witnessed the celebration of christmas by firing guns, carousing & intoxication. These were among some of the first ideas they had of religion. [The reference to white Catholics is speculation, and these ideas more than likely came from Old Ignace.] About ten years ago a young Spokane who goes by the name of Spokane Garry, who had been to the Red River School, returned. My teacher, the Lawyer, saw him & learned from him respecting the Sabbath & some other things which he had heard at the school. This was the first time he had heard anything about the Sabbath & it was called by them 'Halahpawit.' He returned & communicated what he had heard to his people. Soon after wh. six individuals set out for the States, in search as he says of Christian teachers. Two of this number turned back in the mountains & the other four went on & arrived at St. Louis when two died, one died soon after having left that place & one alone returned to tell the story & he is now dead. With what motives these individuals went it is difficult to determine. To suppose that it was any thing but selfish motives, is to suppose that good can come out of the natural heart. Were I to judge of their motives by what I see now among the people I should say it was nothing but selfishness. Doubtless their was curiosity to find out something of the christian religion. There has been much said about the desire of this people for instruction but it is quite evident what it is for. It is not usually the common people that express much desire only the chiefs & principal men. These manifest a great fondness for hearing something new & telling of it & by so doing they gather many about them & increase their influence & sustain their dignity among the people. This has evidently been the case is now."*

For many years a popular but mythical version of this story became accepted which was basically a concoction by William Walker, a visitor to St. Louis at the time. It is doubtful, however, if he ever saw the Nez Perce delegation. According to his story, he had visited William Clark, who told him that he had a delegation of Flatheads that he was accommodating. Curiosity getting the better of him he entered the adjoining room to see the Indians. His description of the natives seems to be inaccurate and also his story of how they had come to be there appears to be just as mythical as his physical description. According to his version of their story, some white men told the Indians after observing their religious rites, that the manner in which they worshipped was wrong and the Great Spirit was displeased rather than pleased. The whites told the Indians that there were other white people toward the rising sun that knew the true mode of worship and that they had a book that contained the proper directions for worship that would enable one to be received into the Great Spirit's country when one died. Even though Walker's story is most probably false and a concoction he created after hearing of the incident, it was passed on to the Methodist **Christian Advocate and Journal and Zion's Herald** who published it. The account became known among the white missionaries as "*The Macedonian Call*," and created the missionary fervor that years later resulted in Smith's mission in Kamiah. Smith's report of Lawyer's account is undoubtedly the more accurate. Smith's letter questions the authenticity of there being any truly Christian motive for the

journey to St. Louis; an observation he bases on his theology and his observations at Kamiah eight years after the event.

Christopher Miller's analysis of the apparently common, but ultimately different, millennial aspects of both the Prophet Dance cult and 19th century American Christianity sheds some light on Smith's attitude. In Miller's words the problem was a *"misunderstanding that brought two very different prophetic traditions together."* The Great Awakening that produced Smith's brand of Christianity was basically Arminian. This theology rejected the Calvinistic belief in predestination. Calvin had embraced the idea of the election as taught by the Apostle Paul in Scriptures, such as:

*"According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestined us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will..." (Eph. 1:4-5)*

Theologians of the Great Awakening adopted the Arminian idea that man was responsible for his own sin and he, himself, must chose God's Grace offered by Jesus Christ, which was freely offered to all men. This ideology then goes far toward explaining Smith's attitude toward the Kamiah Band. Prior to his description of the Lawyer's account of the St. Louis delegation he writes:

*"The character of this people is a subject wh. deserves notice. Every thing that has been written or that has been published before I left the States was in praise of this people so that the impression in the States seemed to be that the people were already christians or certainly almost christians. And sometimes the impression seemed almost to be that this people were destitute of moral depravity. But the church must learn, if they have not already, that none of the sons & daughters of Adam are destitute of moral depravity. The accounts given of this people's religious character by worldly men, cannot be depended on -- & the first accounts of missionaries even merely from their first appearances & first impressions wh. ought not to be too much relied on."*

Clearly, from his writings and theology, Smith could not conceive of the idea that the Indians could have any kind of true Christian faith apart from their acknowledgment of sin and acceptance of salvation as the mission described it. To this question we will return; for now one thing was certain, with the call for missionaries and the Book published, the answer to that call was soon to arrive.

Another important point that Miller brings out in his study is the merging of patriotism and Protestantism in the Great Awakening. *"...the aims and methods of evangelical Protestantism and democratic liberalism became inseparably linked,"* asserts Miller. Evangelical Americans were as fervent about their culture as their religion, and inherent in the preaching of the Gospel was the importance of civilizing the natives. Miller states that, *"As a result of their conversion experiences,*

*the missionaries were rendered incapable of dealing objectively with situations.*" Yet, it is not the conversion experience that is the direct cause of the missionaries' xenophobic nature. The spiritual epiphany brings peace, clarity, and a desire to understand God, know His ways, and please Him. A liminal experience does not produce prejudice. Rather, it is the environment that the one is born (converted) into that determines the religious-cultural ethnocentrism. The religious conversions experienced by the Nez Perce in the "*tulí-m*" cult produced radical changes in the individual, but the religious structure that arose in the Prophet Dance was shaped by the existing Nez Perce culture. Nevertheless, there was a clear change in the person who experienced the conversion or vision, and in the "*tulí-m*" cult, that change seems to have been for the better. Yet, to the white missionary, the Indian was worshipping God in an improper manner, and therefore the worship was savage and heathen. In like manner, after being "*born again*" the new white convert was quickly assimilated into the particular brand of Christian cult at hand. Although it was not the conversion experience itself that produced the patriotic Protestant of the 1830's, Miller's description of the Protestant cult produced by the Great Awakening is graphic and accurate. Their religious convictions were married to their Americanism in such a totality, that the spread of the Liberal-frontier ideal was as sacred to them as the Ten Commandments, and both ideals have their root in law rather than revelatory grace. The missionaries that the Nez Perce so desired were on their way, and with the Book so also came the law of civilization. The comic firstfruits festival of the "*tulí-m*" cult would soon pass into the tragic order of law and judgment. The law was coming to the Nez Perce; nothing was going to stop it, and prophetically it was part of the plan. Comedy would find itself surrounded by the tragic demand for flesh.

## CHAPTER 6

# SPIRIT AND FLESH

# LAW AND GRACE

O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you? This only would I learn of you, received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Are ye so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh? (Galatians 3:1-3)

After Christ's departure, it took ten years before the original followers of Jesus looked beyond the boundaries of Judaism for converts. When they did, the

question immediately arose as to what the Gentile convert should look like. Must Gentiles be civilized and assimilated into Judaism by submitting to circumcision? Must they be required to keep the law of Moses, or did they have the freedom to experience Christ in their own cultural context?

The contention arose between the Apostle Paul, who had established Gentile churches as far into the heart of the Roman Empire as Greece, and Jewish believers from Jerusalem under the apostleship of James, the Lord's brother, and Peter. The disagreement over this matter became so sharp that the first Church Council was called to decide the question.

The incident that brought about the question occurred in Antioch. Certain Jews came from Judea to Antioch teaching the Gentile converts there that unless you were circumcised in accordance with the Law and custom of Moses, you could not be saved. In the letter to the Galatians, Paul describes these men as *"false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage:"* Paul and Barnabas, his partner in the Antioch mission, *"had no small disagreement and discussion with them."* Paul writes that, *"To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you."* The disagreement became so sharp that it was decided that Paul and Barnabas would travel to Jerusalem and confer with the apostles and elders there.

When the meeting convened, Jewish believers who belonged to the sect of the Pharisees, rose up and said that it was necessary for the Gentile believers to be circumcised, and that they must be charged to keep the Law of Moses. After a long debate, Peter stood and recounted to the assembly his first experience with Gentile conversion. He described how he had been commanded to go to a Roman Centurion's home in a heavenly vision. He was told to put aside his religious ideas of who was acceptable to God and simply do as he was told; for up until the vision he had held to the law that forbid him to enter a Gentile's house lest as a Jew he be defiled. At the Gentile's home Peter proclaimed this message:

*" Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe. And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us; And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith. Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they. "*

After this, James, the leader of the council proposed a compromise. The Gentile converts should not be required to keep the whole Law but only that they should abstain from foods offered to idols, from sexual immorality, from animals that had been strangled, and from blood.

Clearly Paul agreed to this compromise in order to maintain peace among the churches, but he certainly did not agree that these laws were great taboos. In his first letter to the Corinthian church he writes:

*"Howbeit there is not in every man that knowledge: for some with conscience of the idol unto this hour eat it as a thing offered unto an idol; and their conscience being weak is defiled. But meat commendeth us not to God: for neither, if we eat, are we the better; neither, if we eat not, are we the worse. But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumblingblock to them that are weak."*

Paul's acquiescence kept the peace, and his concern was that his freedom from worldly-cultural laws would not cause one whose faith was not complete to be so offended or condemned that they would stumble away from Christ.

This controversy between adherence to an external cultural law and freedom from the law to pursue the relationship with Christ by faith, has been the primary spiritual battle in the Church from its foundation. It was the central argument only a decade after Jesus of Nazareth's departure, it is the center of Augustine's **City of God**, it is the foundation of Luther's Reformation, and it is the primary conflict in the white's mission to the Nez Perce.

## CHAPTER 7

# THE LAW FOR THE LAWLESS

The law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, for whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine;

(1Timothy 1:9-10)

Just a few of the Words of the Book had reached the Nez Perce. The Words had come to them spoken through the mouths of Indians, but now their "*Macedonian call*" had been heard. The word that cried out in their hearts would soon meet that which was written in the Book.

The first missionary to reach the Nez Perce was the Methodist, Jason Lee. The site of the 1834 fur trade rendezvous was Ham's Fork of the Green River. Lee arrived trusting that God would show him where and how to establish a mission among a people he knew nothing about. But it would seem that after Lee observed the Nez Perce and heard of their lands he decided to establish his mission elsewhere. After

traveling across the continent to get to them, Lee's attitude toward the Indians appears somewhat casual. He wrote in his diary:

*"Have had a visit from some 10 or 12 Pierced Nose and 1 or 2 Flat Heads today and conversed a little with them through an indifferent interpreter. But being busy arranging our things we requested them to come again when we were more at leisure." The following day Lee writes: "Soon after I awoke, as many Indians as could enter our tent came to see us and we told them our object in coming, showed them a Bible, told them some of the commandments and how they were given, to all of which they listened with the utmost attention and then replied that it was all good...One of the men went to purchase meat of the Indians but they would not bring it to him because it was Sunday. Thus while the whites who have been educated in a Christian land pay no regard whatever to the Sabbath these poor savages who have at most only some vague idea of the Christian religion respect the Sabbath of the Lord our God."*

For a quarter of a century the Nez Perce had looked for the men from the "rising sun" who would bring with them the Book. Jason Lee was the first to come with the Book to teach them everything. He briefly told them of the Ten Commandments - the foundation of the Law - but he did not establish a mission on the Plateau. Taking the advice of an official of the Hudson Bay Company, Lee ventured west, away from the rugged mountains to the Willamette River, far from the Flathead and Nez Perce he had come to convert; here, in one of the loveliest and most promising valleys he had ever seen, he built a mission for the white settlers of the valley.

It can not be asserted from Lee's diary, who the Nez Perce and Flathead Indians were who met with him at the rendezvous, but a trapper named William Anderson kept a journal at the rendezvous that year. He noted their chiefs:

*"Chiefs of the Sapaten or Nez-percé tribe Nose naceon - or Cut nose -- Cowsotum. Otlotcoutson - or the Lawyer - Ko ho kelpip the red crow. Pushwahikite--Mel. meltohhintintini--Koulkoultamin or the red beard - Tiellickinickito - Takinshaitish or rotten belly." When Anderson returned home he rewrote the journal and added, "This tribe like the flatheads is remarkable for their more than Christian practice of honesty, veracity and very moral virtue which every philosopher and professor so much laud, and practice so little. There are four missionaries on their route to the nation of flat-heads. If they can only succeed in making them such as the white men are, not as they should be, it would be charity for these messengers of civilization to desist."*

Joseph describes Lee in this manner, *"Lee turned out to be an empire builder and an important instrument of American Manifest Destiny rather than a missionary to the Indians."* The Indian noted in Andersen's journal as Rotten Belly was a companion of Lawyer and also plays an important role in this relationship of

missionary-Indian. He received his name after the rendezvous of 1832, two years earlier, when a skirmish took place at Pierre's Hole in the Teton Basin. About forty American trappers and a band of Nez Perce and Flatheads unexpectedly encountered a band of Blackfeet. In the fight that followed, Lawyer was wounded in the hip and thereafter walked with a limp. Rotten Belly was hit in the stomach, and the festering, slow-healing nature of the wound earned him his name. Both he and Lawyer would be at the 1835 rendezvous to meet the next two white teachers from the "rising sun".

The 1835 rendezvous was held at the mouth of the New Fork on the Green River and was attended by some 200 trappers and 2000 Indians. On August 12th two new missionaries arrived, Rev. Samuel Parker and Dr. Marcus Whitman, both Presbyterians. Whitman wrote in his journal:

*"We had a talk with the chiefs of the flathead and Napiersas tribes, in which they expressed great pleasure in seeing us and strong desires to be taught."*

Parker also wrote, *"The first chief of the Nez Perces, Tia-quin-su-watish [Tack-en-sua-tis or Rotten Belly] arose and said, 'He had heard from the white men a little about God, which had only gone into his ears; he wished to know enough to have it go down into his heart.'"*

Parker, an elderly man, was described by a Hudson Bay Company's employee as:

*"a very good old fanatic with some few peculiarities, such as licking his plate, 'and often angered others by his begging attitude and manner of helping himself to whatever he wished, he was inspired to self sacrifice by the report of the Nez Perce deputation, and promptly offered to go to their country as a missionary."*

A missionary who knew Dr. Whitman later wrote of him:

*"I need hardly tell you he cared for no man under heaven--perfectly fearless and independent. Secondly, he could never stop to parley. It was always yes or no. In the 3d place he had no sense of etiquette or personal dignity--manners, I mean. 4. And in the fourth place he was always at work...What should such a man have in common with an Indian? How could they sympathize with each other?"*

The two men were shocked to learn that Lee had forsaken the Flathead and Nez Perce for the Willamette Valley, but their hearts were warmed and encouraged by the Indians' apparent hunger for salvation. Eager to establish a mission among them, it was decided that Whitman would return to the East in order to find more workers willing to come to these "whitened fields". Parker would continue with the Indians to explore their lands for suitable sites to establish missions. This plan would save a whole year.

The Indians treated Parker as a treasured messenger of God. He rode in the lead

position with the head chief, and the Indians consulted him on important decisions and were very ready to follow his counsel. Whatever Parker preached or taught, the Indians would immediately put into practice. The Indians held their messenger in high esteem. There were between four hundred and five hundred men, woman and children at the first Sabbath service. Using the poles and coverings of their lodges the Indians constructed a meeting hall almost a hundred feet long and twenty feet wide and carpeted it with skins. Wearing their best attire, they listened attentively to Parker's sermon on the fall of man. Parker summarized what he taught:

*"...the ruined and sinful condition of all mankind; the law of God, both in this life and the life to come; and then told them of the mercy of God in giving his son to die for us; and of the love of the savior, and though he desires our salvation, yet he will not save us unless we hate sin and put our trust in him, and love and obey him with all our heart. I also endeavored to show them the necessity of renovation of heart by the power and grace of the Holy Spirit...when some truth arrested their mind forcibly, a little humming sound was made through the whole assembly, occupying two or three seconds."*

Later in the day, Tackensuatis (Rotten Belly) said to Parker that what he had taught was good, that it was spiritual, and there was powerful medicine in it. *"Now he knew more about God."*

Parker traveled throughout the region with the Nez Perce for ten months. His health was often poor, but his heart was strong, motivating him to continue. During his travels Parker met a Cayuse chief, who, after hearing Parker speak a few times, could not abide by his teaching against having more than one wife. He said he could not part with any of his wives. The chief said he had always lived in this manner and now was old; he would go to the place of burning for he would not alter his life and be saved. Parker accepted this response as proof of the Scriptures saying, *"the Savior is set for the fall and rising of those who hear."* Nevertheless, the Indians *"cheerfully acquiesced, and adopted our custom,"* was his report.

Parker met many of the leaders that played an important part in the transformation of the Plateau tribes to Christianity. The sincerity of two of the headmen's spiritual exercises were described to Parker by the English speaking Kentuck, who traveled with him as an interpreter. Kentuck described the self-important headman, Charle, who had guided Parker over the Salmon River Mountains, as one that prayed only with his lips. The other headman was Tuekakas, who would become known as Joseph and later as Old Joseph to distinguish him from his son, Chief Joseph, who would lead the non-treaty Indians in the 1877 war. Kentuck said Chief "Taetacus" (Tuekakas) was a man who prayed with his heart. Parker wrote of him, *"Confession of sin appears to occupy much of his prayers, and if there is one among this multitude, who it may be hoped, has been everlastingly benefited by the Gospel, I should believe it is this man."*



Parker also traveled to the country of the Spokan where he met Spokan Garry. Garry interpreted Parker's sermon to the tribe. There were also a number of Nez Perce at the meeting. Parker records that one of the chiefs of the Nez Perce spoke the Spokan language; who gathered his band toward the back of the meeting and translated the sermon to them. Although his name is not recorded, it would seem that Lawyer was also an escort of the man from the "rising sun". Everywhere Parker traveled he saw signs of Garry's influence among the Salish tribes.

When the time came to return to the rendezvous and meet Whitman, where he was to report his findings concerning the Plateau inhabitants and describe the possible mission sites he had selected, Parker lost heart. Faced with the rugged trip across the mountains that had almost claimed his life earlier, he decided not to return to the rendezvous. On June 6, he departed the Nez Perce lands and traveled down the Columbia to Fort Vancouver; there, he boarded a ship for Hawaii. In retrospect the aged missionary described the Plateau people who sought knowledge of the Christian God in this manner:

*"The Nez Perces have been celebrated for their skill and bravery in war. This they have mentioned to me, but they say they are now afraid to go to war; for they do not now believe that all who fall in battle go to a happy country. They now believe there is no other way to be happy here or hereafter, but by knowing and doing what God requires. They have learned enough to fear the consequences of dying unforgiven, but not sufficient to embrace the hope and consolation of the Gospel."*

In a Pauline frame of reference, this is a sad testimonial to the message these first missionaries brought. For, if fear of death was the result of the missionaries message, it was not the Gospel of the resurrection of the dead and faith in Jesus Christ apart from the works of the law that was preached. Rather, it was the same message preached to the Gentile church of Antioch and Galatia by the Pharisaic Jews of the first century, the message of the works of the Law. It was the message that caused Paul to cry out in his letter:

*"O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you? This only would I learn of you, received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Are ye so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?"*

In another ominous journal entry, Parker wrote concerning the coming of the law and white man's government:

*"Probably there is no government on earth where there is so much personal and political freedom, and at the same time so little anarchy; and I can unhesitatingly say, that I have nowhere witnessed so much subordination, peace, and friendship as among the Indians of the Oregon Territory. The day*

*may be rued when their order and harmony shall be interrupted by any instrumentality whatever."*

The instrument, the double-edged sword that would be rejoiced in by some and rued by others, the instrument that could be wielded for Grace and freedom or in another's hand bring Law and bondage was arriving at the annual fur trader's rendezvous on July 6 of that year, 1836. The missionaries the Nez Perce had sought after and awaited for so many years were coming. With them they carried the Book that would teach the Nez Perce everything, but they also carried with them their emaciated version of the Law of Moses and the law of cultural civilization.

## CHAPTER 8

# CIRCUMCISION, LAW, AND CIVILIZATION

Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law. Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace. (Galatians 5:1-4)

It was the custom of the caravan approaching the rendezvous to send a messenger a few days ahead of its arrival to announce their coming. When the messenger arrived at the site of the 1836 rendezvous, which was held on the Green River near the present day towns of Daniel and Pinedale, Wyoming, he reported an event that had never been heard concerning any previous group to cross the Rocky Mountains. The first white women had crossed the Rockies and were coming to the rendezvous.

One of the recruits Dr. Whitman had obtained in his year in the East was Narcissa Prentiss who became his wife. Narcissa, it would turn out, would be no more suited to mission work among the Indians than her terse, work-driven husband. She did not lack in devotion, but the hardships of mission life among the uncivilized natives of Oregon did not match her idealized concept of bringing the glorious Gospel to the unenlightened Indians. Over time the natives began to annoy her, and she separated herself from them. It was not long before the Indians would describe her as proud and haughty.

Also among the missionary party were Mr. and Mrs. Henry Harmon Spalding and an ambitious 26 year old, William H. Gray, who had joined the mission party as a mechanic and carpenter. Gray also would turn out to be a poor personality to

send to the mission. He is described by Joseph as, *"a restless, impatient fault-finder as well as narrow and bigoted."* The Spaldings were devout Presbyterians, and Reverend Spalding had been a disciple of Lyman Beecher who often preached against the Catholic Church, *"popery"* and idolatry. Both Spaldings were adamantly anti-Catholic. This fierce battle of doctrine inherent in Christianity would one day factor into the Indian's rejection of the white's way, but today the natives rejoiced in the white missionaries' arrival.

On July 4, Narcissa wrote in her diary;

*"Crossed a ridge of land today; called the divide, which separates the waters that flow to the Atlantic from those that flow into the Pacific, and camped for the night on the head waters of the Colorado. A number of Nez Perces, who have been waiting our arrival at the Rendezvous several days, on hearing we were near came out to meet us, and have camped with us tonight. They appear gratified to see us actually on our way to their country. Mr. Spalding, Doct. W. & Mr. G. are to have a talk with the chiefs this evening."*

Gray tells the story of how, before they reached camp that day, they were greatly alarmed when ten Indians and five white men dressed like Indians came riding toward the caravan yelling, whooping, and shooting. Men from the caravan assured the missionaries that the band was friendly. Among the Indians were Rotten Belly, Lawyer, and Kentuck who carried a letter to Dr. Whitman from Parker. The letter simply informed the party that Parker had decided to return to the States by sea saying nothing of his months in the country of the Nez Perce and Flatheads. The mission party was extremely disappointed. Whitman lamented a few years later:

*"We cannot say how much good Mr. Parker's tour will do others. It has done us none, for instead of meeting us at the Rendezvous as he agreed, he neglected even to write a single letter containing any information concerning the country, company, Indians, prospects, or advice whatever."*

Even though they were not met by Parker, they were certainly met by enthusiastic Indians. Lawyer referred to the meal with the missionaries that night as *"the time when his heart became one with the Suapies (Americans)."* When they arrived at the rendezvous, Rotten Belly insisted that the missionaries set camp next to the Nez Perce lodges. When the rendezvous ended, the Indians, fearful of losing their missionaries, wanted them to continue traveling with them along the route which they had taken Parker the previous year. On the advice of trappers, they decided to take a less rugged route. The Indians were disappointed, but Lawyer and Rotten Belly would not leave the mission party despite Spalding trying to dissuade them. Regarding Rotten Belly (Tackensuatis), Spalding wrote:

*"He also gave us a horse at the rendezvous, and said he would stick by us. He came with us to Wallawalla, and we found him as good as his word. He was*

*always the first on the ground in time of trouble. When at Fort Hall we told him he had better go with his people to the buffalo ground and furnish himself with meat for the winter. No, he said, he would trust to that; he wished to go with us, and render us all the assistance in his power in getting to his country. 'I shall go no more with my people, but with you; where you settle I shall settle. He was indeed of great service to us through the whole journey...He is very strict in his observance of morning and evening prayers, and in the observance of the Sabbath. I believe if there is one in the darkness of heathenism that wishes to do right it is this chief. He is always ready and anxious to hear something about God and the Bible; says he is but a little boy in knowledge, is liable to do wrong, but wants to know how to please God. His conduct to his Flat Head wife has undergone a material change since being with us and observing how we treat our wives."*

The Whitman's established a mission among the Cayuse on the Walla Walla River. The Spaldings along with Gray settled in the more remote Nez Perce lands on the Clearwater River about one hundred miles away. On October 18, 1836, Narcissa wrote in her journal concerning the choice of the mission sites:

*"...our location is on the Walla Walla River an eastern branch of the Columbia about 25 miles east of the Fort & about the same distance South east of the mouth of Snake or Lewis River...This is the country of the Cayouses, who speak the same language as the Nez Perces. Mr. Spalding has fixed upon a place 110 miles east of us on the North side of the Snake river near the mouth of the CoosCoos river a small branch...The Nez Perce are exceedingly anxious for the location. Make promises to work & listen to instruction. They do not like us to stop with the Cayouses. Say they do not have difficulty with the white men as the Cayouses do & we shall find it so."*

The Nez Perce prophecy concerning the Cayuse and the Whitmans could not have been more accurate.

The Whitman's mission would eventually end in tragedy. Over the next few years the mission became a sort of way station for settlers arriving to Oregon from the East. The Cayuse progressively saw the missionaries as aloof. Rather than dedicated to teaching and ministering to the Indians, the Whitmans became increasingly concerned with their privacy and in helping arriving settlers. On November 29, 1847, Marcus and Narcissa Whitman would be killed by the Indians they had come to minister to.

Henry and Elisa, on the other hand, were far better suited to the mission field than the Whitmans. Their mission on the Clearwater at Lapwai did not become a way-station for settlers, but it did become a training ground of civilization and law. Spalding wrote from the rendezvous two days after their arrival, *"What is done for the poor Indians of the western world must be done soon. The only thing that can save them from annihilation is the introduction of civilization."* Years after

Spalding left the mission, he had his picture taken holding a Bible in one hand and a hoe and ax in the other. The photograph depicted his philosophy. By 1855, the tide of white settlers extended well into lands which had long been claimed by the Cayuse, Walla Walla, and Nez Perce. As will be noted, in that year the white man and Indian entered into negotiations as to what the law of civilization should be for the people of the Plateau. Spalding began the Indian's training for the day of that treaty along the Clearwater river in the land of the Nez Perce.

In the summer of 1837, the mission sent Gray back to the States to bring additional personnel and report on the success of the year. He returned to the Rendezvous of 1838 with his new bride Mary, the Reverend Cushing and Myra Eells, the Reverend Elkanah and Mary Walker, the Reverend Asa and Sarah Smith, and the single, 23 year old Cornelius Rogers. The Eells, the Walkers and Smiths were Congregationalists while the Whitmans, Spaldings, Grays, and Rogers were Presbyterians. On August 18, 1838, the missionaries organized the first Protestant church on the west side of the Rockies, the First Presbyterian Church of Oregon. The Walkers and the Eells were sent to the Spokane, the Grays stayed with the Spaldings at Lapwai, the Smiths were assigned to the Whitmans and Rogers was to travel between the missions as need be. Smith was not content to stay with the Whitmans for long, and in February of 1839, he declared that he would rather leave the mission than remain with the Whitmans. He was sent to Kamiah to study the Nez Perce language under the tutelage of Chief Lawyer. Gray accompanied them to help with the erection of a crude cabin. From Kamiah, Smith wrote long scathing letters back to the Reverend David Greene in the states criticizing Spalding and the work among the Indians. He did however make positive references to Lawyer. In his first letter he said:

*"I have enjoyed the instruction of the best teacher that could be obtained in the country. He exhibits more mind than I have witnessed in any other Indian. He is one who has been much in the mountains with American Fur Co. & on account of his knowledge of different languages & his talent for public speaking, he was called by them Lawyer, by which name he is generally known. He has stood by me during the summer & has been faithful in giving me instruction, for which I have fed him & in part his family & promised him some clothing. This is necessary for Indians always live hand to mouth."*

Smith also wrote in another letter concerning Lawyer's Christianity, *"Met the people today in a grass meeting house, or rather lodge which they completed yesterday. A little more than 200 were present including all the children. This will probably be the usual number during the winter. Had an interesting conversation with my teacher [Lawyer] this evening. He seemed to have some sense of his situation as being without hope. He understands more truth than any other individual & it seems to take some effect. His hopes of salvation from his own works seem to be cut off, & now he is in darkness & knows not what to do. I have endeavored to tell him but it is only the Spirit of God that can make him understand what it is to yield himself up to the Savior."*

In Smith's opinion the Indians of the Plateau had no comprehension of true Christianity. As Smith saw them, they were like the Pharisees of old. They practice their religion "to be seen of men or, as a work of merit." He believed them to be self righteous in the extreme; when exposed to the "truth," that they were under the penalty of law and deserving of condemnation, they became offended. This observation is most probably correct, but even if the natives had trouble understanding Christian theology, it did not stop them from exercising their faith. For the past three decades, whatever Christian ideas they had received had simply been incorporated into their existing cultural frame work. Then, in an effort to do what they believed to be in line with the prophecies, they acted upon what they heard. These actions had a profound effect on their lifestyle. Many recognized and recorded that the resulting influence produced a more peaceful and giving heart among the people. This is the classic Pauline description of faith in the Word of the creator God as revealed to an individual, and that faith subsequently changing the particular individual's lifestyle for the better. Christianity, as Paul described it, or Jesus for that matter, consists not of how well one understands theology, but rather, do they do that which they understand. Clear examples of this are the Syrophenician woman of Mark 7:26 and Paul's teaching in Romans:

*"For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified. For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another."*

Before Lee, Parker, and now the mission party came to the Plateau teaching primarily the Ten Commandments and trying to convince the Indians that they were sinners, the Indians simply trusted in what was revealed to them in supernatural visions and the Word of the Book that had come to them. To use an overused Christian phrase, they were "walking in what they knew." This is faith. Smith's judgment that the Indians were self-righteous heathens because they did not understand the concept of justification through atoning sacrifice was somewhat misguided and harsh. Now that the Law had come to Lawyer, he was confused. On the other hand, Smith's answer to him was correct. Since it is the purpose of the Spirit of God to convince men of sin and not the job of preachers, telling Lawyer that only the Spirit of God could make him understand was theologically correct.

Smith wrote that the Indians did not love the truth when it condemned them. The only knowledge they had was concerning the stories of the Bible, and they knew little about the doctrines of Christianity. Yet, what few stories they knew seemed to have had a tremendously powerful effect for peace in their lives. Smith condemned their "supreme selfishness" yet, this is not the description given by the trappers they had helped for years. In another place Smith said:

*"I have not seen one who has any clear idea of the atonement. This I think arises from the fact that they have no idea of law, penalty, or justice. This has for months been my principal topic of instruction, the atonement as connected with the transgression of the divine law."*

It is true that they had little understanding of doctrine, but they were learning much faster than Smith imagined. Lawyer, aptly named, was learning about his name.

Spalding had greater success in winning mission converts, possibly because he did not require them to answer complex theological questions as his co-workers did. In December of 1838, Spalding began what he called *"protracted meetings."* These meetings were attended by hundreds of Indians, and while he was conducting these meetings he put the Indians to work digging and building mission improvements. Teaching them the ways of civilization was as important to Spalding as teaching them the ways of God. The meetings lasted for two months and were charged with emotional conversions. In December, Spalding wrote in his diary:

*"Dec.2 Sabbath. Speak of the Samaritan woman, & apply it to all present. Joseph [Tuekakas, or Old Joseph] speaks most affectingly, urging all present to give their hearts to Jesus Christ without delay..."*

*9 Sabbath. Explain the Ten Commandments again..."*

*16 Sabbath. Speak of prodigal son.*

*17 ...Conner calls tonight. Very much distressed. Talk & pray with him in bro Rogers room both of us urge him to submit immediately. C prays. Oh thou Friend of sinners, appear to him the one altogether lovely. Oh bring this man who has spent so many years in sin to sweetly at the foot of the Cross..."*

*18 Conner calls early. Says he has found peace of soul is happy..."*

*23 Sabbath. Good No present. Speak of the death of Stephen. Seem to feel more anxious for these immortal souls than usual. Before the sermon closed Timothy was before the stand in tears. Conner gives a brief history of his wicked life & concludes by saying he hates now what he once loved & and is determined to serve & love no one but Jesus Christ in the future, speaks in NZ P. After which Timothy commenced but soon was overwhelmed with grief and cried aloud. Before we closed many more were before the stand, men & women & the scene, the most awful & interesting I have ever witnessed, continued many waiting for the speaker to close, many deeply affected, till I rose & said those before the stand were all that could speak till evening. Conner prayed at the Bible class which is attended with the English hearers every Sabbath afternoon, this 3 Sabbath. Many speak at Ev prayers. Some children. Late in the Ev the girls are found in tears. They came with Joseph to my room. He*

*urges them most affectionately to give their hearts to Jesus Christ & be good children. O God of love what a Sabbath it has been. Evidently thou art amongst us & we knew it not. I feel deeply the want of a more perfect knowledge of this language, the habits of thought of this people, & the difficulties in the way of their becoming Christians. O teach me & lead them to the lamb of God...*

*30 Sabbath. Great Nos. present. Speak of the temptations of Christ on the mount. Considerable feeling. Some weeping, a few speak, perhaps a hundred...*

After December the revival began to wain. Spalding's admitted ignorance of the habits and the thoughts of the Nez Perce coupled with his intense desire to civilize and convert them to farmers as much as Christians soon brought trouble. His descriptions of the Sabbath meetings become more and more brief, and by April there was clear dissent among some of the Indians and most surprisingly among the disenchanted was Rotten Belly. On April 22, 1839, Spalding wrote:

*"Last evening had some talk with Meiway, Isaac's son, & Rotten Belly. Today they leave. I do not know that I ever felt discouraged in the least before in relation to this people. Really I fear they will all prove to be a selfish, deceptive race of beings. Surely many of them appear like another race of beings from what they did when we first came among them."*

Meiway, who was called Looking Glass, was the Father of the famous Chief Looking Glass who was one of the War Chiefs in the 1877 war. Old Looking Glass was named for the small round mirror that he wore around his neck. He was not a chief but a *"tiwét"* (shaman). Whether jealous of the missionaries intrusion into the spiritual leadership role of their people or for some other reason, the *"tiwét"* were not warm toward the missionaries nor the missionaries toward them. Of Looking Glass, Josephy writes, *"He was not a man for untutored missionaries to trifle with."*

Spalding had another *"tiwét"* to deal with, *"Hin-mah-tute-ke-kaikt,"* known as Big Thunder, but to whom Spalding gave the name of James. James had camped in the valley at Lapwai for many years. When Spalding began to convert the Indians to farming, they naturally farmed land close to the mission. When Old Joseph, Timothy, and others, who came from other river valleys, began to farm in James' valley he became discontented. In March 1839, Spalding wrote:

*"13. Speak with people respecting a man, the same that caused difficulty 21 ult. who raised his whip over Gray's head...I require the chiefs to speak. They exhibit fear...Soon begin to speak of whipping Mr. Gray. Later on Meiway [Looking Glass] takes the lead. He once helped tie and abuse Mr. Pambrun. Others express the same & I leave without worshipping with them.*

*14. Chiefs hold out. James & others command all to abstain from work on the*



*premises. Multitudes threaten to tie and whip me...*

*16. Chiefs hold out still, what the end will be I know not. Late in the eve Chiefs come, say they have done wrong, ask pardon, promise to whip the man, wish me to commence worship with them again. I consent."*

These three days were tense days at the mission. Some have suggested that these two *"tiwéts"* were anti-Christian. This they may have become, but both were central figures in the *"tulí-m"* cult and had been eager to understand the Book. Looking Glass had been Captain Bonneville's friend and James was Joe Meek's friend. Both these trappers described the friendly and pious nature of the Indians. As noted earlier, a month after this incident, Rotten Belly and Looking Glass left the mission. From here, Rotten Belly, the most helpful and eager for missionaries of the Nez Perce chiefs, disappears from records until 1871, when he appears again in his old age and is baptized, along with Lawyer, by Spalding.

Smith's opposition to the baptisms of Old Joseph and Timothy may have been the reason that Lawyer was not baptized earlier. Smith, in one of his scathing letters had hinted to a conspiracy to admit Indians to the Church before they were ready. He said, *"...they are not intelligent Christians...I do not believe they know why they are in the church, nor that they are able to give a satisfactory reason for 'the hope that is in them'"* Spalding wrote in his diary the night before their baptism:

*"The views of Joseph & Timothy are very clear on all the principle doctrines of our religion. Joseph says he had trusted for salvation in his simplicity knowing something of God & in outward worship, & in that state the words of God had no place in his heart, but when the law of God was brought plain in his mind, it penetrated his heart like an arrow making a severe wound...He is confident that God can see nothing in him suitable for heaven unless Jesus Christ has put it in there & if he is finally received it will be through the mercy of God."*

Old Joseph and Timothy were baptized on Nov. 17, 1839. On April 12, 1840, Spalding baptized the newborn son of Chief Joseph whom he named Ephraim. This son was the young Chief Joseph who would one day lead his people in their darkest hour. Twenty-four years later, at this same site, Old Joseph would tear up a copy of the 1855 treaty in a demonstration of his frustration with the white man's law, and then tear up his copy of the Nez Perce Gospel of Matthew rejecting the hypocrisy of the religion he had once adored.

Unable to conform to Spalding's strict codes and demands of hard labor, Old James would leave the mission in 1841. Spalding's diary entry for October 29 and 30, 1841, describes the parting:

*"29. Speak on faith. 'Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.' Old James seeing too*

*much light for his sorcery rose in rage & said he had received waiikin when young & could not throw it away & by that power over the winds & clouds & that he could cause the winds to blow or the clouds to give rain when he pleased. This stirred up the zeal of Timothy who answered him very closely but the old man stopped him by force & attempting to speak, I told him to sit down. The sorcery & many other things convince me that this people are very much under the power of the devil. O may his chains be broken & their souls set at liberty.*

*30. Old James comes early this morning & he says he shall see me no more for a long time & further that Craig tells them that they should demand pay for their lands & that he told them to tear away the mill-dam last winter. Joseph, Luke & Timothy speak very much to the point."*

The chiefs and shamans who were most affected by the visions and spirit of the "tulí-m" cult, who had for decades followed the words of the prophecy seeking after the Book and the men from the "rising sun," who sat at the feet of the missionaries learning everything, began to reap the firstfruits of the law which was being sown in Coyote's fields. The law, with its scapegoats and judgment, began spreading its dividing roots into the crumbling soil of the Nez Perce's world. Big Thunder (James), who could no longer abide the strict law of civilization, was departing; others would stay to learn more of the Law of God while conforming to the culture of civilization.

After Old James departed, Spalding began to see the Indians progress in his plan to civilize them. He wrote of *"the satisfaction of seeing the people come to the mill with their horses loaded with grain, the fruits of their own industry."* Attendance at his school increased. Some of the elders who attended were: Joseph, Timothy, Luke, Lawyer, and Hezekiah, the Cayuse chief whose Indian name translates Five Crows. By December, Spalding wanted to baptize Hezekiah, Luke and some others believing them to have progressed sufficiently to be admitted to the church. His eagerness to swell the ranks of converts was quelled this time by Whitman who refused to allow them to be baptized. If the Nez Perce were beginning to be divided, so also were their teachers. Whitman and Spalding quarreled continually.

In May 1842, the missionaries met in Wailatpu for their regular meeting and Whitman determined to settle his and Spalding's differences. Before the meeting he wrote to the board in the East that, *"We hope soon to be able to say all are united either in final separation, or in everlasting union & cooperation."* The meeting did not begin well. Walker wrote, *"There was so much bad feeling manifested that I said that I thought it was an abomination for us to meet and pray."* Walker gave the two a stern lecture, and the next day, after meeting privately, Spalding and Whitman made peace, but it was not soon enough to affect the damage done by the many letters Smith had written to the Board complaining about Spalding's methods. In September, Elijah White arrived from

the East, carrying an order which had been issued that spring for Spalding's recall.

White had been an assistant to Jason Lee in the Willamette valley where he had to resign because Lee accused him of misuse of funds and impropriety with Indian women. White had returned to the East in 1840 and began to lobby for a political appointment to Oregon. He finally obtained the position of sub-agent to the Oregon Indians. After delivering the Board's fateful letter to Whitman, he continued to the Willamette where he was received by the settlers with excitement as a sign of Washington's concern for their protection. Lee and those at the mission were dismayed at his reappearance, especially now that he possessed government authority.

The letter White delivered stunned the missionaries. It not only recalled Spalding, which all felt was unnecessary since the reconciliation, but also called for the closing of both Spalding and Whitman's missions. Whitman was chosen to return to Boston and set the record straight as to the true situation at the missions. It took Whitman five months to reach St. Louis, and from there he made brief stops in Washington and New York on his way to Boston. He received a cold reception from the Board, but he was successful in convincing them that all was now well in Oregon. The Board reversed its decision and authorized Whitman to return with a small group of *"intelligent and pious laymen."* Although he was only able to convince his nephew, Perrin Whitman, to return with him, when the two arrived in Missouri they found already assembled a thousand emigrants with loaded wagons, cattle, horses, and mules ready to depart for the Oregon territory. Whitman wrote to his friends, *"It is now decided that Oregon will be occupied by American citizens."*

While Whitman was away in the East, an event took place that would hurry the law of civilization toward the Indians. Narcissa was left alone at the mission when her husband went east. Shortly after her husband's departure, an Indian tried to intrude into her bedroom in the night. Her screams frightened the intruder away, but it was decided that she should move to the safety of the fort at Walla Walla until her husband returned. After she left for the fort, the Cayuse burned the grist mill and some two hundred bushels of corn. When the news of the incident traveled down the Columbia to the new Indian agent, Elijah White, he set out to investigate.

He arrived at Waiilatpu on November 21, where he was *"shocked and pained at beholding the sad work of savage destruction."* He instructed the few Indians who were left lurking about the area to tell their chiefs to prepare for an assembly in a few days. He continued to Lapwai where he arrived on December 3. Spalding greeted him with *"joyful countenances and glad hearts,"* while the gathering Indians received him with *"civility, gravity and dignified reserve."* He waited two days for all the headmen to come in, and on December 5, he began his council with them. White wrote that he was *"ushered into the presence of the assembled chiefs, to the number of twenty-two, with some lesser dignitaries, and a large*

number of the common people." He told the Indians that he was sent by the American government with "*kind intentions*," to protect them from any white man "*who should invade their rights, by stealing, murder, selling them damaged for good articles, or alcohol.*" He then went on to elevate Spalding. He wrote, "*I gave them to understand how highly Mr. and Mrs. Spalding were prized by the numerous whites, and with what pleasure the great chief gave them passport to encourage them to come here to teach them what they were now so diligently employed in obtaining, in order that they and their children might become good, wise and happy.*" The Indians were then asked if they were of a heart to listen to the advice their new protector, Dr. White, had to say to them. The Indians responded positively. The eminent war chief, Hohots Ilppilp (Red Grizzly Bear, also known as Many Wounds or Bloody Chief) addressed White:

*"I am the oldest chief of the tribe. Was the high chief when your great brothers, Lewis and Clark, visited this country; they visited me, and honored me with their friendship and counsel. I showed them my numerous wounds received in bloody battles with the Snakes; they told me it was not good, it was better to be at peace; gave me a flag of truce; I held it up high; we met and talked, but never fought again. Clark pointed to this day, to you, and this occasion; we have long waited in expectation; sent three of our sons to Red river school to prepare for it; two of them sleep with their fathers; the other is here, and can be ears, mouth and pen for us. I can say no more; I am quickly tired; my voice and limbs tremble. I am glad I live to see you and this day, but I shall soon be still and quiet in death."*

The Indians viewed White as a messenger equal with the historic Lewis and Clark. Yet, White did not view the Indians as a free people like Lewis and Clark did. Elevated by his position as United States Indian agent to Oregon, he saw the Indians as being under his supervision, even though Britain and the United States were still squabbling over claim to the territory, land which belonged to neither but to the Indians. But he was not here to propose a treaty with the Indians, as would happen after the United States viewed themselves as having clear claim to the territory. White was here to codify and impose a set of laws upon them that they should live by. The sanction would no longer be the fear of God, Who would be displeased with their bad conduct, but the penalty of the law of American's civilization.

White read his new laws to the assembly, "*clause by clause, leaving them as free to reject as to accept.*" He said, "*they were greatly pleased with all proposed.*" This is the code he proposed that the Indians accept:

*"1) Whoever willfully takes a life shall be hung.*

*2) Whoever burns a dwelling house shall be hung.*

*3) Whoever burns an outbuilding shall be imprisoned six months, receive fifty*

*lashes, and pay all damages.*

*4) Whoever carelessly burns a house, or any property, shall pay damages.*

*5) If anyone enter a dwelling, without the permission of the occupant, the chiefs shall punish him as they think proper. Public rooms are excepted.*

*6) If anyone steal he shall pay back two fold; and if the value is over a beaver skin or less, he shall receive twenty-five lashes; and if the value is over a beaver skin he shall pay back two fold, and receive fifty lashes.*

*7) If anyone take a horse, and ride it, without permission, or take any article and use it, without liberty, he shall pay for the use of it, and receive from twenty to fifty lashes, as the chief shall direct.*

*8) If anyone enter a field, and injure the crops, or throw down a fence, so the cattle and horses go in and do damage, he shall pay for all damages, and receive twenty-five lashes.*

*9) Those only may keep dogs who travel or live among game; if a dog kill a lamb, calf, or any domestic animal, the owner shall pay the damage, and kill the dog.*

*10) If an Indian raise a gun or other weapon against a white man, it shall be reported to the chiefs, and they shall punish him. If a white person do the same to an Indian, it shall be reported to Dr. White, and he shall redress it.*

*11) If an Indian break these laws, he shall be punished by his chiefs, if a white men break them, he shall be reported to the agent, and be punished at his instance."*

Clearly White thought that these laws would stop the principal transgressions by Indians which the missionaries had contended with. The Indians agreed to accept these laws which substituted the noose, lash, and imprisonment for traditional native sanctions, but White still had one more problem to solve. The missionaries often had problems with the native's loose political structure. Headmen could not be responsible for the actions of members of another's band. James had often refused to respond to actions taken by young men around the mission, and many times no one would claim leadership over them. In order to enforce these laws there must be a headman over all the chiefs that reported to the agent. Much deliberation on the part of the whites completed this task. The Indians could not conceive of such a position. Finally, with help from the white interpreters, Ellis, the son of old Hohots Ilppilp (Many Wounds) was chosen, probably because of his father's earlier speech and the fact that he had been to the Red River School and could, as his father described, "*be ears, mouth, and pen for us.*" These things did give Ellis some distinction among the bands, but he was young, only 32, and he had established no deeds in hunts or war. On top of this,

after he won election to this position, he became puffed up and conceited, and he aroused the jealousy of older and more experienced leaders, Lawyer and Joseph among them. Ellis would not be able to hold this position long and these two other leaders would represent the different factions of the tribe in the divided world to come.

The concepts of codified law, one headman over all the bands, and councils with representatives of the United States Government had now been introduced into the native's world. These ideas would become the primary factors in dividing the tribes until their world would fall to pieces. This event set the stage for the legal work of the treaty councils which would come to defraud the Indians of their mother, the earth.

By 1855, the lines would be clearly drawn, and after 1863, the Nez Perce kingdom would be split like the kingdom of Israel of old. Those who possessed the law would remain in the land captivated by the law; they would be led by one whose name was law, Lawyer. The others would be scattered. Divorced from the land, they would be called "*not God's people*" just as Ephraim of old. Paralleling the prophecy to Joseph and Ephraim of the Old Testament, the non-treaty, divorced, heathen Nez Perce would be led by one whom Spalding named - Ephraim, the son of Old Chief Joseph. Young Joseph's true name would be, "*Hin-mah-too-yah-lat-kekht*" (Thunder Traveling to Loftier Mountain Heights). His people would travel from their land in a tragic story which will find them sitting with Coyote awhile, but still holding to the hope of traveling to loftier mountain heights.

## CHAPTER 9

# BOUND UNDER THE LAW

Once upon a time Coyote sat for a long time musing. "Now I am going to create the human race," he said. So he built a fire and mixed the ingredients. He made a mold in human form, with feet, arms, legs, and all those human features--head, eyes and mouth. He completed the mold, put it in the oven, and stoked the fire. But he was too impatient and took it out while it was still just white. He wasn't satisfied with this so he threw it across the ocean. and it became the white people.

Because he wasn't happy the first time, he made another and decided to bake this one longer. And that is what he did. When he put the mold in the oven this time he waited too long and it became black, just totally black and burned. "This isn't quite good enough, too black," he thought. So he discarded it toward the south. That is why the black people are from there.

Coyote tried a third time, and this time he took greater care. He put it in the oven, and then he deliberated and watched carefully for just the right time--neither too long nor too short, but right in the middle. He opened the oven and took it out, and there it was baked just fine, and he was completely satisfied. He said, "Yes, these will be the People hence." And that is how the Indians got their name. That is the reason they were put here. The Indians never came from any other place. They are Coyote's creation. But that's not all.

For when Coyote threw the white loaf toward the sun and it landed across the ocean, it multiplied greatly in that land. The Great Spirit sought among all the pale multitudes for people who would become His friends, none accepted His offer. Among all the multitudes He found only one man who would trust Him, but this man lived at the very fringes of the white lands, and his skin was not very white.

Nevertheless, he became the Great Spirit's friend. The Great spirit gave His friend powerful medicine, and the medicine followed the man's descendants generation after generation. From those generations the Great Spirit took two wives, but they were childish and unfaithful. He divorced one and chastised the other. To the wife who remained, the Great Spirit said, "Although you are an unfaithful wife, upon you will I have mercy; law is yours, and you will bare the ruler of the sun." To the divorced wife He said, "Depart from me; on you I will have no mercy," and she was scattered among the lands of the whites. As she left, the Great Spirit said, "She is like a great and stubborn bull; where she goes she will push the nations to the very ends of the earth. When she has learned humility I will receive her again."

The Bible says that God found a man in Abraham who would trust Him. Therefore, God made a covenant with him. This contract became the birthright containing God's promise which he, the friend of God, handed down to his generations. The promise said: from Abraham's loins all the families of the earth would be blessed, that his descendants would become as numerous as the sand of the sea and the stars of the heavens, and they would be blessed. God said that Abraham's seed would become a multitude of nations, kings would come from him, and they would possess the gates of their enemies. The sign of this covenant was to be circumcision. The Apostle Paul equated circumcision to the law. Abraham's seed would be marked by the characteristic of law.

In handing the birthright down from father to son an unusual pattern was set. The promise would not go to the firstborn, which was according to law and tradition, but to the younger son. Ishmael, Abraham's firstborn "*son of the flesh*" did not inherit the promise. Rather, Isaac, "*the son of promise*" conceived in Abraham's old age, received the blessing. Isaac's firstborn Esau did not inherit the birthright, but his younger brother, the trickster Jacob, deceived his father and obtained the blessing of the birthright promises. Likewise, when Jacob prophesied over his twelve sons he did not give the birthright to his eldest, Reuben, but he split the promise between Judah and Joseph. This pattern of the promise going not to the firstborn but to a son born later becomes a metaphor in Biblical prophecy which is fulfilled in Jesus who is not the first man, Adam, but the second Adam who receives the blessing of God the Father. Paul uses this metaphorical pattern when he talks of the resurrection saying:

*And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven.*

The symbolic pattern takes on more substance as it continues to unfold in the division of the birthright to Judah and Joseph, and symbolically parallels the substance of the division in the Nez Perce tribe.

Judah received lawmaking and the scepter - the right to make laws and kingship, while Joseph received the rest of the promise - becoming a multitude of people and nations, possessing the gates of their enemies, and a blessing of prosperity. In Jacob's blessing to Joseph he adopted Joseph's sons as his own and gave them specific promises choosing the younger Ephraim to rule over the older Manasseh. Years later, before Israel entered the promised land, Moses prophesied of Joseph describing his descendants as a great bull with two horns (Ephraim and Manasseh); with these horns he would push the nations to the ends of the earth. Wherever the seed of Joseph would go they would be numerous, prosperous, and imperialistic.

These two streams of the birthright promise, Joseph and Judah, dwelt together as one people, but also as twelve tribes throughout the reign of Solomon. After his kingdom the twelve tribes were separated according to the streams of promise. Judah and Benjamin became the Southern Kingdom of Judah (from hence comes the name Jew), and the other ten tribes became the Northern Kingdom of Israel, also known as Ephraim because of his supremacy in the birthright. They were also called Samaria because Omri, one of the northern kings, moved the capital of the kingdom to that city.

In 722 B.C., Assyria took the Northern Kingdom of Israel captive and resettled the tribes north of Nineveh in the land of the Medes. From here these tribes supposedly disappear from history. This is not the case; for recent work has traced this people's migration. From this area south of Lake Van, in what is now Iraq, these tribes migrated through the Caucasus Mountains, conquering and settling across northern Europe.

*"And as for your seeing him gather to himself another multitude that was peaceable, these are the nine tribes that were taken away from their own land into exile in the days of King Hoshea, whom Shalmaneser, king of the Assyrians, made captives; he took them across the river, and they were taken into another land. But they formed this plan for themselves, that they would leave the multitude of the nations and go to a more distant region, where no human beings had ever lived, so that there at least they might keep their statutes that they had not kept in their own land. And they went in by the narrow passages of the Euphrates river. For at that time the Most High performed signs for them, and stopped the channels of the river until they had crossed over. Through that region there was a long way to go, a journey of a year and a half; and that country is called Arzaeth. Then they lived there until the last times; and now, when they are about to come again..."*

These descendants of the patriarch Joseph, the Northern Kingdom of Israel, described by Hosea the prophet as the divorced wife of God, carried the birthright to Europe. This story is the deepest, prophetic/symbolic root of what would centuries later be labeled *"Manifest Destiny."*



After the resurrection of Christ, the Church of the first century took the message of the Jewish Messiah through the Greco-Roman world into Europe. When the Apostle Paul determined to go to Asia he was restrained by a vision of a man from Macedonia calling, "*Come over into Macedonia, and help us.*" This is the "*Macedonian Call*" which became the allegory in the story of the four Nez Perce or Flatheads who came to St. Louis looking for the Book and missionaries to teach them. Hence, the promise of the scepter and law from Judah came also to Europe. From Europe, the Bull (the birthright descendants of Joseph) that would push the nations to the ends of the earth, carrying the law with him, arrived in the Americas. In 1855, this Bull, now in the form of the Manifest Destiny of American Christianity, sat down to bring its law to the Nez Perce and the tribes of the Columbian Plateau.

## CHAPTER 10

# SEPARATED BY THE LAW

### **The Heart of the Monster**

The asphalt path led to a grove of trees that shaded picnic tables. With a push of a button the story of Coyote and the monster proceeded from a speaker. Coyote had slain the monster, cut it to pieces throwing the pieces to the winds. As each piece landed a people grew from it. With no pieces left he took blood from his hands to create the Nez Perce for this place. Here, just outside Kamiah, is the heart and liver of the monster; from hence came "The People" - "Noon Nee-mee-poo."

Another path from the parking lot would take you to an observation platform where you can view the entire scene of the grove and the Heart. Seen from the modern, architectural platform or from a seat on a table under the leaves of the grove, the Heart is circled, bound by a wooden rail fence. A boy, who didn't understand the meaning of fences, vaulted the fence, and then he climbed to the top of the Heart; his hands raised in triumph, he screamed his victory.

A map of the grounds showed the parking lot, the paths, the Heart, and the Liver. There was no path to the Liver. Chest high grasses, wildflowers, and thistles stood sentinel blocking the way. The Liver was not on the property of the complex; for a pasture fence, concealed in the grasses, had to be crossed in order to scale to the summit of the organ. Only the sign of one other set of footsteps could be seen in the grasses. Who?

White men and women came along the asphalt paths to gaze at the Heart from the grove and the platform. That one white boy, who did not understand sacred taboos, left the grove to touch the Heart with his shoes in triumph. One white man, the boy's father, left the paths, left the mowed grass, forged his own path out of the complex, followed the previous foot sign, and touched the Liver with his heart. The white man knew the presence of the Spirit of creation; that Spirit was here on the Liver. The Spirit was not bound by wooden fences, nor taboos, nor the color of skin. Here, on the organ of the Monster that many say the Indian has given his heart to in desperation an drink, the white man knew the spirit of the red man still lived and would rise again.

Dr. and Narcissa Whitman had provided a way station for the arrival of Oregon bound immigrants until their sudden massacre in 1847 by the Cayuse. The attack on Whitman's mission also precipitated the closing of Spalding's mission which was looted. With Lawyer away in the buffalo country, Spalding was protected by Timothy, Luke, and those Nez Perce loyal to him until he left the country in haste. Old Joseph also left Lapwai to return to his own land in the Wallowa. Although his loyalty could not be questioned, he had close family ties to the Cayuse, and many of his young warriors were accused of participating in the looting at Lapwai. For several years after the incident the United States Calvary provided escorts for the settlers who traveled through the Cayuse lands. In the year 1848, more settlers entered the Oregon territory than the entire combined population of the Nez Perce, Cayuse, and Walla Walla. In 1851, Dr. Anson Dart, the Indian Agent for Oregon, reported to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs that the Cayuse, Walla Walla, and Nez Perce inhabited a territory larger than Connecticut, Rhode Island, Vermont, and New Hampshire combined: some 25,000 square miles. Dart suggested that the Congress make provision to purchase a portion of these lands.

On May 29, 1855, the United States of America began negotiations with the Plateau people for their land. In the official report to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Isaac Ingalls Stevens described the site of the negotiations as *"near the place consecrated by the blood of the missionary, Dr. Whitman and his family who were killed in 1847 by the Indians of the Cayuse Tribe."*

The Nez Perce were the first of the bands to arrive at the site on Thursday, May 24. Lawyer wore a white man's high silk hat with three large feathers tied around the crown with bands of ribbons. Possibly the hat symbolized his leadership at the proceedings, or maybe his amalgamation of white and Indian ways. A nineteen year old civilian observer named Lawrence Kip had been invited to the proceedings, and he kept a diary of the events. Kip met Lawyer on the afternoon of the 25th while the Indian leader was having his portrait sketched by Gustavus Sohon. That evening Lawyer visited Kip, who wrote, *"We feasted him to the best of our ability not omitting the indispensable pipe..."*

On the following day, Saturday, the Cayuse, Walla Walla, and Umatillas arrived; Kam-i-ah-kin, Chief of the Yakimahs also arrived. They refused the gifts of the white men saying that they had never accepted anything from the white man without paying for it. Spokane Garry also attended the council. On Sunday, the Nez Perce held Sabbath services with Timothy speaking on the Ten Commandments. Governor Stevens wrote, *"The Nez Perces have evidently profited much from the labor of Mr. Spalding...their whole deportment throughout the service was devout."*

The Council convened at one o'clock, Tuesday afternoon, May 29. Kip described the arrangements:

*"Directly in front of Governor Steven's tent, a small arbor had been erected, in which, at the table, sat several of his party taking notes of everything said. In*

*front of the arbor on a bench sat Governor Stevens and General Palmer, and before them in the open air, in concentric semicircles, were arranged the Indians, the chiefs in the front ranks, in order of their dignity, while the far background was filled with women and children. The Indians sat on the ground, (in their own words,) 'reposing on the bosom of their Great Mother.' There were probably a thousand present at the time."*

The interpreters were sworn in and pleasantries exchanged. The council was then broken up due to poor weather.

The next day, Wednesday, the council met again beginning at 1:00 p.m. After the pipe was smoked, Governor Stevens spoke for over two hours concerning the history of white and Indian relations, and the necessity of laws to protect one another. The Indians said nothing. On Thursday the council reconvened at noon. Governor Stevens, who always addressed the Indians as "*My Children*," began a lengthy speech again expounding the virtues of laws that would keep the Indians separated from the whites. This in order to protect the Indians from lawless whites. Stevens said at one portion of his speech, "*We have some people whose hearts are bad, who violate our laws...*" General Palmer then spoke addressing the Indians as "*My Friends*". He spoke of the Indian wars fought on the other side of the mountains and how it was in the best interest of all to enter into a treaty to decide upon tracts of land to be assigned to them by law. The council adjourned at 3:30 p.m., the Indians having said nothing again.

On Saturday the council began and General Palmer spoke again. He warned the Indians of the inevitability of the white immigration into the Indian lands. He said:

*It is but fifty years since the first white man came among you, those were Lewis and Clark who came down the big river - the Columbia. Next came Mr. Hunt and his party, then came the Hudson Bay Co. who were traders. Next came missionaries; these were followed by emigrants with waggons across the plains; and now we have a good many settlers in the country below you.*

*If there were no other whites coming into the country we might get along in peace; You may ask why do they come? Can you stop the waters of the Columbia river from flowing on its course? Can you prevent the wind from blowing? Can you prevent the rain from falling? Can you prevent the whites from coming? You are answered No! Like the grasshoppers on the plains; some years there will be more come than others, you cannot stop them. Our Cheif [sic] cannot stop them, we cannot stop them, they say this land was not made for you alone, the air that we breath, the waters that we drink, was made for all. The fish that come up the rivers, and the beasts that roam through the forests and the plains, and the fowls of the air, were alike made for white man and red man.*

*Who can say that this is mine and that is yours? The white man will come to enjoy these blessings with you; what shall we do to protect you and preserve peace? There are but a few whites here now, there will be many, let us live like wise men, act so as to prevent trouble."*

Palmer could not have described the nature of the two horned Bull that was pushing the nations to the ends of the earth more accurately. He ended his speech with the guarantee that if the Indians signed the treaty, its provisions would be carried out; it was again late and the Indians had said nothing for days. Governor Stevens asked the Indians if they wanted to open their hearts. Finally, after four days, three of which the Indians had listened in silence to Stevens and Palmer expound on the virtue of law, Five Crows, the Cayuse Chief, spoke. He said, *"We are tired."* Palmer, thinking that the Indians wanted to adjourn said, *"We are not expecting to say anymore today."* But Five Crows was not finished. He had heard enough of the white man's description of the benefits of law, and he had been called *"child," "brother,"* and *"friend"* too many times. He replied:

*"I have a little more to say. Do you speak true that you call me brother? We have but one Father in Heaven; it is He/pointing above/who has made all the earth; He made us out of earth on this earth; He made our Fathers; when he gave us this earth. He gave us gardens also.*

*He created our Fathers when he created Adam; we were divided into different countries; It was he the Almighty that passed the law: He is the same God that made the Ten Commandments; He said my children you must do no evil, you must not steal, you shall not take anything without payment; the Great Father says he will send the thief into fire-into hell."*

The commissioners, taken aback, said, *"Will you speak now or Monday?"* Pee-o-pee-mox-a-mox, Chief of the Walla Walla said, *"Why not speak tomorrow as well as today? We have listened to all you have to say, and we desire you should listen when any Indian speaks..."*

Five Crows had spoken truly. He had learned law well from Whitman and Spalding. For Five Crows law was from God, and if you broke it you went to hell. What need was there, faced with such penalty, to create other laws than those given by God? If the whites were truly the Indians' brother, what need was there of a guarantee to keep a new law?

Pee-o-pee-mox-a-mox finished his discourse with this simple observation;

*"...if there was a cheif [sic] among the Nez Perces or Cayuses, if they saw evil done they would put a stop to it and all would be quiet; such cheifs [sic] I hope Go. Stevens and Gen'l Palmer are. I should feel very much ashamed if the Americans should do anything wrong."*

It is clear that these men understood law and righteousness. Asa Smith had

complained that these people had no knowledge of law, penalty, or justice. If they did not have an understanding of these concepts a decade earlier they certainly did now. Not only did the Indians embrace the law, they clearly understood the hypocrisy that can exist under the law. This also Spalding had taught them, for the next day Eagle-from-the-light arose and described Spalding, saying he and Whitman had taught the Indians well and that what they taught them was from the Light. Yet, the Indians were able to separate the message from the man. Eagle-from-the-light went on to say:

*"A preacher came to us, Mr. Spalding. He talked to us to learn, and from that he turned to be a trader, as though he was two in one, one a preacher and the other a trader. He made a farm and raised grain and bought our stock, as though he was two in one; one a preacher the other a trader. And now from the East has spoken and I have heard it. And I do not wish another preacher to come and be both trader and preacher in one. A piece of ground for a preacher, big enough for his own use, is all that is necessary for him."*

One might argue with Eagle-from-the-light's theology concerning the condition in which a preacher should live, but it is clear that he saw in Spalding the materialistic nature of the white culture. This concept of life measured by goods was also foreign to the Indian's thought. Pee-o-pee-mox-a-mox had asked the day before:

*"From what you have said I think you intend to win our country, or how is it to be?...Suppose you show me goods shall I run up and take them? That is the way we are, we Indians as you know us. Goods and the Earth are not equal; hoofs are for on the Earth. I do not know where they have given lands for goods."*

The white negotiations centered not only on the argument that it was necessary to establish legal boundaries between whites and natives, but also the government would pay the Indians in goods for years to come in exchange for the land they intended to settle. During the middle of the negotiations, after listening to a discourse detailing the goods and services the government would provide for the Indians in exchange for their land, Chief Stichus of the Cayuse, who was known for his friendliness to the whites, vented his frustration with this concept saying:

*"If your mothers were here in this country who gave you birth, and suckled you, and while you were sucking, some person came and took away your mother and left you alone and sold your mother, how would you feel then? This is our mother this country as if we drew our living from her."*

After a long pause the council adjourned for the day.

The next day again the Indians talked of the same ideals: that God had given

them the land; that God's Law was a sufficient law between brothers whose hearts were right. Owhi, a Yakima, explained that God had given his people the land so how could he steal it and sell it? Owhi saw this as a sin that he feared God would send him to hell for. Camaspilo, a Cayuse, described the Law in his heart:

*"I have no books. The missionaries told me if I had no books I had a book in my heart which enabled me to pray to God. They told me in taking water to drink I should think of God this I have not learned of myself, it is what they have taught me and I keep it." How-lish-wam-pum added, "...We are the same. You have life and breath you white people; we red people have life and breath. I think the old laws are straight, that they should still exist."*

Throughout these entire proceedings Lawyer insisted that the new white man's laws should be adopted, that the treaty should be signed. The turning point came when Lawyer removed his lodge from the camp of the Indians and set it up in the white's camp. One version of the story says that he did this to prevent an uprising against the whites by the Cayuse. Lawyer discovering the conspiracy, moved his lodge in the night knowing the conspirators would not dare attack because of the greater number of Nez Perce with him. The other version claims that there was no truth to Lawyer's claim. The Yakimas and the Walla Wallas heard of it only after Lawyer had moved his lodge, and Kam-Mi-akin, Pee-o-pee-mox-a-mox, and Looking Glass accused Lawyer of speaking with a forked tongue.

Drury points out that there is evidence that the dissident tribes were considering an attack, for three Catholic Priests had warned Stevens and Palmer of possible trouble. On the other hand, the quotations recorded above came from the chiefs of these dissident tribes and most assuredly do not sound like the words spoken by deceitful men. Whatever the case, Lawyer's move settled the matter of the treaty and all the chiefs signed. This was the last unified act by the people of the Plateau. From this place they would become a divided people much like Israel of old. Five Crows prophesied well the day before the treaty was signed when he said, *"We have been as one people with the Nez Perces heretofore; this day we are divided."*

## CHAPTER 11

# NOT PEACE BUT A SWORD

" Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household. He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me. He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it." (Matthew 10:34-39)

"Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law? For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman. But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman was by promise. Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar. For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all. For it is written, Rejoice, thou barren that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not: for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath an husband. Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise. But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now." (Galatians 4: 21-29)

From the day the 1855 treaty was signed, Five Crows saw that his bands, the Cayuse, were divided by what had transpired from the Nez Perce. He could not agree with Lawyer's embrace of the white man's laws. But it was not only the Cayuse and the Nez Perce who were separated that day; it was also the beginning of the separation of the Nez Perce people themselves. Although the Nez Perce left the treaty with their lands intact, most viewed the events that had transpired with shame. They agreed that to sell one's mother for goods was contrary to the Great Spirit of their people. Fifty-six headmen signed the treaty, including Joseph, an act he, his son, and his people would later regret. But today, they were just relieved that tragedy had been averted, their lands were intact, and the seeds of division which were planted had not caused war. Nevertheless, the seeds of division had been planted. By the end of the decade the Nez Perce would be a clearly divided people. One faction would follow the new law of civilization, the other would hang on to the Indian traditions that remained.

Lawyer and his followers comprised about two-thirds of the Nez Perce people, some 4000. Relying on the law, they put their trust in the promises of the missionaries and the United States government. They not only embraced God's Law, they were placed under the bondage of the emaciated version of that law as interpreted by the missionaries. Elijah White had spelled out the white man's version of what the Indian must follow but the missionaries did not stop even there. For the Christian Nez Perce the Golden Rule became a strict law they were taught to follow, requiring charity and meekness to the extreme. The Sermon on the Mount became the code the Indians were to keep while they assumed the trappings and ways of civilized, God-fearing people. When Lawyer was asked what he wished for his people, he replied, "*Peace, plows, and schools,*" but the law that was instituted to bring peace would paradoxically bring division and strife. White's laws and the treaty negotiations taught that there were bad whites and bad Indians and the law was necessary for protection from them. The "*bad Indians*" were those who rejected the law, who refused to give up their wandering nomadic ways. They were unwilling to settle down in villages and farms like white men and enjoy the material benefits of civilization. To these, Christianity and treaties began to be synonymous with lies. By 1858, the U. S. government had not ratified Steven's treaty and none of the promises and annuities had been delivered. The bitter feelings between the two factions increased as the non-

Christian Indians mocked the "*head chief*" for trusting Stevens, saying that the whites would come to steal the land as they had done to other tribes like the Yakimas and Wallawallas. Lawyer wrote Stevens complaining about the delay, and by 1859 Steven's lobbying finally paid off. On March 8, the Senate finally ratified the treaty. The President signed the document on April 29, and in July, while the bands were gathered for their annual camp on the camas prairie, the government announced that the treaty was now law. With headmen from both factions present most of the people were pleased that government appeared to be living up to their promises. Joseph appeared pleased and said, "*The line [in the treaty] was made as I wanted it.*" He felt that his lands were secure; "*not for me but my children that will follow me. There is where I live and there is where I want to leave my body.*" Old Joseph hoped the treaty would protect his land, the Mother he loved, but it would not.

The white man broke the law of the treaty when gold was discovered on the vast reservation. A tide of white men began to overrun the reservation. The first miners claimed to have found gold to the east of the reservation boundaries, but truthfully the place was in the center of the Indian's lands, near the beginning of the Lolo Trail. To reach these sites the miners used what was now called the Big Nez Perces Trail from Walla Walla to Lapwai. A new Nez Perce Agency had been created at Lapwai near at the site of Spalding's old mission. Lawyer lived nearby where he often spoke to miners who rested there on their way to the gold fields. Although, not entirely happy with the intruders, there seemed little he could do. A newspaper man described Lawyer's appearance at the time in this manner:

*"He is about five feet eight inches in height, and awkwardly framed. His features are rather more oval than common among Indians, with a nose straight and not high. Eyes small and expressive and a smile always about the corner of his mouth, completes his picture. His whole bearing is extremely amiable. He wore elegantly beaded moccasins, blue cloth pants, calico shirt, alpaca sack and a preposterous, white plug hat...he carried a plain hickory cane, the usual three-tailed tobacco pouch, and an Indian pipe." Another traveler said, "It appears to me that he is not entirely satisfied that the whites should come into his country. After asking him three separate times he refused to answer...Saywer says he tells his people that they are rich now, but if they go to war with the whites, they will loose [sic] all their horses and cattle as the Cayuses have, and become reduced to poverty; that the whites are too strong for them, but yet most of the sub-chiefs are complaining to him, while many of the people are understood to be satisfied that miners shall come in..."*

Many of the Indians turned the miners back when they encountered them, only to have the men circle around when out of sight and continue on their journey to fulfill visions of wealth. Others of the tribe saw the mining camps as opportunities for Indian wealth. The miners supplied them with food, livestock and labor. Many took on the miner's ways, hanging around their camps, becoming their guides and messengers. The abundance of white man's goods overcame much of the



Indian resistance. They began to dress, talk, drink, and act like the miners. The prosperity of the gold rush did in just a few months what the missionaries, soldiers, and Indian agents could not do in twenty years. Even Koolkool Snehee (Red Owl) a chief who had little liking for Lawyer and who had opposed the entry of the miners at first, later had a change of heart. He told a correspondent :

*"My eyes are now open. The white men dig up and take the gold; what then? We get some of it. They buy our beef and pay for it with some of this gold. Our buffalo robes they exchange for gold or blankets. I am an Indian, I don't know how to farm; but I am going to learn...they will buy my corn and other things that I shall grow on my farm. No! I have so far been for war, but now my eyes are open. I say peace."*

The reservation was open to the arriving whites. Lewiston sprang up on reservation lands, and the whites were there to stay. The Indians needed protection from the "bad whites" and the whites from "heathen Indians" who refused the amenities of civilized life. A new treaty was needed which would open new land for settlement, while consolidating the wandering bands of Indians.

The biggest problem with negotiating a new treaty with the Nez Perce would be that very little that had been promised in the 1855 treaty was ever delivered. This would not only be an obstacle in dealing with the Indians, but also with getting more funds from the Senate. Senator J. W. Nesmith, who had been Superintendent of Indian Affairs for Oregon and Washington, developed a twisted rhetoric by which he convinced the Senate to appropriate the funds necessary to negotiate a new treaty with the Nez Perce. He cleverly worked on the Senate's sympathy toward the Indians, asserting that a new treaty was necessary for their protection. In his speech to the Senate he reported:

*"White men have...overspread and occupied the reservation in violation of the treaty, and to the great detriment of the Indians...the annuities which were promised to be paid in stock and substantial improvement, were, in great part, paid in utterly worthless articles; whistles and shoe strings, pod augers and gimlets, and old worthless, shelf worn goods, purchased by some swindling agent in New York at three times their value...' It was not the Nez Perces' fault what happened; 'it is their boast that the blood of the white man never stained their hands.' But now 'exterminating war' threatens. 'For the purpose of preserving peace, to say nothing of our treaty obligations to these Indians,' they should be removed from danger...'The Indians are anxious to dispose of the reservation and remove to some point where they will not be intruded upon...They can be taken to some valley which will be more remote than the present position which they occupy, from the line of travel across the continent."*

This mixture of sympathetic truth and outright lie worked. The Senate appropriated \$50,000 to "negotiate a treaty with the Nez Perces Indians of Oregon

*and Washington Territory, for the relinquishment of a portion of their present reservation, or its exchange for other lands."*

The government then began to make good on delinquent promises to the Indians. Lawyer received his salary, had his house built, fences erected, and fields plowed. The mill and the school house were built; the Indians were being primed for another round of treaty making. Even so, when the friendly headmen were called together for the announcement that the government desired another council in the spring, the Indian response was not favorable. They were startled, fearful, and distrusting. During that winter Old Looking Glass died. His son took his name, and although one day he would lead his people in war against the United States, being young, he was not as powerful and forceful a leader as his father yet. The leaders and spokesmen of the anti-treaty bands were Eagle From the Light, Big Thunder, White Bird, and Old Joseph. They argued with Lawyer, claiming his pro-white policy caused the whites to overrun their land. Lawyer charged that they were bad leaders who had no respect for God's laws. The division in the tribe grew as the spring of 1863 approached.

At the time of the treaty council there were almost 20,000 whites living on reservation lands. Lewiston had a population of over 2000 and Florence, in the heart of the gold fields, had a population of 9,200. The whites were on Indian lands to stay. On May 11, Superintendent Calvin Hale arrived at Lapwai only to find the tribe scattered and very few in attendance. Many of the Indians had stayed away because they feared the soldiers would drive them off their lands and rumors that the United States government was breaking up due to the Civil War. Hale met with Lawyer and instructed him to spread the word that the rumors were false and the agents were waiting to council.

Hale enlisted mountain man, Robert Newell, who had lived among the Indians since 1829, and the Nez Perces' old teacher Henry Spalding as translators for the council negotiations. Timothy wanted Spalding to return to the Nez Perces' country and had communicated his desire to Hale, telling him that Spalding's return would be a good influence on the tribe. However, Lawyer was uncomfortable with the two men as interpreters. Lawyer and the other headmen wanted Whitman's nephew Perrin Whitman as interpreter. They considered his command of the language superior to either of the other men. The Indians wanted no misunderstanding to occur in the negotiations since they had some very direct and hard things to say, and Newell and Spaulding might soften their words. They considered that many of the problems which occurred with the 1855 treaty were due to inaccurate translations. Lawyer did not want there to be any place for the non-treaty bands to find unnecessary fault in the proceedings. Perrin would be much more acceptable to them than Spalding who called the non-treaty bands "*heathens*." Not only that, he was particularly antagonistic toward Joseph, who was his first convert but had turned his back on the hypocrisy of the Protestant's Christianity.

By May 21, over 1000 Nez Perces had arrived at the site for the council, but Perrin and the *"heathen Indians"* had not arrived. Hale began the council anyway on May 25. The only chief in attendance not loyal to Lawyer was Big Thunder (James), and he, being sick, had to be ministered to by the attending physician. Hale presented the government's plan to reduce the size of the reservation down to 10% of its existing size offering to pay for the lands the Indians were to cede. The borders carefully included all of the villages of the leaders in attendance except Timothy of Alpowa and Jason of Asotin who were considered as white men and could remain on their farms if they desired. The confining boundaries would be stifling to the Indians. The *"heathen"* bands would have to be located among those on the proposed reservation making it more crowded, not to mention the problems this would create due to the conflict that existed between the factions. Stunned, the Indians refused the proposition. The 1855 treaty had not been broken by the Indians; it was the whites who intruded onto their lands. Hale insisted that if gold had not been found there would be no need for a new treaty, but, as it was, the Indians needed to be protected from the encroaching whites who could not be stopped. Lawyer acquiesced to relinquish the land the gold fields were situated on and the site of Lewiston along with the ferries but no more. He said, *"Dig the gold, and look at the country, but we cannot give you the country you ask for."* Another of the headmen, Utsinmalikin, affirmed Lawyer's refusal, demanding the 1855 treaty be upheld. He told Hale:

*"That boundary then made we considered permanent, sacred, and according to law...we thought it was to remain forever...We understood that the whole of the reservation was for us, to cultivate and occupy as we pleased. We cannot give up our country. You but trifle with us. We cannot give up our country, we cannot sell it to you."*

Hale had come to an impasse, and this with the Indians who were amiable to the whites. The council recessed for six days in which time Perrin arrived accompanied by the *"heathen"* bands of Joseph, Eagle From the Light, White Bird, and Koolkool Snehee. The council reconvened on June 3, and Hale once again reiterated that no one could have foreseen that gold would be discovered, but that it made it necessary for the 1855 treaty to be changed. The Indians, after all, did not use all of the vast land and they were scattered across it making it impossible for the government to protect them. After the two factions of the tribe discussed the matter they agreed with Lawyer's proposition that they would sell the portions where gold had been discovered and the area around Lewiston out to about ten miles but no more. This was the last time the tribe would ever agree together as one voice again. The proposition was not what Hale had come for, and he decided to take a different direction with the negotiations. He would talk to each leader separately. Later, he reported on the success of this new plan to the Commissioner of Indian affairs:

*"I...concluded to try private conferences with the Chiefs, where, by direct questions and answers, there would be better opportunity of ascertaining their*

*true feelings, meeting their objections, removing their doubts, and explaining to them such matters as they are liable to misunderstand. The difference was soon perceivable. They had thought our speeches to them might mean something different; they had been afraid that we would deceive them. Private conversations thus held, separately with the chiefs of each faction, resulted satisfactorily. On the part of the friendly ones, a agreement to accept the terms proposed by the Commissioners, with some slight alterations as to the boundary, and a few items in the way of further consideration, was at length had...On the part of the disaffected bands, their chiefs gave an unequivocal assent to the main features of the Treaty, so far as they were concerned, only that their pride would not let them come in with the Lawyer party, and sign the treaty. Quil-quil-se-ne-na, Eagle From the Light and Hin-ma-tute-ka-kike or Big Thunder, each came of their own accord, in private conference, and asked that it might be reported to their Great Father in Washington, that they did not refuse to sign the Treaty, out of any disrespect or want of friendly feelings toward him, to the Commissioners, or the people of the United States, but their refusal was solely, on account of the difficulties among themselves. Besides, they alleged that it was not necessary for them to sign it, as they were not called upon, by the conditions of the Treaty, to surrender anything to the Government, as their lands were almost entirely included in the proposed Reservation. They did not need provisions or presents, they were not poor, they were rich. They wished the Treaty to be made, and expressed their belief, that it would be for their best interests as a people. After thus opening their hearts, in which they seemed to be sincere, manifesting nothing of the haughtiness which marked their behavior on their first arrival at the Council Ground, they took leave of us in the kindest manner.*

What Hale went through to gain the Nez Perce lands was not as easy as this report makes it sound. The friendly chiefs did not surrender to his demands at first. Not only were "*a few items in the way of further consideration*" necessary, but Hale had to bring in more soldiers because the friendly bands were afraid of the anti-treaty chiefs who accused them of cowardice. Hale told the anti-treaty chiefs that they would still be free to roam, hunt, fish, and gather cammas and berries outside the the boundaries of the treaty on lands not occupied by whites. The minutes of the meeting record that their answer was not possitive: "*Two or three of the disaffected chiefs said a few words but in such a haughty, and incoherent manner as to be unable to understand the half of what was said.*" The ranking officer of the calvary, Captain George Currey, who Hale called in as a show of strength to appease the friendly Indian's fears, listened in on the discussion between the two factions of the tribe. Describing what happened shortly after his arrival, he wrote:

*"The debate ran with dignified firmness and warmth until near morning, when the Big Thunder party made a formal announcement of their determination to take no further part in the treaty, and then in a warm, and in an emotional manner, declared the Nez Perce Nation dissolved; whereupon the Big Thunder men shook hands with the Lawyer men, telling them with a*

*kind but firm demeanor that they would be friends but a distinct people. It did not appear from the tone of their short, sententious speeches, that either party was meditating a present outbreak. I withdrew my detachment, having accomplished nothing but witnessing the extinguishment of the last council fires of the most powerful Indian nation on the sunset side of the Rocky Mountains."*

What Currey had witnessed was not only the formal end of the Nez Perce as a united people, it was the formal end of the anti-treaty faction's respect for the white man's law. Elijah White's law and political system which had finally consummated Lawyer as head chief of the Nez Perce was dead to them. From this day they would live outside the white man's law, or if you will, they would be outlaws. Joseph and White Bird left the proceedings *"in the kindest manner"* because they were confident that Lawyer no longer spoke for them. The other non-treaty chiefs stayed and listened to Hale's co-negotiator, agent Charles Hutchins, harangue them the next day. The white men were going to put these outlaws in their place:

*"We wish now to talk to Quil-quil-se-ne-na, Eagle Form the Light, and Big Thunder, and what we say is for them, and not for the other Nez Perces, but we want all to hear what we say to you. We heard your talk yesterday and have considered it. What you said convinces us, that you are not good men to the law, and that you are bad counselors to your young men...You shall not poison the hearts of the other Nez Perces. The Government will protect them against your bad designs, and...will punish you terribly...You talked a little yesterday, but you did not say much when you spoke...You answer us with crooked words...You have told the Nez Perces, that when they take the blankets and clothing given them by the President, that they are putting their lands on their backs and when they eat the Beef and the Flour, that they are eating up their country. When you say that you lie...Lawyer and his Chiefs who wish the welfare of their people, begin to see that it will be wise and good to accept our propositions, and if you do not choose to make arrangement with them, we will make it without you...When the new arrangement is made, the good Nez Perces will be wise, rich and happy. You will be poor and miserable--and you will make your children poor and miserable. They will see that you have caused it, and when you are dead, they will curse you, because you did not secure these things, to make them happy, as the wise chiefs did for their children...if you persist in your disloyalty, we shall not regard you as Nez Perces, for the white men think that to be a Nez Perce, means that you are good men."*

Big Thunder's astonished answer to this discourse was, *"Is that the way we are?"* Clearly Hale would do as he pleased with the support of the friendly chiefs. Big Thunder left the proceedings saying, *"I am very sick, and spitting blood, excuse me."* He did not sign the document; not one of the *"heathen"* chiefs who had come to the council signed the treaty. All the signatures Hale obtained were from

leaders whose lands would not be affected by the new treaty save Timothy and Jason who could remain on their farms as private residents in the same manner as white men.

Old Joseph's lands were forfeited without his consent or his knowledge. Traveling back to his home he was confident that he was separate from those he had once embraced as brothers, both Indian and white. Their law had no more hold upon him; he viewed himself as free, but Lawyer's faction and the white man saw him as an outlaw. Joseph was the first Nez Perce to be baptized a Christian. He now rejected the law of the white man and the white man's religion he had once embraced so tenderly. The hypocrisy of the white man's religion contradicted the Spirit of the Book he had experienced in his youth. Lawyer and his bands, who prophetically correspond to Jerusalem and the law would, like Judah of old, would retain their land for a time. Old Joseph's son, who was christened Ephraim by Spalding, but became known as Thunder Traveling to Loftier Mountain Heights after receiving his "*wé-ya-kin*", would lead the non-treaty, heathen people, a people known as "*not God's people*," into their exile from the land.

The world of the Prophet Dance was falling to pieces just as the Word of the Spokane Prophet's dream had foretold. It had done so in accordance with the pattern of prophecy written in the Book that would teach the people of the Plateau everything. The Noon Nee-mee-poo were divided into two bands much like ancient Israel. Lawyer's band became known as the "*Treaty Indians*" or the "*Christian Indians*." The bands led by the chiefs who rejected the white's law became known as the "*Non-Treaty Indians*" or "*Heathen Indians*."

To carry the analogy to its conclusion then, reveals the great irony of the prophecies in the story of the Nez Perce. For if the "*Heathen Indians*" correspond to Ephraim, to Hosea's divorced wife who is taken from their land and scattered, only to be found later as Gentiles and be called the "*sons of God*," then they also correspond to those who will find faith by the Spirit, who Paul describes as the true church. Are the "*Heathen Indians*" then chosen by the Spirit as heirs to the promise of Christ?

On the other hand, if the "*Christian Indians*" are analogous to Judah, those who are in bondage to the Law, then one might conclude that their religion is false and they are cut off by the law and without promise. But this would be no more true than to assume that Israel of today is cut off from the promise of the Scriptures, or that any Christian who has a religion of law and tradition, rather than a spiritual relationship through epiphany, is cut off from the promise of God. The Scripture's answer to these musings would likely be, *Who are you, oh man, to stand in the place of ultimate judgment which belongs only to God*. Yet, has not this been the great sin of religion for centuries, standing in their own righteousness condemning the outsider as savage and heathen? This is the essence of Burke's symbolic scapegoat; it is the tragedy of the tigers of state and religion. The nature of church and state is law and judgement, they demand

scapegoats, and with the scapegoat comes division. Someone is outside the camp.

Whoever the chosen are, both the Indian prophets and the ancient Hebrew prophets promise that the division would one day come to an end; that the two would be made one. Concerning the two kingdoms of Israel, Ezekiel says:

*"The word of the LORD came again unto me, saying, Moreover, thou son of man, take thee one stick, and write upon it, For Judah, and for the children of Israel his companions: then take another stick, and write upon it, For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim, and for all the house of Israel his companions: And join them one to another into one stick; and they shall become one in thine hand. And when the children of thy people shall speak unto thee, saying, Wilt thou not shew us what thou meanest by these? Say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I will take the stick of Joseph, which is in the hand of Ephraim, and the tribes of Israel his fellows, and will put them with him, even with the stick of Judah, and make them one stick, and they shall be one in mine hand. And the sticks whereon thou writest shall be in thine hand before their eyes. And say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land: And I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king to them all: and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all:"*

Ezekiel goes on to describe the resurrected, harmonious kingdom of peace that will come in the last days. It would appear from the view of the prophets, God is able to bring both the law and the spirit together into one. In like manner the prophets of the "tulí-m" cult foretell the coming of the Great Spirit with the new earth:

*"When I return, all spirits of the dead will accompany me, and after that there will be no spirit land. All the people will live together. Then will the Earth-Woman revert to her natural shape, and live as a mother among her children. Then things will be made right, and there will be much happiness."*

As Christopher Miller has so aptly demonstrated in his book, the two religion's millennialist structures parallel most strikingly. Miller points out that the Prophet Dance dreamer's vision has not come to pass, but then, neither has Ezekiel's vision of the sticks. The native prophet's would also come to visions where they would be given prophetic sticks. These dancing prophets would arise out of the root of Smohalla, the first to revive the Prophet Dance, and their prophecies would also parallel the Book the Nez Perce once longed for. Smohalla, his disciples, and other native prophets of many tribes would come to visions by very similar circumstances as the "tulí-m" cult had received their prophecies. If it is true that prophecies have a way of working themselves out, if symbols are

consubstantial with reality as Burke claims, if rhetorical structures frame the world we live in, should the so called "*heathen Indians*" have any less faith and hope than the Jew, the Christian, or anyone else to whom the Word of the Great Spirit chooses to reveal Himself.

## CHAPTER 12

# WILD ONES

In my experience, a steep, switch back climb usually brought me to the vista of some mountain. Today, climbing out of Kamiah, Idaho on the curving, sometimes tar, sometimes gravel road called highway 64, the climb didn't bring me to a scenic mountain view. Instead my family and I were deposited onto a high plain. We were headed for "Talmaks," the Presbyterian Camp Meeting of the Nez Perce Indians just outside of Craigmont, Idaho. The road we traveled crossed the very center of the Nez Perce Reservation. There were still a few places where the original camas prairie still peeked through the manicured fields, today owned almost entirely by white men. Where now wheat stretched toward the blazing summer sun, camas lilies had once littered this high expanse. Camas bulbs were a major food source of the Plateau Indians. They gathered to dig the roots in late spring and early summer and to celebrate firstfruits on these prairies. As we passed through the village of Nez Perce, I was reminded of a midwest farming community. There seemed to be nothing that spoke of the culture of the name the town carried.

Much to the delight of my wife and children, a summer carnival and celebration was in full swing as we entered the community of Craigmont. Crafts, rides, and people arrayed this community in the center of a rich farm land. After lunch at the local cafe, my family scattered to browse; I chose a tall, sun bronzed farmer sitting alone at a table to inquire directions to the Talmaks campsite.

"They been coming for that meeting for years," he said, "bring tents and stuff; stay for weeks. After the religious ones get done and leave, the '**wild ones**' will come. They got a place where they camp across from Talmaks. You take the fork the other way. Once, when I was a kid, we camped on a bluff above 'em. Heard 'em out there in the night, dancing and whoopin. It raised the hair on the back o' my neck I tell ya."

When we got out to Talmaks, the first person I approached was Rev. Harry Sugden. I think he might have been the only white man there except me; my wife and kids are Hispanic. He was the only one I saw. I asked him about the Nez Perce Presbyterians. He said they believed that, if you were a Christian, you ought to act like one. Cut your hair, no beads and things, wear nice clothes, and "by golly you ought to change your underwear regular too." There was an amused gleam in his eye as he sent me down the path to the Camp President, Lynus Walker's little cabin. As I walked through the shade of the tall pines, I pulled my blonde hair back into a pony tail and reached up to finger the Hudson Bay trade beads that are always around my neck.

## Coyote is Tragically Bound



January 1, 1863, was the date the Emancipation Proclamation officially went into effect. Five days earlier, the United States government had ended 1862 by executing thirty-eight Sioux warriors in Mankato, Minnesota by Lincoln's order. A reporter from the **Saint Paul Daily Press** described the scene:

*"The prisoners mounted the gallows. The ropes were soon arranged around their necks. The white caps, which had been placed on their heads, were now drawn down over their faces, shutting out forever the light of day from their eyes. Then ensued a scene that can hardly be described, and which can never be forgotten. All joined in shouting and singing. The tone seemed somewhat discordant, and yet there was a harmony to it. The most touching scene was their attempts to grasp each other's hands. Fettered as they were, many succeeded. Three and four in a row were hand in hand and all hands swaying up and down with the rise and fall of their voices. Captain Bert hastily scanned all the arrangements and motioned to Major Brown the signal officer, and with a crash, down came the rope. It is unnecessary to speak of the awful sight of thirty-eight human beings suspended in the air. Imagination will readily supply what we refrain from describing.*

It is the largest mass execution in the history of the United States. The bodies were buried in a common grave, but before the night was out, Dr. William W. Mayo, founder of the famous Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota, dug the bodies up to be used as cadavers in teaching anatomy. Even in death, the Indian was paying the price of "progress."

1863 would be a year of transition for all Americans: white, black, and red. Abraham Lincoln closed the year when he delivered the Gettysburg address, 272 words which married the ideals of Christianity to the ideas of democratic liberalism in a manner not conceived of or articulated before. In 1863 the forces of this *"new nation, conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal"* were engaged in a civil war; resolved to ensure *"that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom -- and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth."* This had been the year when the Nez Perces lost their second treaty battle with the government dedicated to liberty, and from this year forward, the Nez Perce would progressively lose their liberty.

The question of what was to be done about the Indian plagued the United States government. In the East, among the educated, the stereotype of the Indian as noble savages was most popular. After visiting the Ogalala Sioux, a Harvard student wrote with excitement:

*"They are thorough savages. Their religion, superstitions, and prejudices are the same handed down to them from immemorial time. They fought with the same weapons their fathers fought with, and wore the same garments of skins. They are living representatives of the 'stone age.'"* sadly, " ...Great changes are at

*hand in the region...The buffalo will dwindle away, and the large wandering communities who depend on them for support must be broken and scattered. The Indian will soon be abased by whiskey and overawed by military posts."*

Those who lived west of the Mississippi did not hold the mythical delight which the East had for the natives. *"In 1865 Senator James R. Doolittle, chairman of the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs, asked a Denver gathering what he thought was a rhetorical question: Should we teach the Indians to farm their reservations, that they may support themselves, or should we simply exterminate them? 'There suddenly arose,' a shaken Doolittle remembered, 'such a shout as is never to be heard unless upon some battlefield--a shout almost loud enough to raise the roof of the Opera House--Exterminate them! Exterminate them!'"* In the view of the utilitarian politician of the day, the best that could be done was get the Indians separated from the settlers and onto reservations as quickly as possible.

By the 1870's, most of the Indians of the Northwest had been displaced and collected on reservations. The bands who remained at large clung to what remained of their freedom but were under tremendous pressure to relocate on the reservations. The Christianized version of the Prophet Dance had receded somewhat by the time of the treaties of the 1850's. The heathen, nomadic, anti-treaty Indians were beginning to look for their crumbling world to be renewed. Traditions needed to be reformulated. The hopes they had for the Book were gone. Another prophet arose to proclaim a renaissance in a manner that bears a paradoxical, ironic parallel to the Old Testament book of Judges.

The stories in Judges take place in a scene where Israel has successfully invaded the land of Canaan. They had been instructed by God to kill and drive out the inhabitants of the land. This they had done to a degree but not entirely. Some of the indigenous tribes remained to become a thorn in the flesh of God's chosen conquerors. Many Euro-Americans identified with this Old Testament frame of reference in their dealings with the Native American bands. The Europeans, whose Christianity was locked into the legalistic-tragic frame of the law, and who saw themselves as God's chosen people, thought they were justified in exterminating the savage heathens as they labored to possess the promised land of the New World. Although this is a strong statement, for the Christian of the day would say that it was not true, by virtue of their identification with Israel entering the promised land, they identified with the whole substance of the symbol. This automatically assigned the role of the Canaanite to the Indian. If they did not eradicate them, the Indians would become a thorn in their flesh. In the Old Testament, Israel had possessed the land, but now the thorn of the Midianites were returning to make war on them, to take their produce and their land. Ironically, as one reads the accounts in Judges, you can just as easily turn the tables as you apply the Biblical story analogies to Indian/white contact.

*"For they [Midianites] and their livestock would come up, and they would even bring their tents, as thick as locusts; neither they nor their camels could be*

*counted; so they wasted the land as they came in. Thus Israel was greatly impoverished because of Midian; and the Israelites cried out to the LORD for help. When the Israelites cried to the LORD on account of the Midianites, the LORD sent a prophet to the Israelites; and he said to them, "Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: ..."*

One can easily substitute white culture for the Midianites here, and assign the role of Israel to the Indian. The *"white Midianites"* came as thick as locusts, neither they nor their cattle could be counted; so they wasted *"mother earth"* as they came in. Thus, the Indian was greatly impoverished because of the whites, and the Indian cried to the Lord on account of the whites. The Lord sent a prophet to the Indians; the prophet the Lord sent to Israel was Gideon, whose cry was, *"The sword of the Lord and Gideon."* Israel, living deep in the season of the tragic frame under the Law of Moses, had forsaken that law, and was looking for revival to restore it. Their prophet brought the message of the sword. The Indians in 1863, on the other hand, were looking for the revival of their comic frame; the traditions they had forsaken were Coyote's ways. Their prophet's message was not the tragic message of the sword but a message in the comic frame. The original message of the Indian revivalist prophets was a message of peace. It was not until the message moved through the ranks of disciples that it took on the tragic aspects of war. The prophet that came with the message was truly a comic figure, but to the white Christians, who identified with Israel in the tragic frame, Smohalla's *"wild bunch raised the hair on the back of their necks."*

Click Relander describes the prophet Smohalla and his importance to history in a poetic but reasonably accurate manner:

*"Smowhalla was born a hunchback, having the mind of a genius, the tenderness of an artist, and an inborn sense of leadership. These talents, his wisdom and his religion, lifted the Dreamer from a humble condition in life and carried him along the devious paths of intrigue to become the greatest power among the Northwestern Indians for a quarter of a century. He and his priests thumped out the song of their new faith on the pumpum hand drums in camps up and down the Columbia, and the echoes spread...History has recorded the glory of armed conflict during the Indian wars that overspread the land and for a time retarded settlement; but history touched only lightly on the real issue, which was the Indian determination to retain the principle heritage, the Indian religion.*

Smohalla was a Wanapum, a small tribe with close ties to the Yakimas and Palouses. He led a band of some 200 and camped at Priest Rapids along the Columbia river. Mooney, in his classic work on the Ghost dance, claims that Smohalla began preaching his doctrine around 1850, but gained attention a couple of years after the Yakima war of 1855-56. Sometime around 1860 he got into a quarrel and fight with Chief Moses, a powerful leader further up the river. Moses believed Smohalla was *"making medicine"* against his life and nearly killed him in

the fight. The story goes that Smohalla crawled into the river, and floated down stream until he was rescued by some white men. Embarrassed and afraid to return to his own country, he undertook a pilgrimage that took him south through Oregon, California, and into Mexico, then north again through Arizona, Utah, Nevada and back to the Plateau. Upon his return, he claimed to have been in the spirit world among the dead, and he had returned with a message from the Great Spirit for the people.

The Indian version of how Smohalla obtained his spirit power is much different. When Smohalla's little girl died, the story goes that he died too, crying himself into the sleep of death:

*"This is the way it happened when I died; and the sun and moon stand in the sky to witness my story. I found myself in hills that were just like the hills along the Chiawana at P'na. I walked and walked, but was unable to move forward. Looking up, I saw two men on horseback. They were Evil Ones. They were sick men whose horses were weak from starvation. I tried to walk toward them and they tried to come to me, but we couldn't meet. The Evil Ones warned me that I was in the wrong place and that I should not be among the dead.*

*I heard 'qualal qualal' (bell). It rang just once, saying to me, 'come.'*

*Suddenly, like when the clouds roll back, I found myself near a long house. Drums were beating and people were singing a strange song. Everything opened up for me like when the wind blows the clouds aside. Suddenly, I was in the long house with the people. There were three rows of them on each side of the floor...A voice asked me, 'Why have you died? Why are you crying? See your daughter over there? She is safe. See, she is living with us.'*

*A man who was holding a gleaming stick--a stick that glittered like Anh shining on water--pointed toward the women and I saw my daughter. She was happy, singing and dancing, and it made my heart glad. She couldn't see me although she looked right at me.*

*The voice told me, 'You are not ready to come here. You have come before your time and while you have work to do. Go back and teach the Wanapums and others to be good, do good, and live like Indians. Give them this song and show them this dance. Now, go back. There is only one way of life.'*

*I turned and stepped outside the house. Quickly I was at Weyounwe. I was cold and when I woke up and saw some of you around me, I sat up and lived again, feeling that a great weight had been lifted from my heart."*

Whatever the case, Smohalla claimed to have died and returned from the spirit world with an important message. The Great Spirit Chief was angry because the people had forsaken traditional ways. This was the cause of their "miserable

*condition.*" Return to the religion of the fathers, take no part in white man's ways and dance the "*Washat*," (the dance and songs Smohalla had received while in the spirit land) and the earth would be remade.

During the decades from 1860 to the 1880's Smohalla's preaching spread and grew having a tremendous effect on the tribes of the Northwest. It is believed that his teaching had a marked effect on the non-treaty Nez Perce and was an important influence in the Nez Perce War of 1877. Even treaty Indians began to believe and leave the reservation to wander with the non-treaty bands. Smohalla's teaching threatened the spread of white settlement and civilization. In 1872 the believers along the Columbia numbered around 2000 and many disciples were spreading the gospel from reservation to reservation. Smohalla officially appears in a report by A. B. Meacham, Oregon Superintendent of Indian Affairs in 1870. He wrote:

*"...One serious drawback [to the adoption of the white man's road] is the existence among the Indians of Oregon of a peculiar religion called Smokeller or Dreamers, the chief doctrine of which is that the red man is again to rule the country, and this sometimes leads to rebellion against lawful authority...they are taught that a new god is coming to their rescue; that all the Indians who have died heretofore, and who shall die hereafter, are to be resurrected; that as they will then be very numerous and powerful, they will be able to conquer the whites, recover their lands, and live as free an unrestrained as their fathers lived in olden times. Their model of a man is an Indian. They aspire to be Indians and nothing else...It is thought by those who know them best that they can not be made to go upon their reservations without at least being intimidated by the presence of a military force.*

This belief of the whites, that this religion was hostile to them and the cause of Indian unrest, would become a primary misunderstanding of the Nez Perce War of 1877.

Old Joseph died in 1871. Young Joseph, who had taken over leadership of the band due to his father's age and blindness, recounted the story of his father's death:

*"I saw he was dying. I took his hand in mine. He said, 'My son, my body is returning to my mother the earth, and my spirit is going very soon to see the Great Spirit Chief...A few more years and the white men will be all around you. They have their eyes on this land. My son, never forget my dying words. This country holds your father's body -- never sell the bones of your father and mother.' I pressed my father's hand and told him I would protect his grave with my life. My father smiled and passed away to the spirit land."*

Old Joseph's Dreamer doctrine concerning death was much the same as the Christian doctrine of death which he had embraced in his youth. Young Joseph's beliefs concerning how men ought to be governed also paralleled to the ideals of

American government just as the Dreamer's doctrine paralleled many of the tenants of Christianity. Chief Joseph said:

*"We are all sprung from one woman, although we are unlike in many things. You are as you were made, and, as you were made, you can remain. We are just as we were made by the Great Spirit, and you cannot change us; then, why should children of one mother quarrel? Why should one try to cheat another? I do not believe that the Great Spirit Chief gave one kind of men the right to tell another kind of men what they must do."*

The "savage" world of the Indian Dreamers, which was so different from the "progressive", "civilized" world of the enlightened Euro-American, was not so very different rhetorically, yet neither could much understand the other.

For the next few years, Chief Joseph tried as much as was possible, to "Follow peace with all men," an admonition of the writer of the book of Hebrews. He was unsuccessful. The United States government had its own plan to live at peace with the Indian. In 1869, President Ulysses S. Grant enacted a new policy to deal with the "Indian problem." In his first inaugural address he said:

*The proper treatment of the original occupants of this land--the Indians--is one deserving of careful study. I will favor any course toward them which tends to their civilization and ultimate citizenship.*

Grant's course was to use the church. On April 10, Grant's "Peace Policy" was enacted by congress. Its major provisions were:

*"1. The Indians were to be placed on reservations as quickly as possible so that the dictates of humanity and Christian civilization could meet. On the reservations, they were to be taught as fast as possible the arts of agriculture and civilization through the aid of the Christian organizations of the country actively engaged in the work, acting in harmony with the federal government. The Indian's intellectual and moral character was to be developed with kindness and humanity through Christian principles.*

*2. It would be the policy of the President to punish with severity any tribe which refused to live on the reservation and determined to continue their nomadic life.*

*3. All supplies of every kind needed by the Indians on the reservations should be purchased at fair and reasonable prices in such a way that supplies would arrive when and where needed and without having the government funds squandered in their purchase. No longer should profiteers be allowed to make money on Indian supplies.*

*4. It was the purpose of the government, with the advice of religious organizations, to procure competent, upright and moral religious agents to*

*care for the Indians on the reservations and to distribute the goods and provisions purchased for them by the government. The church groups were to aid in the intellectual, moral and religious culture and thus assist in the humanity and benevolence which the peace policy meant.*

*5. It was the policy of this peace enactment to establish schools, churches and Sabbath schools through the instrument of the church organizations so that the Indian may be taught a better way of life and be trained to be citizens of this great nation."*

The problem for Joseph and his people with this policy was they wanted nothing more to do with the Christianity of moral, religious white churchmen and had chosen to espouse the Dreamer religion of the Prophet Dance. In June of 1873, President Grant agreed to set aside part of the Wallowa country as a reservation for Joseph's band, and when Young Joseph was asked if he wanted schools and churches, he replied that he did not. Churches would cause his people to "*quarrel about God,*" and schools, he thought, would teach his people to want churches. Joseph did not have to concern himself with schools and churches anyway; Grant's promised reservation never materialized. Two years later the entire Wallowa was put into public domain, opened to white settlement, and a commission was established who were given orders to remove the non-treaty Indians to the Nez Perce Reservation as soon as possible. The commission consisted of three easterners, David H. Jerome of Michigan, A. C. Barstow of Rhode Island, and William Stickney from Washington D. C., along with General Oliver Otis Howard and his aid Major C. E. S. Wood who commanded the Military Department of the Columbia.

Howard had met Joseph on a visit to the Umatilla agency in 1875, shortly after he had taken over command of the Columbia. Of their first meeting the General wrote;

*"Joseph put his large black eyes on my face, and maintained a fixed look for some time. It did not appear to me as an audacious stare; but I thought he was trying to open the windows of his heart to me, and at the same time endeavoring to read my disposition and character. An Indian is usually a shrewd physiognomist. I think Joseph and I became then quite good friends."*

One wonders what Joseph saw that day in Howard's eyes. Known as the "*Christian General,*" he was deeply religious and moralistic. As most officers of his day, he was no stranger to battle, having participated in the bloodiest days of the Civil War. He had lost his right arm in the battle of Fair Oaks, and after returning to service he fought at Antietam, Fredricksburg, Chancellorsville, and Gettysburg. His compassion led him to the position of Commissioner of the Bureau of Freedmen and Refugees after the war, and he was also an experienced Indian fighter having campaigned against Cochise and the Apaches. Yet, for all his qualifications and experience, he had just looked into the eyes of the man who

would soon put them to the sorest test of his life. Friend or not, Chief Joseph would become his chief antagonist. It is prophetically fitting, that the "*Christian General*" would draw his sword against the "*heathen Indian*," who at birth was named Ephraim by Spalding but was now known as the leader of the "*not God's people*" Dreamers, who having rejected Christianity, were about to be driven from the land flowing with their mother's milk.

The commission met with the Nez Perce in November 1876, and failed to obtain Joseph's agreement to relocate. They concluded that the problem rested with the Dreamer "*fanatics*," and Joseph was, in the eyes of the commission, clearly under their influence. General Howard wrote:

*"At one time during their meetings Joseph was almost persuaded to yield, and Ollicut [Joseph's brother] appeared to catch the spirit of peace; but the old Dreamers, the **too-ats**, talked to them earnestly, and prevailed against the commission."*

The commissioner's report stated that Joseph was "*usually calm and sedate, when animated, marked and magnetic.*" They reported his arguments as such:

*"...the Creative Power, when he made the earth, made no marks, no lines of division or separation on it...The earth was his mother. He was made of the earth and grew up on its bosom. The earth, as his mother and nurse, was sacred to his affections, too sacred to be valued by or sold for silver and gold. He could not consent to sever his affections from the land that bore him. He asked nothing of the President. He was able to take care of himself." To this emotional and moving (pathos) argument he added this logical analogy concerning the fact that his Father refused to sign the 1863 Treaty: "Suppose a white man should come to me and say, 'Joseph, I like your horses, and I want to buy them.' I say to him, 'No, my horses suit me, I will not sell them.' The he goes to my neighbor, and says to him: 'Joseph has some good horses. I want to buy them, but he refuses to sell.' My neighbor answers, 'Pay me the money, and I will sell you Joseph's horses.' The white man returns to me and says, 'Joseph, I have bought your horses, and you must leave me have them.' If we sold our lands to the Government, this is the way they were bought."*

The commission was correct in asserting that Joseph clearly believed as a Dreamer, but his parable has all the power of those written in Howard's Bible. Even though he had spoken eloquently, they saw Joseph conferring with his "*sorcerers*;" he was under the spell of Dreamer fanatics, "*who obviously guided him according to the plans of Smohalla.*" The commission recommended that the Indians be given an ultimatum that should they refuse to go on the reservation they would be immediately removed by force to the Indian Territory in Oklahoma. In January 1877, agent John B. Monteith was ordered to carry out the removal and he asked General Howard to send troops to the Wallowa. Joseph still refused to leave and asked for another council at Lapwai. Howard left to meet with



Joseph at Walla Walla to discuss the council.

Believing that the Indian's refusal was tied directly to the Dreamer religion, and suspecting that there was a connection between the Palouse Dreamers and the Nez Perce, Howard stopped to meet a delegation of Dreamers on April 18, at the steamboat landing in Wallula on the Columbia. They were led by the Wallawalla chief, Homily, who sometimes lived on the Umatilla Reservation because of his desire for white man's goods and other times dwelt in his old homeland of Wallula which was just south of Smohalla's lands. There he practiced "*Washani*" meetings. Homily appealed to Howard to meet with Smohalla, but Howard refused. Unaware of the seriousness of the problem he was soon to face with the Nez Perce Dreamers, Howard simply demanded that they all remove themselves to the Umatilla Reservation where they had been assigned. He then continued on to see Joseph who would be at Fort Walla Walla.

Chief Joseph was sick at the time and his brother Ollicut and several other prominent chiefs met with Howard. The General recorded that:

*"Ollicut put in an appearance about six P. M. (April 19.) Young chief and several other prominent Indians, among them the medicine-man, an old Indian...The council talk amounts to little. The Indians are very polite...The wishes of the government are explained to them, but they are only delegates and can make no 'binding promises,' but beg for another interview with me for the whole band, and for the Salmon River non-treaty Indians, in fact for the various companies of malcontents. I grant the petition, and agree to meet Joseph and the others at Lapwai in twelve days."*

After the meeting Howard returned to Wallula arriving on April 23, where he met with Smohalla.

He wrote of his purpose: "*The work of the day was the beginning of a series of measures that kept the 'Columbia River renegades' from joining the non-treaty Nez Perces of Joseph.*" Smohalla sent a messenger requesting General Howard to come to his camp which was just across the river. Howard, suspecting treachery, insisted that the meeting be held on his side of the river and sent a message to the fact claiming that he really didn't care if he saw Smohalla or not. Smohalla decided to cross the river. Howard described their arrival:

*"A little after noon Smohollie, having given up his first designs, crossed the river just above the village, and mustered all his people, including women and children. They were bedecked with much paint and feathers, and with all the pomp and circumstance possible came into town..."* The General's impression of the band was, "*Indian Smohollie, who has grouped around him a band of renegades, who is the high priest of Dreamer-drummers...is a large-headed, hump shouldered, odd little wizard of an Indian, and exhibits a strange mixture of timidity and daring, of superstition and intelligence...His followers*

*have been embraced in a score of tribes, and his deleterious influence has been sadly productive of suffering."*

The Indians declared their intent to follow their traditions and remain free of the reservation. Howard described their statements as no different than the non-treaty Nez Perce. They wanted peace with the whites but also to roam as they pleased. Howard said, *"renegades' describes them well."* Nonetheless, he promised to write to the President on their behalf, but the Indian agents explained clearly that the Indians must obey the law and go onto the reservations.

Howard's meeting with Smohalla was short and uneventful. What Smohalla thought of Howard, we have no record. The *"Christian General"* saw the Indian Dreamer-prophet as a comical looking figure, his clothes *"course and gray," "ragged and soiled,"* an *"odd little hump-shouldered wizard."* Yet, he also realized, to some extent, the influence this *"fanatic"* held over the *"renegade"* bands of the Columbia. The Wallawalla chief Homily, describing how he felt about Smohalla, once told Howard:

*"Yes, Smohally's my friend, my priest. He dreams great dreams, and he tells all the Columbia Indians, miles and miles up and down the great river, about the Great Spirit; and often what's coming. He cures sick folk by good medicine and drumming. He's a great Indian--Homili's friend."*

The Dreamer Prophet's message was well embedded in the non-treaty bands. Their relationship to the land was paramount to their conviction. The earth as mother was taken so literally by many of the disciples, that it was believed to be improper to interfere with her natural course at all. There should be no parceling and dividing of her, to sell her was unthinkable, and to plow her was to rip open her breast. Howard took a dim view of the Dreamer's beliefs. After the Nez Perce War, he described them in an article, *"The True story of the Wallowa Campaign,"* which he wrote in rebuttal to an article written by Chief Joseph which had been published the year before. Howard said:

*"The Dreamers, among other pernicious doctrines, teach that the earth being created by God complete, should not be disturbed by man; and any cultivation of the soil or other improvements to interfere with its natural productions; any voluntary submission to the Control of the Government, any improvement in the way of schools, churches, etc., are crimes from which they shrink. This fanaticism is kept alive by the superstition of these Dreamers, who industriously teach that if they continue steadfast in their present belief a leader will be raised up (in the East) who will restore all the dead Indians to life, who will unite with them in expelling the whites from their country, when they will again enter upon and repossess the lands of their ancestors."*

In a few days, General Howard would meet with the non-treaty Indians at Lapwai. His hostility toward the dreamer priests and their *"pernicious doctrines"* set face to

face with the native zeal toward their mother, the earth, would doom the negotiations from the start. But the pernicious doctrines of the native Dreamers were not really so far from the central doctrines of the Book, Howard endeavored to live his life by.

Leslie Spier held that, *"Doctrinally the Smohalla cult was good Prophet Dance."* The belief that the earth was to be destroyed by a terrible convulsion after which the Creator would resurrect the dead and restore the earth to a state of peace and rightness is, as already demonstrated, completely compatible with the Bible. Beyond that, the Dreamers held that earthquakes and underground noises were signs of their mother's displeasure, and they themselves were one in their relationship. As the earth suffered, so also did her children. The apostle Paul wrote much the same thing to the Romans when he said:

*"For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creature [creation or the earth and her inhabitants] waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body."*

The groans of the creation and the groans of its children were tied together awaiting a new dawn of glorious peace in both of the Christian and Indian prophet's views.

In Howard's description of the Dreamer's doctrine, he stated that not only should the earth not be disturbed by man but voluntary submission to the government or its institutions was wrong. Many of the non-treaty Indians refused to accept anything at all from the government. Old Joseph believed that to accept anything from the white government would be a sign of acquiescence to taking gifts for land. His son felt the same way, but the belief was deeper than just a rhetorical statement. By this time the Indians had observed the white man's lust for wealth for many years, and such lust was contrary to the Dreamer's view of life.

When the Euro-American spoke of the earth, he called it *"land."* The white settlers viewed land as a thing you possessed, owned, your property. It possessed a particular value which could be measured in the amount of goods or money it could be exchanged for. As owner of the land, you decided how it should be used, and although you might have a sentimental attachment to it, if there came a place better suited to your needs and desires, and you could afford to purchase it, sentiment was foolish. The Dreamers on the other hand were possessed by the

earth, their mother. They lived in her bosom. The earth was not valued for its resources. Rather, from her flows the nourishment of life. Men gather what she freely provides. *"Man comes from the earth and at his death returns to it."* This two-way relationship with the earth is evident in the Dreamer's concept of *"wayakin."* The guardian spirit was always a spirit from the surroundings one came from--an animal like grizzly or coyote, the atmosphere like lighting or thunder, or maybe the sun or moon. *"Wayakin"* was a fellow spirit in creation who was assigned by the creator *"to take hold together with you"* in the affairs of this life. This concept is very much equivalent to Jesus's description of the relationship of the Holy Spirit to the believer. He said of the Holy Spirit:

*"And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you...But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you. Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."*

The word Comforter in these passages is the Greek word, *"parakletos"* (par-ak'-lay-tos) which is defined as, *"One summoned, called to one's side, esp. called to one's aid."* At the very least, the *"Wayakin"* is a shadow of this concept. Paul wrote in Romans that:

*"That which may be known of God is manifest in them [all who dwell in the world]; for God hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead..."*

Had Christianity been presented to the Indians as receiving the Spirit of God as *"Wayakin,"* Dreamers like Old Joseph might not have found the white man's religion so distasteful. As it was, the Dreamers could not understand the white man's greed-based approach to the land.

Not only did *"Wayakin"* reflect the Christian doctrine of spiritual relationship, the Indian lifestyle embraced much of the teachings of Christ from the Sermon on the Mount.

*"No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon."*

*Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? Behold the fowls of the air: for*

*they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature? And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.*

The example which the missionaries had set among the Indians early on had often perplexed the natives. At the 1855 Treaty, Eagle from the light had said, *"I do not wish another preacher to come and be both trader and preacher in one."* The idea of being preachers on Sunday and merchants the rest of the week was hypocritical to many Indians. Now the white's insistence that the Indian take up the way of civilization where they should become *"productive"* hard working farmers was bewildering. It is no wonder that Old Joseph tore up his copy of the New Testament that Spalding had given him. The materialistic frame of reference of the white man was not the frame of reference of the Indian. The Indian trusted the earth to supply his needs, took little thought for tomorrow, and the Dreamers spent much effort in seeking to fulfill the Great Spirit's instructions. Many observers reported that the Dreamers often danced for such extended periods that they neglected hunting and gathering to the point of their detriment.

Yet, the Sermon on the Mount is more than an example of how life should be lived, it is a comparison of the two views I have labeled comic and tragic. When Jesus made statements like, *"Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment,"* He was comparing the life which is bound to the law and the life where rightness proceeds from within. In this speech, Christ identified that simple adherence to a law, even if it was possible, is not sufficient to produce a right life. There was need of an awakening of spirit that went beyond just doing right. This is what the native religion, by its very nature, had always been after. Theologians might argue whether the *"savages"* looked in the right places for this awakening, but they were clearly seeking a spirit-relationship rather than goods as their primary journey in life. This desire for the transference of spirit-power through the vehicle of relationship has been dealt with extensively by Howard Harrod in his comparative study of plains Indian religion. He writes that among the Crows and Blackfeet:

*"The transfer of power [spiritual] is a matter of establishing a relation between humans and sacred sources of power. This relationship is more one of kinship than it is an economic relationship, which the notion of transfer might initially suggest. Indeed, among the Crows, the formula of relationship between humans and sacred vision-beings is expressed in the language of adoption:...The vision-being is then addressed as 'father' or 'mother' and the human's self-understanding is that of 'son' or 'daughter'...the relationship established between humans and the world of spirit-beings is finally one of kinship. This pattern seems to be generally present within the cultures of the Northwestern Plains."*

This is exactly the world view of the Dreamers of the Plateau; it was the very foundation of their society. This idea that one enters into a kinship relationship with the spirit-being is also the foundational tenant of Paul's interpretation of the scriptures. He writes that the believer's relationship to the Spirit of Christ amounts to adoption by the Creator:

*"For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God...[and this adoption is but the firstfruits of the resurrection of the dead]...And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body."*

The Christianity that the natives had rejected was steeped in the tragic frame of the law. The Indians in their rejection of Christianity were not rejecting the spirit they had received in the Christianized Prophet Dance that arose after Spokan Garry's early preaching, they were rejecting the white man's emaciated version of God's law which was full of greed. The Indian Dreamer was searching for a relationship with the Spirit of freedom. Ironically, this is the promise of the Bible which Old Joseph had torn up in his final rejection of Christianity:

*"But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ...Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage." [The yoke of bondage here being the law.]*

The Indian Dreamers sought freedom and power in the "Wayakin;" power to make them free from the white man who had blinded them, through the law, to the "Book that would teach them everything."

It was Thursday, May 3, 1877. Howard had returned to Lapwai the day before to begin the council he promised to Joseph. On this same day, as the parade of non-treaty Indians appeared at Lapwai, troops, who had been given marching orders the day before, were on their way from Fort Walla Walla toward the juncture of the Wallowa and Grande Ronde rivers. Under the command of Captain Stephen Whipple, they had orders to establish camp on the edge of the land Chief Joseph loved and be prepared to strike where ever necessary. Miles away at Lapwai, Howard had received a letter from agent Monteith dated May 3, 1877, it read:

*"I would respectfully request that you would assist me in the removal of Joseph's and other roving bands of the Nez Perce Indians to locate them upon proper lands within the boundaries of the Nez Perce Reservation by the use of such troops as you deem necessary."*

*"Positive instructions had come,"* Howard wrote, *"and obedience was required."* Howard's orders and plan were clear and he would not linger in their execution.

Some fifty Nez Perce approached Lapwai in a column, men in front with women and children behind. Howard described them as having:

*"...faces painted, the red paint extending back to the partings of the hair,--the men's hair braided and tied up with showy strings,--ornamented in dress, in hats, in blankets, with variegated colors, in leggings and buckskin, and moccasins, beaded and plain; women with bright shawls and blankets, and skirts to the ankle, and 'top moccasins.' All were mounted atop Indian ponies as various in color as the dress of the riders. These picturesque people, after keeping us waiting long enough for effect, came in sight from up the valley, from the direction of their temporary camp, just above the company gardens. They drew near to the hollow square of the post, and in front of the small company, to be interviewed. Then they struck up their song. They were not armed, except with a few 'tomahawk pipes,' that could be smoked with peaceful tobacco, or penetrate the skull-bone of an enemy, at the will of the holder. Yet somehow this wild sound produced a strange effect. It made one feel glad that there were but fifty of them, and not five hundred. It was shrill and searching; sad, like a wail, and yet defiant in its close. Our ladies, thinking it a war-song, asked, with some show of trepidation, 'Do you think Joseph means to fight?' The Indians swept around outside the fence, and made the entire circuit, still keeping up the song as they rode. The buildings broke the refrain into irregular bubblings of sound till the ceremony was completed."*

General Howard was prepared to confer with Chief Joseph, but this meeting would not center on their meeting. Joseph would fill the role as Howard's chief adversary later, particularly after the war. In this scene another adversary would take the position of chief spokesman for the Nez Perce, but he would not arrive until the next day. These two men who would confront each other at the 1877 Lapwai Council were, both of them, the embodiment of paradoxically conflicting

world views.

One would have to search far and wide to find a man who represented the ideals of Protestant Christianity and American Liberalism to the extent that those ideals were sown and flowering in Oliver Otis Howard. A humanitarian, he had taken his appointment to the Bureau of Freedmen and Refugees after the war as divine providence. When Abraham Lincoln said, "*The world will little note, nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced,*" General Howard was one of the men he was speaking of. Fiercely dedicated to the rule of law, Howard was thoroughly involved in the quest to carry out his orders. He had a great respect for Joseph, and he had compassion for his plight. Howard believed that Joseph had not been treated fairly, but the law had spoken, and he had his orders; he would carry them out.

Two old Dreamers arrived with Chief Joseph who were foreshadows of the man Howard would soon face in council. Howard recognized one of them immediately when the non-treaty delegation paraded into Lapwai. He recorded the first thing the two old "*tiwéts*" said after they sat to begin council:

*"Thereupon the old Dreamer, whom I have previously described, stood up, and addressed Mr. Whitman [the interpreter] in the most pointed manner: 'On account of coming generations, the children and the children's children, of both whites and Indians, you must interpret correctly.'*

*A companion-piece to this Dreamer, another aged medicine-man, with a cross and querulous manner, said, 'We want to talk a long time, many days, about the earth, about our land.'*

*The answer was, 'Mr. Monteith and I wish to hear what you have to say, whatever time it may take; but you may as well know at the outset that in any event the Indians must obey the orders of the government of the United States.'*

It would soon prove to be true that Howard did not want to hear what the old "*tiwéts*" had to say, he did not have all the time it may take, but to his credit, he was up front with the fact that he had not come to negotiate but to carry out his orders.

The Indians were confused. The General whom they called "*Atim Keunim*" (Cut Off Arm) gave the appearance of kindness and seemed to be their friend, but he would not move from his position. No matter what the Indians said, Howard insisted on carrying out his orders. Joseph's brother, Ollokot, rose to his feet and said;

*"We have respect for the whites; but they treat me as a dog, and I sometimes think my friends are different from what I supposed. There should be one law*



*for all. If I commit murder I shall be hung; but if I do well I should not be punished. Our friends will be here to-morrow, I will then tell what I think."*

Howard answered: *"Joseph, Agent Monteith, and myself are under the same government. What it commands us to do, that we must do. The Indians should come to the reservation first; then they may have privileges, as the agent has shown, to hunt and to fish in the Imhaha Valley. If the Indians hesitate to come to the reservation, the government directs the soldiers be used to bring them hither. Joseph and Ollicut know that we are friends to them, and that if they comply there will be no trouble."*

The council was going nowhere and Howard could see this. The Indians wanted the support of the other bands who had not yet arrived. Howard described the scene as tense, *"the two old Dreamers, whom the Indians treat with great respect, and by whom they are always unduly influenced, were at this council very saucy and quarrel-some in manner."* Howard warned the two shamans that if they did not give *"good advice"* he would *"arrest and punish them."* Upon seeing that his warning had a marked effect in quieting the Indians, he agreed to adjourn the meeting until the next day when, hopefully, the other bands would arrive. Later, Howard would write, *"fearless sternness always produced the most wholesome and immediate consequences."*

The next day White Bird and some of his followers arrived. Also Looking Glass, who by this time had become one of the tribes most respected hunting and war leaders, a true *"mi-yó-hat,"* leader of bands or war chief. But Howard's real adversary was also arriving. In Howard's own words, *"Too-hul-hul-sote, with his followers, were straggling in."* From the hills along the Snake River, south of the mouth of the Salmon, the old *"tiwét,"* Toohoolhoolsote came to these proceedings *"restless, and unafraid of any white man."* He was, *"like a grizzly at bay, contemptuous of the Christian Nez Perces, resentful of a soldier who, he had heard, planned to tell him to go on a reservation, and ready to out argue anyone who attempted to deprive him of his freedom."* The capable orator with the deep, guttural voice had been chosen as the band's spokesperson to whom even Joseph would defer. Unlike Smohalla, who had risen to fame lately because of his visions and oratorical skills, this old shaman was the quintessential Dreamer. Researcher, Edwin S. Curtis stated that the Nez Perce seemed to have been *'the highest priests'* of the religion of the Earth Mother, and they observed the *"invisible law,"* the *"Holahholah-tamaluit,"* which held that the earth was sacred and, like Smohalla's *"Washani"* ceremony, practiced songs and vision dancing. Another early researcher, Herbert Spinden, viewed Smohalla's doctrine to have arisen as a natural outgrowth of the religious ideas of the Nez Perce Dreamers. Ruby notes that, *"Toohoolsote was among the many Indians who met Spokane Garry on the later's return from the mission on the Red River of the North, and Toohoolsote carried back to his Nez Perce people the message of the white's God."* Toohoolhoolsote was one of the originators of the Christianized Prophet Dance, but unlike Lawyer, who was probably the Indian who translated Garry's sermon

that day, this old holy man held no allegiance to the white man and was ready for battle, not with his rifle but with his words.

A treaty Indian, Alpowa Jim, who Howard described as handsome, pleasant, active and *"happy in the religious gatherings,"* opened the day's proceedings with a prayer. Joseph introduced the new arrivals and announced that Toohoolhoolsoote would speak for the non-treaty bands. Howard had been warned that the old man was one of the most dangerous of the Dreamer teachers. The General described the Indian who now stood to speak as *"broad-shouldered, deep-chested, thick-necked, five feet ten in height, had a heavy, guttural voice, and betrayed in every word a strong and settled hatred of all Caucasians."* Toohoolhoolsoote began to speak with a *"plentiful flourish of words and illustrations;"* he said, *"There are always two parties to a dispute. The one that is right will come out ahead."* In Howard's view the *"tiwét"* made no attempt at conciliation, but then neither was the General prepared to give any ground. The Indians were again informed that they were subjects of the United States government and must obey its laws. The Dreamer responded that he had heard of an agreement, a trade between some Indians [the treaty Nez Perces] and the white men concerning their land, but *"I belong to the land out of which I came. The earth is my mother."* The commission stated their position again; that the non-treaty Nez Perce were bound by the treaty because they were only a minority of the whole tribe in their opposition to the agreement. This appeared to anger the old Dreamer, and he replied, *"You have no right to compare us, grown men, to children. Children do not think for themselves. Grown men do think for themselves. The government at Washington shall not think for us."* Joseph points out that this was the same rebuke which Spokane Garry had used with I. I. Stevens in the 1855 negotiations. The statement also makes abundantly clear how Toohoolhoolsoote saw the treaty Nez Perce. The discussion continued in like manner with excited *"Ah's"* from the natives and growing discomfort from the whites. The Dreamer's closing argument was, *"The Great Spirit Chief made the world as it is and as he wanted it, and he made part of it for us to live upon. I do not see where you get authority to say that we shall not live where he placed us."* As the Dreamer's anger began to cool Joseph asked that they continue later and a session was set for the following Monday. Howard suggested the Indians take the next few days of intermission to think and *"talk fully"* amongst themselves.

The next few days were filled with anxiety for the whites and the treaty Nez Perce. The non-treaty bands were well armed and well trained in fighting and following their chiefs. Rumors began to spread that what had started the recent Modoc war could happen here. During a negotiation council with Modoc chief, Captain Jack, he pulled a revolver and the Indians began shooting the negotiators. Howard recorded that, *"For a time there were at the fort, and the agency, which is but three miles distant, much sleeplessness and terror lest there should burst out somewhere in our neighborhood a fire that no ordinary effort could quench."* Nevertheless, when the Sabbath arrived some of the fear began to diminish. Services at the agency chapel were attended not only by Christian Indians but also by a number of the

Dreamers. The gloom and anxiety lifted somewhat with the songs of praise, the cheerful and gay spirit, and the colorfully picturesque costumes of the Indians. The Christian Nez Perce ministers prophesied peace, and hope was reborn for a settlement to the disquieting questions that had brought the cloud of gloom. But Joseph did not attend the gay affair; he danced the Dreamer's ceremony, the drums beating to the throbbing of the Dreamer's hearts. It was reported by some of the treaty Nez Perce that Joseph's band was chanting war songs, but this is unlikely. Joseph was always against war, and the drumming was certain to have been the regular Sabbath Prophet Dance of the Dreamers. Howard, who was a preacher himself, said that Joseph and his warriors *"went through with a weird dance, accompanied by the incessant beating of tom-toms, and other ceremonies characteristic of their heathen worship."*

By Monday, May 7, many more Indians had arrived for the council. Among them two bands of Palouse who still dwelt on their mother's bosom along the lower snake. One of these bands was led by a the Dreamer Hush-hushcote who was known as the Preacher. At 37 years old he was already a powerful shaman, well known for his speaking abilities. Howard reported him as being an *"oily, wily, bright-eyed young chief, who could be smooth-tongued or saucy as the mood seized him."* If Toohoolhoolsote's nature was that of the grizzly bear, Hush-hushcote was coyote. It is thought that he was intended to also speak for the non-treaty bands, but he would not get the chance. Before this day was out, contrary to his words of the first day, Howard would no longer *"wish to hear what they had to say, whatever time it may take."* He would be finished listening to the Dreamers who wanted *"to talk a long time, many days, about the earth, about our land."*

Immediately after the previous session had dismissed, Howard seeing the animosity of the Dreamers, had dispatched more troops. Whipple had been instructed to move closer to Lapwai in case of hostilities. Two other companies had also been dispatched, one from Walla Walla to Lewiston and another from Fort Vancouver toward Fort Walla Walla. By Monday, Joseph had gotten wind that there were troops in his valley where he had left many women and children and no warriors. Both Joseph and Ollokot headed for the council anxious. The Indians arrived with a ceremonial display abounding in color and horsemanship. With so many new warriors having arrived, the display was filled with even more confidence, conviction and determination than their entrance at the previous sessions. Fearing the tone of the meetings would take on the same character as the first days, agent Monteith, hoping to diffuse some of old Dreamer's rancor early on, stated that the government would not interfere with the religious rites of the Dreamers unless a *"tiwét"* became a *"bad teacher"* who encouraged disobedience.

The dedicated General was not pleased when, in his words, *"the cross-grained growler, was again designated as the speaker, and took up his parable. He was, if possible, crosser and more impudent in his abruptness of manner than before."* Toohoolhoolsote began to articulate his faith to the commission again. The earth

as his mother should not be disturbed by plows and hoes. The Great Spirit instructed his mother to supply men abundantly from her bosom. The "*tiwét*" was incensed at the violence that would separate Indians from their mother, lands which they possessed by inheritance. He could not understand the white man who somehow believed to have chieftainship greater than the earth. He went on in great length, maintaining that chieftainship could not be sold or given away; the Agent and the General, he demanded, "*must speak the truth about this chieftainship of the earth.*"

The commission replied, "*We do not wish to interfere with your religion, but you must talk about practicable things. Twenty times over you repeat the earth is your mother, and about chieftainship from the earth. Let us hear it no more, but come to business at once.*"

For the Dreamers, this was the business; religion and practical things were not separate, they were one. Toohoolhoolsoote replied, in what Howard called a very insolent tone, "*What the treaty-Indians talk about was born of to-day! It isn't true law at all! You white people get together, measure the earth, and then divide it; so I want you to talk directly what you mean!*"

Howard, of course, could not understand what the Indian was talking about. Authority was a product of hierarchy and laws, authority did not rise out of the female person of the earth. Agent Monteith replied in as calm a tone as possible, "*The law is, you must come to the reservation; the law is made in Washington. We do not make it.*"

Lines from Burke's poems describing the "*iron law of history*," where man is "*separated from his natural condition by instruments of his own making - goaded by the spirit of hierarchy (or moved by a sense of order) - and rotten with perfection*" resound in the agent's words.

Toohoolhoolsoote changed his direction. He had learned much of white man's laws in his long life. He tried again, one last time, to approach Howard from a legal frame, to point out the illegal nature of the document which was being forced upon him and his people.

*"We never have made any trade. Part of the Indians gave up their land. I never did! The earth is part of my body, and I never gave up the earth."*

Howard replied, "*You know very well that the government has set apart a reservation, and the Indians must go upon it. If an Indian becomes a citizen, like old Timothy of Alpowa, he can have land like any other citizen outside, but he has to leave his tribe, and take land precisely as a white man does. The government has set apart this large reservation for you and your children, that you may live in peace and prosper.*"

This, to the Dreamer, was heresy. In a zealous rage, that if it was in a prophet of

the Old Testament would be called righteous indignation, the "*tiwét*," looking fiercely at Howard, "*spoke something in a short sentence... in his most provoking tone.*"

Perrin quickly translated; he demands, "*What person pretends to divide the land, and put me on it?*"

In the most forceful voice Howard commanded, he replied, "*I am the man. I stand here for the President, and there is no spirit good or bad that will hinder me. My orders are plain, and will be executed. I hoped that the Indians had good sense enough to make me their friend, and not their enemy.*"

Howard had clearly articulated his stand; regardless of the spirit, the spirit of the Indian, the spirit of the earth, or even the spirit of the law, Howard would only be moved by his orders. "*Signs of anger and bad blood began to appear.*" Looking-glass became evasive and left off his "*gentle style.*" White Bird spoke from behind the eagle's wing he always carried at council, "*If I had been taught from early life to be governed by the white men I would be governed by the white men. The earth sustains [or rules] me.*"

Howard had arranged this meeting against all advice. The murders of the negotiators by the Modoc was still fresh in everyone's mind, and no one wanted it repeated. His orders were clear, and public pressure had been unceasing; sternly and forcefully remove the Indians to the reservation. The General surveyed the scene. The Indians were well armed, and weapons were openly evident. He "*must, somehow, put in a wedge of separation, and curb the unruly tendency.*" He looked at the old Dreamer and said:

"*Then you do not propose to comply with the orders of the government?*"

The Dreamer answered, "*So long as the earth keeps me, I want to be left alone.*"

Howard replied to all, "*Our old friend does not seem to understand what the question is: Will the Indians come peaceably on to the reservation, or do they want me, in compliance with my orders, to put them there by force.*"

Toohoolhoolsote declared, "*I never gave the Indians authority to give away my lands.*"

"*Do you speak for yourself alone?*" Howard asked.

Even more fiercely he answered, "*The Indians may do what they like, but I am not going on the reservation.*"

Howard, sternly and with as much force as he could said, "*This bad advice is what you give the Indians. On account of it you will have to be taken to the Indian territory [Oklahoma]. Joseph and White Bird seem to have good hearts, but yours is*

*bad. I will send you there if it takes years and years. When I heard you were coming, I feared that you would make trouble. You say you are not a medicine-man, but you talk for them. The Indians can see no good while you are their spokesman. You advise them to resist, to fight, to lose all their horses and cattle, and have unending trouble." Turning to the others, he said, "Will Joseph and White Bird, and Looking-glass go with me to look at their land? The old man will not go. He must stay with Colonel Perry."*

Toohoolhoolsote asked, *"Do you want to scare me in reference to my body?"*

Howard said, *"I will leave your body with Colonel Perry."*

Chief Joseph's description of this scene paints a little different picture of the General. Howard does not appear as collected in Joseph's account as in his own. Joseph records the scene:

*"General Howard lost his temper and said: 'Shut up! I don't want to hear anymore of such talk. The law says you shall go upon the reservation to live, and I want you to do so, but you persist in disobeying the law.' (meaning the treaty) 'If you do not move, I will take the matter into my own hand, and make you suffer for your disobedience.'*

*Too-hool-hool-suit answered: 'Who are you, that you ask us to talk, and then tell me you shant talk? Are you the Great Spirit? Did you make the world? Did you make the sun? Did you make the rivers run for us to drink? Did you make the grass grow? Did you make all these things that you talk to us as though we were boys? If you did, then you have the right to talk to me as you do.'*

*General Howard replied: 'You are an impudent fellow, I will put you in the guard-house.'*

Then ensued a scene unparalleled in American history in its symbology and prophetic power. General Howard, who was the epitome of American-Protestant-Christianity, a man whose one-armed body was the perfect symbol of tragic Christianity, a Christianity married to only one wife (the law) but cut-off from the wife of the spirit, called for a messenger to have the old Dreamer arrested. No one came immediately, so the one-armed General, aided by Colonel Perry took Toohoolhoolsote by the arm and lead him to the guardhouse. Toohoolhoolsote may not have been a visionary prophet like Smohalla, but he was the embodiment of the Prophet Dance. It was he who brought the message with Lawyer back from Spokane Garry. As a symbol of the spirit of the Dreamer, there is no other that compares. If Lawyer, who had died the previous year, was a symbol of the Indians of law, Toohoolhoolsote was the symbol of the Indians of the spirit. Whatever there was that remained of the innocent, comic spirit of the Prophet Dance was, in this act, bound by the shackles of law whether it liked it or not.

Toohoolhoolsote did not resist. He asked the General, *"Is this your order? I don't*

*care. I have expressed my heart to you. I have nothing to take back. I have spoken for my country. You can arrest me, but you can not change me or take back what I have said."*

No one can take away what Toohoolhoolsote said that day; the words stand as a memorial to the free, innocent spirit of Coyote. But even though the Dreamer said, "*You can not change me,*" Toohoolhoolsote was changed. General Howard was not the only character with a tragic flaw on the scene. This symbolic day of change, not only bound the Indian's body, but bound him to a scapegoat.

The central tenant of Burke's theory is that the presence of a scapegoat denotes the tragic frame. General Howard symbolically bound the Indian to a scapegoat, the white man from the rising sun, the East. From this act until today, the white man is to blame for the rape of the native's innocence. Chief Joseph tried to diffuse what had happened. Of the scene he wrote:

*"The Soldiers came forward and seized my friend and took him to the guard-house. My men whispered among themselves whether they would let this thing be done. I counseled them to submit. I knew if we resisted that all the white men present, including General Howard, would be killed in a moment, and we would be blamed. If I had said nothing, General Howard would never have given an unjust order against my men. I saw the danger and while they dragged Too-hool-hool-suit to prison, I arose and said: 'I am going to talk now. I don't care whether you arrest me or not.' I turned to my people and said: 'The arrest of Too-hool-hool-suit was wrong, but **we will not resent the insult.** We were invited to this council to express our hearts, and we have done so.' Too-hool-hool-suit was prisoner for five days before he was released."*

With the words, "*we will not resent the insult,*" Chief Joseph contained the violence only for a few short weeks. Forgiveness is the only defense against being bound to your scapegoat. This is primary to Burke's idea that the symbol is consubstantial with the substance. When the symbolic transfer of blame is made to the scapegoat you become one substance with the scapegoat. This is the central message of Christianity. Christ is the only scapegoat where the transfer can be made, and the substance exchange be peace. It would only be days before the scapegoat bound to Toohoolhoolsote by Howard produced war, and try as he might Chief Joseph could not stop it. Tragedy had come to the Dreamers, and the only defense now lay in the Prophetic visions of a wily, crafty, hunchbacked coyote called Smohalla.

## CHAPTER 13

# MILLENNIUM

Long ago, a young warrior and a beautiful maiden were deeply in love and very happy. But

sickness came to the warrior. He died, and his spirit went to the land of spirits. There he mourned for the girl, and she mourned for him in the earth world. A few nights after his death, a spirit from the land of the dead came to her in a dream and spoke to her.

"Your lover is longing for you," said the voice of the spirit. "Even though he is in the beautiful land of the spirits, he is unhappy without you. He cannot be happy again unless you come to him."

The girl was so troubled by the dream that she told her parents. They too were troubled and did not know what she should do. The next night, again a third night, the spirit spoke to the girl in a dream. After the third vision, her parents decided that they would send their daughter to her lover, lest some harm come to them from the land of the spirits.

So in their canoe they took the girl down the river to the island where all the dead are gathered in the happy spirit land. Darkness was falling as they drew near. From the island came the sound of drums and of spirits singing as they danced to the music. Through the twilight haze, lights gleamed on the island.

Four spirits met the family at the shore, helped the girl out of the canoe, and told her parents to return to their home among the living. The spirits guided the girl to a great dance house, a large lodge made of tule mats. There she saw her lover, more handsome and noble looking than he had been on earth and dressed with the richness found only in the land of the spirits.

All night the singing and dancing continued, and the young couple were among the happiest of the dancers. When dawn began to break and the first bird songs were heard, the spirits went to their rest. Spirits sleep during the day and are active during the night. The maiden also closed her eyes on the joyful spirit world and went to sleep.

But, unlike the spirits, she did not sleep soundly. When the sun was high above her, she awoke and looked around. Beside her lay a skeleton--the skeleton of her lover. His skull, with hollow eyes and grinning teeth, was turned toward her. All around her were skeletons and skulls. The air was filled with the smell of death, for the beautiful spirits of the night hours had become bones.

With a scream, the girl sprang from her bed and ran to the shore. After a little search she found a canoe and rapidly paddled back to her home village. But her family and friends were alarmed. They feared that the spirits would be offended by her leaving their land and that they would punish the village.

"You have done wrong to the spirit people," they told her. "You should have slept all day, as they do. You must go back to your lover, for he has claimed you."

So the maiden returned to the island that evening and again joined her lover at the dancing lodge. He was again a handsome and happy spirit. Next day, and every day after that, she slept until evening. When darkness came, she went forth to be happy with all the spirits during the night.

In course of time a child was born to her, a child of unusual beauty, half human and half spirit. The young father was so eager for his mother on the earth to see the baby that he decided to send for her. He found a spirit messenger and gave him this message:

"Tell my mother that we are very happy in the spirit land and that we have a beautiful baby. We want her to see him. Ask her to come back with you. Then the baby and his mother will return home with her to the land of the living. I will soon follow, taking with me all the dead people so that they may live on earth again."



The message made the grandmother happy, and she gladly went to the island of the dead. Her son welcomed her but warned her that she could not see the baby yet.

"Not for ten days can you see him."

The grandmother waited patiently at first. But the longer she waited, the more eager she was to see her grandchild. After a few days she decided that she would peep at him. It would do no harm to anyone, she thought, if she should lift up the cloth covering the baby board and take one glance.

She lifted the cloth and saw the sleeping child. The punishment came swiftly, for the baby sickened and died. The spirit people were so displeased that they have never since permitted the dead to return to the living.

The grandmother was sent back to her village and never heard of the young couple again.

**"Son of man, can these bones live?"**

**I answered,**

**O Lord GOD, thou knowest."**

In 1935, anthropologist Leslie Spier presented the hypothesis that the cult, which he labeled the Prophet Dance, (1) existed on the Plateau as an aboriginal development independent of Euro-American contact, and (2) was the origin of the later nativistic movement among the Plains Indians known as the Ghost Dance. This thesis sparked a fierce debate that not only continues to this day, but has escalated into a debate on the cause of nativistic movements worldwide. In the first chapters of this work, I took the position that a form of Prophet Dance most probably predated white contact, and as Christian ideas spread into the Plateau area, they were adopted and integrated into the culture producing an unique religious experience that symbolically paralleled prophetic structures in the Bible. This is not unusual if, as Kenneth Burke has proposed, identification with symbols transfers the substance of those symbols. Spier described the Prophet Dance cult, or "*tulí-m*," as involving a circular dance, with an inspired leader who fell out into the spirit land, obtained visions, and returned with prophetic messages. Great emphasis was placed on a creator spirit who held ascendancy over all other spirits, confession of sin often played an important role, and the doctrine of world renewal was primary to the cult.

Later anthropologists would challenge the aboriginal origin of the cult. Deward Walker states:

*"Spier chooses to assign the movement an entirely aboriginal origin. It is clear that he was deliberately searching for the aboriginal roots of the Ghost Dance in order to disprove James Mooney's earlier contention that the Ghost Dance*

*resembled many similar movements elsewhere that developed out of cultural deprivation and the consequent need for a messiah who prophesied deliverance."*

Citing David Aberle's theory, that indirect Euro-American contact may have caused several types of cultural depravation, Walker suggests that it is quite reasonable that indirect white influence may have played a substantial role in the origin of the Prophet dance. Aberle suggested that a smallpox epidemic which occurred at approximately the same period as the rise of the Prophet dance may have had direct influence on the birth of the cult.

In almost all of the analysis which has been conducted on the subject of the rise of nativistic revitalization movements, the idea that some kind of deprivation caused by direct or indirect cultural contact has been the foundation of the work. As mentioned earlier, Christopher Miller adds the element of natural cataclysm with his hypothesis that the eruption of Mount St. Helens along with indirect contact through the spread of disease caused the necessary stress. As the debate leaves the proto-historical period of the Plateau, the idea of deprivation caused by cultural contact is the central explanation set forward as the cause of the subsequent cult revivals.

The deprivation theory has taken on varied forms. Mooney's basic premise, that unrest was due to contact with the white man, is a sophisticated attempt to assign the cause to economic factors: the buffalo was being wiped out, Indians were dependent upon government rations that did not arrive, and treaty negotiations had robbed them of sacred lands. This view seems to fit for movements after the Prophet Dance like the Ghost Dance, but it is too simplistic for the Plateau because the non-treaty Indians were not experiencing economic hardship when the Prophet Dance revival began under Old Joseph, Toohoolhoolsoote, and even Smohalla. On the contrary, they were continuing a semi-nomadic lifestyle, refusing any government subsidies, and still negotiating for their ancestral lands. After the 1877 Nez Perce War, the Dreamer religion continued to be a viable aspect of the Plateau peoples lives but it did not rise to the fervor it had experienced before the war. The Ghost Dance, on the other hand, does, at first, appear to be caused by economic factors and has therefore been called a "*cargo cult*" by many scholars.

Cargo cults are defined as, apocalyptic millenarian movements which promise a millennium in the form of material and spiritual "*cargo*." Although the term had not been coined at the time of Mooney's monumental work, it does apply in the sense that there was a clear desire for "*spiritual cargo*." But this could be said of almost any religious cult, or institutionalized religion for that matter. There is also evidence of the desire for material cargo in the Ghost Dance. Subsequent scholars to Mooney concurred with the premise. In 1917, Alfred Haddon assumed a similar stance. Because of white encroachment, social unrest surfaces which often takes the form of religious activity around the belief in a conquering messianic hero

who will usher in a paradise. After Haddon, anthropologists F. E. Williams and Bernard Barber, in a similar vein, held that certain effects of contact and subjection to a "*superior*" or dominate culture somehow correlated in cult activity that often embraced messianism. All of these theories left fundamental questions unanswered. Why is religious activity a characteristic response to periods of social unrest? How do new and often "*bizarre*" ideals arise from unrest. How do these ideals take on religious forms, and why millennialism?

In 1943, Ralph Linton published an important paper entitled "*Nativistic Movements*." Linton defined "*nativistic movement*" as, "*Any conscious organized attempt on the part of a society's members to revive or perpetuate selected aspects of its culture.*" Linton believed that "*nativism*" arose out of nostalgia for a time of perceived demi-paradise which predate the coming of white culture. What the natives felt was needed for a restoration of their former state was to reject the dominate culture and reaffirm and perpetuate their native culture. Linton states that, "*What really happens in all nativistic movements is that certain current remembered elements of culture are selected for emphasis and given **symbolic value.***" He goes on to deal with the religious question by delineating two types of nativistic movements, "*magical nativism*" and "*rational nativism.*" His theory then can embrace four categories of nativistic movements:

- 1.) Revivalistic-magical
- 2.) Revivalistic-rational
- 3.) Perpetuative-magical
- 4.) Perpetuative-rational

Linton maintains that forms 1, 2, and 4, occur frequently, but form 3, as far as he knows, has never occurred. Simply put, magic is not needed to preserve what already exists. He also points out that there are many cases where contact has not spawned nativistic movements. The reasons for this are so varied and often obscure, he says, that no analysis is possible. But he notes that nativistic movements are not likely to occur where both societies are satisfied with their present conditions. Nevertheless, if there is a charismatic enough leader, who has something to gain, a movement could arise around the leader. But most commonly, some sort of inequality must exist or at least be perceived to exist. Therefore, a hierarchy or superior/inferior relationship must exist where one society sees itself as superior and the other acquiesces to inferiority, or both cultures view themselves as superior.

Using Linton's typology, the Prophet Dance and Ghost Dance would be categorized as revivalistic-magical movements. Although the Prophet Dance of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries would have more characteristics of a cargo cult (wanting the Book), while the Prophet Dance of the

last half of the nineteenth century would be more nativistic in character. The Prophet Dance cult hierarchy structure, then, began as a white-superior/Indian-inferior ratio during its early stages when they desired the cargo of the Book that would teach them everything, and subsequently developed into a superior/superior ratio after the non-treaties rejected white culture. The Ghost Dance hierarchy presents a more difficult job of pigeon-holing. Did the various tribes involved see themselves as superior or inferior, and did it differ from tribe to tribe? What kinds of cargo were they after, if any, and were they nativistic? Jarvie points out that Linton's typology supplies a mechanism which goes a long way in explaining the attitudes and situations in which cults flourish. It develops different categories to plug a particular cult into, but the categories do little in explaining why religious cults appear, nor why one society has a magical millenarian cult and another develops only "*social snobberies*." The one thing that Linton's typology makes clear is that a perceived hierarchy exists which is the foundation of Burke's concept of symbolic scapegoating.

A straightforward explanation as to why the magical millenarian cults appear, millennialism being central to both the Prophet Dance and Ghost Dance, is put forward by Mircea Eliade. Eliade argues that millennialism is simply a cultural inheritance. These cultures have the annual return of the dead and cosmic regeneration as parts of their normal cycles.

*"If so many 'cargo cults' have assimilated Christian millenarist ideas, it is because the natives have rediscovered in Christianity their old traditional eschatological myth. The resurrection of the dead...was to them a familiar idea. If the natives came to feel disappointed in the missionaries...it was...because the missionaries and their converts did not seem to conduct themselves as true Christians...The millenarist movements became savagely anti-Christian when their leaders realized that the missionaries...did not really...believe in the imminence of the kingdom, the resurrection of the dead, and the establishment of paradise."*

Clearly this is the most straightforward and accurate reasoning that explains why the revitalization movements of the Northwest and Plains tribes took on millennialist forms. As Miller asserted, originally the Prophet Dance millennial visions were believed by the participants to be entirely compatible with Christianity but were in reality on a collision course toward cataclysm. I have asserted that the collision is directly tied to the tragic versus comic world views involved. The doctrines were compatible, but the frames of reference were not. Linton's recognition of the hierarchical nature of what he labeled nativistic movements reinforces the idea of a scapegoat involved in the process.

As to the question of why religious cults appear, another anthropologist, Anthony Wallace, published a paper in 1956 that goes a long way in shedding some light on the question. Wallace developed a paradigm that incorporates most cult theories under the term "*revitalization movements*." He proposes that all the phenomenon

attached to the common labels, "*nativistic movement*," "*reform movement*," "*cargo cult*," "*religious revival*," "*messianic movement*," "*utopian community*," "*sect formation*," "*mass movement*," "*social movement*," "*revolution*," and "*charismatic movement*," are characterized by an uniform process. Revitalization movement is defined by Wallace as "*a deliberate, organized, conscious effort by members of a society to construct a more satisfying culture*." This is a more inclusive definition than Linton's nativistic movement. Wallace uses an organismic analogy to demonstrate his theory. Human society is a kind of organism. A society is made up of not only the persons and groups that make up the organism, but also the cells and the organs of the individual people along with the non-human subsystems. Wallace asserts that, "*This holistic view of society as organism integrated from cell to nation depends on the assumption that society as an organization of living matter, is definable as a network of intercommunication*." In his view, social organization exists to the degree that events in one subsystem are information to other subsystems. Wallace goes on to say that each member of the society must maintain a mental image of the society and culture. This mental image (what to this point I have referred to as frame of reference) Wallace calls "*the Mazeway*." "*The mazeway is nature, society, culture, personality, and body image, as seen by one person*." This idea of the revitalization of the organism presumes that something has gone wrong in it. Rather than deprivation as others have suggested, Wallace proposes that sufficient "*stress*" to any system of the mazeway can trigger the revitalization process. This is the basis, as introduced in chapter 1, for Christopher Miller's assertion that the Plateau people's mazeway was assaulted by disease and a volcanic eruption supplying the stress necessary for the birth of the Prophet Dance. Miller's assertion is certainly plausible since the Native mazeway, by its very nature, is so interconnected with its environment. The reconstruction of the mazeway under the Prophet Dance and its Christianized form would last until the separation of the tribes into treaty and non-treaty factions and their removal from ancestral lands. With the renewed cultural assault, the stress to the Indian mazeway again became tremendous. This resulted in Smohalla's revitalization movement.

Yet, before we continue with Smohalla's response to this stress, Burkean terminology should be incorporated into Wallace's framework. As just stated, I have used the term frame of reference for the same concept as "*mazeway*." This mazeway could also be seen as the world view of the individual actor in the scene. Adding Burkean concepts and terminology I maintain that the mazeway, at any given point, tends toward a tragic view or a comic view. Wallace states that "*the perception of stress, particularly increasing stress, can be viewed as the common denominator of the panel of 'drives' or 'instincts' in every psychological theory*." He goes on to say that the individual experiencing increasing stress "*must choose between maintaining his present mazeway and tolerating the stress, or changing the mazeway in an attempt to reduce the stress*." To use a dramaturgical term here, stress translates into conflict, the ever present element of drama. In the drama, there must be a resolution to the conflict for the story's completion. Burke uses the term "*comic correctives*" as the expression of the comic frame. Essentially then,

as conflict arises in the individual mazeway it must be resolved through tragic catharsis or comic corrective, or if you will, comic relief.

Wallace describes the process of revitalization as a series of cyclical phases.

I.) *Period of generally satisfactory adaptation* to a group's social and natural environment. For the Plateau people the original Prophet Dance and Christianized Prophet Dance accomplished this state. Yet, it also contained the tragic prophecy of their world falling to pieces.

II.) *Period of increased individual stress*. The missionary period began this phase with the introduction of the law and an increasing tragic frame.

III.) *Period of cultural distortion*. After the treaty of 1855 the changes in the group's social and natural environment drastically reduced their ability to effectively deal with the stress or conflict. In describing this stage Wallace points out that "*rigid persons apparently prefer to tolerate high levels of chronic stress,*" while "*more flexible persons try out various limited mazeway changes.*" The more rigid personalities among the Nez Perce would adapt to the law and its accompanying stress while the more flexible, comic frame, would seek revitalization.

IV.) *Period of revitalization*: (1) reformulation of the cultural pattern, (2) its communication, (3) organization of a reformulated cultural pattern, (4) adaptation of the reformulated pattern to better meet the needs of the group, (5) cultural transformation, (6) routinization--the adapted reformulated cultural pattern becomes the standard cultural behavior. The treaty Indians reformulated their cultural pattern by adapting to the white man's way and adopting the law. This enabled them to identify themselves with the mechanisms of tragic catharsis already established in white society. The non-treaty bands on the other hand, choosing a nativistic approach, opted for a comic corrective.

V.) *New period of generally satisfactory adaptation*. The treaty bands seem to arrive here by entering into the new white mazeway. But due to the forces of white culture imposing its law (exemplified in the scene between Toohoolhoolsoot and Howard), the non-treaty bands cannot firmly establish their desired mazeway as they reach back for the comic frame. The comic corrective periodically arises attempting to bring resolution to the conflict being experienced by the non-treaty bands. It is to this scene that we return to Smohalla's attempt toward revitalization. As the conflict begins at the individual level, so also the revitalization begins at the individual level. Hence the appearance of the prophet.

Wallace writes that the basic methodological principle employed in his study is that of event analysis. In other words, the actors and the scene may vary, but uniform patterns of behavior will be evident independent of cultural differences. *"For example,"* Wallace says, a *"sequence of happenings following a severe physical disaster in cities in Japan, the United States, and Germany, will display a uniform pattern, colored but not obscured by local differences."* He calls these patterns *"behavioral units"* and his revitalization process is such a unit. What we just did using Alice Kehoe's description of the process of revitalization was simply substitute the Plateau people and events into the process she had the Iroquois plugged into. In Burkean terms we substituted the actors and the scene. Burke delineated a method of viewing an event or discourse using five elements which he called *"the pentad."* He said:

*"Dramatism centers in observations of this sort: for there to be an **act**, there must be an **agent**. Similarly there must be a **scene** in which the agent acts. To act in a scene, the agent must employ some means, or **agency**. And it can be called an act in the full sense of the term only if it involves a **purpose** (that is, if a support happens to give way and one falls, such motion on the agent's part is not an act, but an accident.)"*

Burke proposes that the element which is focused upon in a discourse reveals the dominant philosophy:

**Act** featured - "**realism**"

(not just existence but actively "taking form;" verb centered)

**Scene** featured "**materialism**," "secular"

(Origin of the Species: "accidental variation" "natural selection" "survival of the fittest")

**Agent** featured - "**idealism**"

(universe is the work of reason/intellect; treating ideas as personalities)

**Agency** featured - "**pragmatism**"

(the means necessary to the attainment of happiness; utilitarian)

**Purpose** featured - "**mysticism**"

(speculative and religious thought; immediate attainment of the divine essence)

These elements of an event can be joined in many different ratios to be used in examining different aspects of the event. Since in Wallace's process the agents and the scene can vary but the process remains, I would like to focus our

attention to the other aspects that remain, (recognizing of course that none of the elements can be ignored). Most writing that has been done on the subject of these revitalization movements of the Native American have focused on the agents (biographical) and the act/scene ratio (historical). Since our focus is religious prophecy, an agency (prophecy)/ purpose(attainment of divine essence) ratio will dominate our perspective. Yet, this does in no way eliminate the presence of the other elements. The agents or actors in our revitalization scene who are involved in the prophetic aspects are represented in Thomas Overholt's model of the prophetic process. Overholt examines the dynamics of the prophetic act itself.

*"The prophetic process is defined as one of reciprocal interaction and adjustment between a minimum of three distinct actors or groups: the supernatural, the prophet, and the people to whom the prophet's message is addressed. This interaction takes place within a concrete historical-cultural situation, which is reflected both in the prophet's message and his auditor's evaluation of it."*

This interaction is represented as a communication process by Overholt in the following diagram.

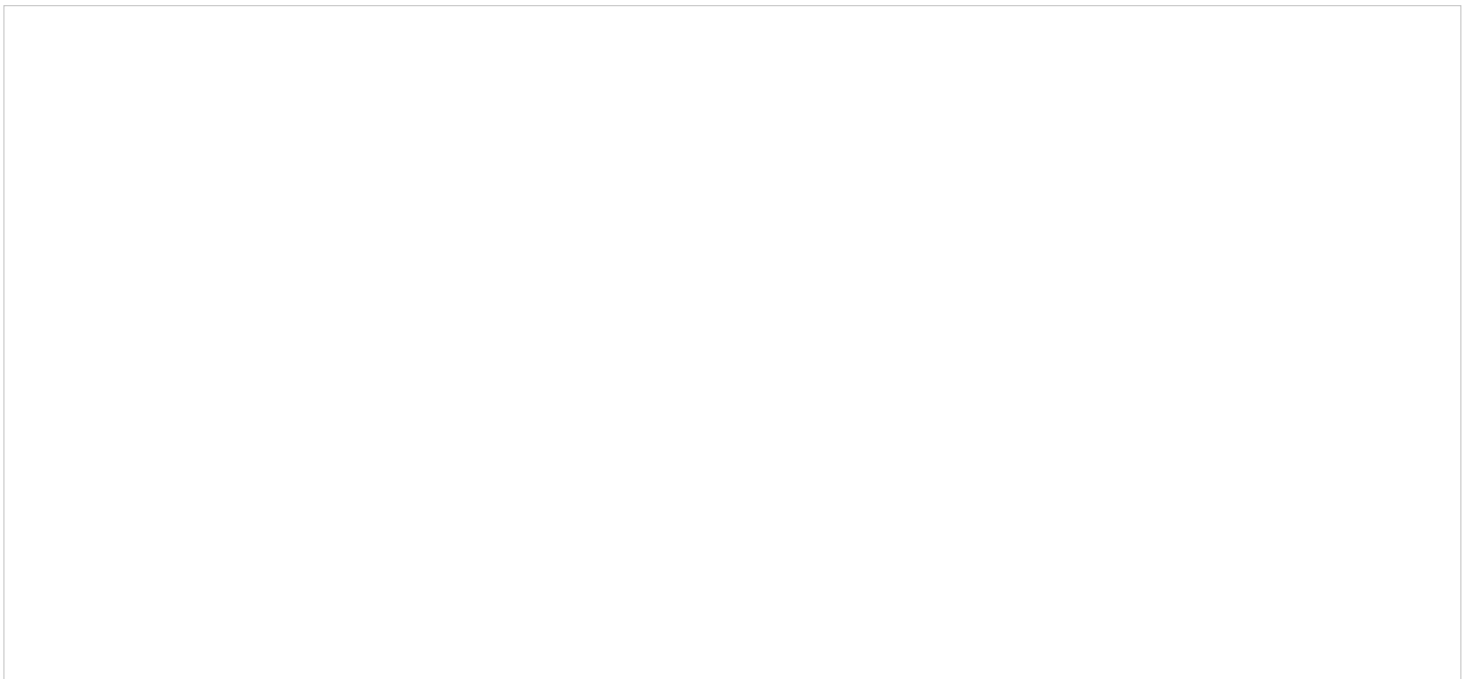


Figure 1.

Overholt's paper focuses primarily on the interaction between the prophet and the people. Of the prophet he says:

*"The prophet functions as the messenger of the supernatural power to the people, and we can therefore identify two bases for his authority: revelation (primary, private, theological) and acceptance by the people (secondary, public, existential). The second of these is both the most tangible and the most crucial, since it is the auditors who must decide whether or not, or how, to act in response to the prophet's message. In coming to their decision they will in*



*effect test the cultural 'competence' of that message by deciding whether or not it is in continuity with the broad cultural tradition and congruous with the current socio-political situation".*

In other words the message must be wrapped in the symbolism of the culture and be applicable to real, day to day life. (This is why Christianity constantly runs into conflict with native societies in its insistence upon the adoption of an entirely different symbology. This of course is the essence of the earlier discussion of the early Church's Gentile/Jew conflict.) Overholt affirms that the interaction between the prophet and the people is what is most often studied as it is observable using the tools of history. But for our purpose here looking at the interaction between prophet and supernatural is primary and the other relationships secondary. Overholt states, *"The supernatural is the least tangible component in the process, since...it cannot be observed directly but can only be represented or symbolized by sensory reality."* Nevertheless, there are certain things we can know about the supernatural based upon the symbolic interaction evident in the revelation. The tools of rhetorical criticism enable us to examine the symbology of the prophet/supernatural discourse, at least to a degree.

## CHAPTER 14

# COYOTE'S PROPHETS

The hand of the LORD was upon me, and carried me out in the spirit of the LORD, and set me down in the midst of the valley which was full of bones, and caused me to pass by them round about: and, behold, there were very many in the open valley; and, lo, they were very dry.

And he said unto me, Son of man, can these bones live? And I answered, O Lord GOD, thou knowest.

Again he said unto me, Prophecy upon these bones, and say unto them, O ye dry bones, hear the word of the LORD. Thus saith the Lord GOD unto these bones; Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live: And I will lay sinews upon you, and will bring up flesh upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and ye shall live; and ye shall know that I am the LORD.

So I prophesied as I was commanded: and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and behold a shaking, and the bones came together, bone to his bone. And when I beheld, lo, the sinews and the flesh came up upon them, and the skin covered them above: but there was no breath in them.

Then said he unto me, Prophecy unto the wind, prophecy, son of man, and say to the wind, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live.

So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army.

The Nez Perce were destined for war. After the Lapwai council, Joseph's bands decided to move onto the reservation. Joseph spoke for peace. Toohoolhoolsoot spoke for war, gathering arms and a following of young warriors. Collecting as much of their stock and possessions as possible in the short time they had been given to do so by Howard, Joseph and Toohoolhoolsoot's bands met with White Bird and the other non-treaty bands just a few miles from the reservation. It was June 2, twelve days before the deadline set for them to be on the reservation. They set camp to dig camas roots and reflect on their plight before they left freedom for the boundaries of the reservation. Ten days later, during which time the war spirit grew, two young warriors who were riding together on the same horse in a war parade, crushed some kouse roots laying out on a canvas to dry next to the tipi of Yellow Grizzly Bear.

He shouted at one of the boys, *"See what you do! Playing brave you ride over my woman's hard-worked food! If you are so brave, why don't you go kill the white man who killed your father!"*

The young warrior's name was *"Wahlitits."* His father, Eagle Robe, had been murdered by a white man who had never been brought to justice for the deed. Before his father died he pleaded with his son not to take revenge but to let the white man live.

Wahlitits looked at Yellow Grizzly Bear; pained, he said, *"You will be sorry for your words."*

The next day with two other warriors he went in search of his father's murderer. They didn't find him. But by the end of the following day they had killed four other white men and wounded a storekeeper. The match had been struck that would ignite the famous Nez Perce War. Four months later, after maneuvering through impossible mountains and winning impossible battles in one of the most incredible treks for freedom in history, Joseph surrendered. The bands were forty miles from the Canadian border where they were fleeing to join Sitting Bull. Toohoolhoolsoot was killed in the last battle of the war at Bear Paw Mountain in Montana. The Palouse Dreamer, Hush-Hushcote, survived to accompany Joseph into captivity in the Indian Territory (Oklahoma). The June 1878 issue of the **Council Fire and Arbitrator** stated that the captives under the influence of the *"Walla Walla Dreamer"* still believed that a deliverer would come to save them so *"that they need not labor and adopt the white man's laws."* Even immersed in one of the most powerful tragedies of American history, the Dreamers danced with coyote.

Hush-Hushcote and Toohoolhoolsoot were goaded by the scapegoat into taking up a crusade against the whites. Joseph always held that it was the short notice given them to move onto the reservation and the high-handed, humiliating

treatment of Toohoolhoolsoot that had caused the war. It was war that the whites feared all the Dreamers would bring. This is why Smohalla had become such a great concern of the military, and the rumors that raged around the subject of the Prophet increased that fear. The year following the Nez Perce flight brought war with the Northern Paiutes and the Bannocks along the Columbia. Another Paiute Dreamer-Prophet named Oytes, again tormented Howard. Oytes excited the people by claiming, *"I can defeat all my enemies! No bullet can hurt me. I have the power to kill any of you! It is wrong to dig up the face of the earth,-the earth is our mother; we must live on what grows of itself."* Whites believed that Smohalla was the cause of these dreamer beliefs. Howard saw Smohalla as one of the greatest threats to peace in the interior; after all it was his doctrine that had incited the Nez Percés to choose to fight. The editor of the **Tacoma Herald** described Smohalla as probably the most dangerous Indian in the country, *"roaming through the Yakima valley at will, ready at any moment to give the signal for murder, rapine and pillage."* None of these images were accurate concerning Smohalla.

## Smohalla

Smohalla believed that war with the whites was not only foolhardy, it was wrong. He held that the Great Spirit would deliver them from the white's oppression, not war. His teachings inspired the Nez Perce and the other tribes of the plateau who opposed the reservations, but he never promised them protection from the whites. Throughout the years of tension after the Nez Perce War, Smohalla did his best to avoid contact with whites. Because he dwelt alongside Chief Moses, who did his best to be accommodating to Howard, he managed to do so. After 1878 he did have to leave his village at Priest Rapids for a time to stay out of harms way, but on August 8, 1879, Howard wrote the governor of Washington Territory that he believed it would be best to discontinue proceedings against Moses and Smohalla as he did not see them as threatening to go to war. Smohalla was left alone until the opening of the Northern Pacific Railroad in 1883, which would again bring problems to the Indians of the area.

Most of what we know of Smohalla comes from one Major J. W. MacMurray who was sent by General Nelson A. Miles to collect information on the cause of disturbances in the area. Many Indians by this time had secured homesteads under the law, but the railroad was located through Indian fields and orchards with little respect for their rights. The Indians requested protection from the military while settlers complained to the Indian agents that the natives should be removed to the reservations. MacMurray was sent to the scene of these disturbances in June 1884, where he spent about a year visiting villages along the Columbia. Of his instructions he wrote:

*"General Miles...instructed me to exercise the utmost patience with the Indians humoring their desire to explain their view, which I afterward found extended to the discussion of the philosophy of the universe, from the creation to futurity; and they were anxious to impress General Miles, through me, with the purity of their intentions, and the theological authority of their opinions...I was glad to hear from its prophet or leading priests as full an exposition of its origin, foundation and characteristics as possible. This I had at Smohalla's village...of Priest Rapids."*

Smohalla was known as "*Shmóqûla*," (the Preacher) by his disciples and people. His band consisted of only about 200 people but his disciples numbered in the thousands. MacMurray described him as "*a finished orator. His manner is mostly of the bland, insinuating, persuasive style, but when aroused he is full of fire and seems to handle invectives effectively. His audience seemed spellbound under his magic manner...*"

Smohalla was described as possessing "*the same curious mixture of honest conviction and cunning deception that runs through the history of priestcraft in all ages.*" This is due to MacMurray's report that he used an almanac to predict eclipses. He asked the Major to readjust an almanac he had from the previous year "*as it did not work as it had formally done.*" Smohalla had powerful credibility among his people due to successful predictions of eclipses and the weather. MacMurray reported that Smohalla asked him to fix the 1882 almanac so that it would work for 1884, and his inability to do so cost him a great deal of respect, for the prophet saw him as a wise man from the east. Trickster or not, MacMurray believed the prophet to be sincere toward his faith.

Since the current troubles between the whites and Indians were over disputes concerning land, the Major was asked to explain how the Indian homestead law worked and how the white man divided the land. Using a checkerboard, MacMurray showed them how the land was measured into equal squares so that each man could find his own land. He urged them to apply for their own homesteads; that way they would not have to go onto reservations and could avoid trouble with the new settlers who were streaming into their country. Smohalla replied that this new law was against nature, and he did not like it. He went on to relate to MacMurray his belief:

*"Once the world was all water and God lived alone. He was lonesome, he had no place to put his foot, so he scratched the sand up from the bottom and made the land, and he made the rocks, and he made the trees, and he made a man; and the man had wings and could go anywhere. The man was lonesome, and God made a woman...Many more men and women grew up...*

*There were so many people that the stronger ones sometimes oppressed the weak...They fought and nearly all were killed...God was very angry at this and took away their wings and commanded that the lands and fisheries should be*

*common to all who lived on them; that they were never to be marked off or divided, but that the people should enjoy the fruits that God planted in the land, and the animals that lived upon it, and the fishes in the water. God said he was the father and the earth was the mother of mankind; that nature was the law; that the animals, and fish, and plants obeyed nature, and that man only was sinful. This is the old law...*

*Those who cut up the land or sign papers for lands will be defrauded of their rights and will be punished by God's anger. Moses was bad. [Chief Moses] God did not love him. He sold his people's houses and the graves of their dead. It is a bad word that comes from Washington. It is not a good law that would take my people away from me to make them sin against the laws of God.*

*You ask me to plow the ground! Shall I take a knife and tear my mother's bosom? Then when I die she will not take me to her bosom to rest.*

*You ask me to dig for stone! Shall I dig under her skin for her bones? Then when I die I can not enter her body to be born again.*

*You ask me to cut grass and make hay and sell it, and be rich like the white men! But how dare I cut off my mother's hair?*

*It is a bad law and my people cannot obey it. I want my people to stay with me here. All the dead men will come to life again. Their spirits will come to their bodies again. We must wait here in the homes of our fathers and be ready to meet them in the bosom of our mother.*

Concerning Smohalla's doctrine, Leslie Spier thought that it was identical to the Prophet Dance. There was the belief in the imminent destruction of the world, the earth woman, and the resurrection of the dead. Smohalla's dance differed somewhat in form, not being circular, but the aspect of vision trances was very prevalent. MacMurray described that Smohalla *"falls into trances and lies rigid for considerable periods."* He claimed that unbelievers had experimented with the prophet while in trances by sticking him with needles and cutting him to see if he would respond to pain. It was reported that he was surely dead for he didn't even bleed. *"I questioned him as to his trances and hoped to have him explain them to me, but he avoided the subject and was angered when I pressed him. He manifestly believes all he says of what occurs to him in his trance state."* The only doctrinal difference from the Prophet Dance, Spier claims, lays *"in a fiercely nationalistic turn which emphasizes the annihilation of the whites at doomsday."* This is true of many of the Dreamers of the time, especially those involved in wars with the United States government, but it is not true of Smohalla's doctrine.

Certainly Smohalla's revival was nationalistic, or to use Linton's term nativistic. It absolutely emphasized the importance of holding to Indian traditions and the rejection of white ways, but Smohalla did not proclaim the white man would be

annihilated by God. His doctrine specified that, *"Those who cut up the land or sign papers for lands will be defrauded of their rights and will be punished by God's anger."* Among these he specifically included Chief Moses, an Indian. This judgment was not racially based but action or behaviorally based. This type of millennial judgment based upon the individual's actions is completely compatible with Judeo-Christian theology. To illustrate Paul writes:

*"To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life: But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile; But glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile: **For there is no respect of persons with God.** For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law; (For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified. For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;) In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel."*

Smohalla's law, although different than the Ten Commandments, was the law he believed he would be judged by, and as pointed out previously, this is central to Christianity as defined by Paul, that you are saved by faith and not adherence to a specific law. More importantly here, Smohalla's doctrine also leaves the work of judgment in God's hands, not man's. And Smohalla also believed, like Paul, that God does not judge based on race or culture.

Smohalla's doctrine was certainly nativistic but it was not in any way racist and it had no scapegoat. Smohalla did not lay blame, he left that to *"God's anger."* The comic voice of Coyote is clearly heard in Smohalla's maze. Yet, for many of his disciples, the white scapegoat was paramount, leading them to war. Captain E. L. Huggins, of the Second cavalry also interviewed Smohalla and posed this question to him:

*"It is said, Smohalla, that you hate all white men."*

*"It is not true."* replied Smohalla, *"But the whites have caused us great suffering."* He went on to relate the wrongs that had been done to his people, especially the diseases which had been brought. He claimed that Whitman had deliberately poisoned the Indians causing the Cayuse massacre at his mission so many years before, but the prophet emphatically restated, *"If they tell you Smohalla hates all white people, do not believe it."*

Much also can be learned about this doctrine from Smohalla's chief disciple and assistant, "*Kotai'aqan*," or as MacMurray spelled it, "*Coteea'kun*." He was the son of the great war chief of the Yakima's, Kamai'äkan. MacMurray relates Kotai'aqan's story of the cosmos which is essentially in agreement with Smohalla's, but he then goes on to describe the Dreamer's view on the resurrection and red/white relationships. MacMurray writes:

*"...Coteeakun went on to say that some day Saghalee Tyee would again overturn the mountains and so expose these bones (of the ancient animal people), which, having been preserved through so great a time, would be reoccupied by the spirits which now dwell in the mountain tops, watching their descendants on earth and waiting for the resurrection to come. The voices of these spirits of the dead can be heard at all times in the mountains, and often they answer back when spoken to. Mourners who wail for their dead hear spirit voices replying, and know they will always remain near them. No man knows when it will come, and only those who have observed nature's laws and adhered to the faith of their ancestors will have their bones preserved and be certain of an earthly tenement for their spirits. He wanted me to confirm this.*

*Coteeakun was pacific and gentle. He said that all men were as brothers to him and he hoped all would dwell together. He had been told that white and black and all other kinds of men originally dwelt in tents, as the red men always have done, and that God in former times came to commune with white men. He thought there could only be one Saghalee Tyee, in which case white and red men would live on a common plane. We came from one source of life and in time would **'grow from one stem again. It would be like one stick that the whites held by one end and the Indians by the other until it was broken, and it would be made again into one stick.'**"*

As the Dreamer's doctrine first proceeded from Smohalla and his closest disciple it clearly exhibits the comic frame of reference. Not only this, it also parallels in content and structure the prophecy of Ezekiel. After Ezekiel's vision of the valley of dry bones coming to life with sinew, flesh, and the winds of breath, his prophecy of the stick of Judah being joined with the stick of Ephraim follows immediately.

*Moreover, thou son of man, take thee one stick, and write upon it, For Judah, and for the children of Israel his companions: then take another stick, and write upon it, For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim, and for all the house of Israel his companions: And join them one to another into one stick; and they shall become one in thine hand.*

This prophecy not only represents the joining of the tribes of Israel, the symbology extends to the joining of the law and the spirit. It also parallels the treaty and non-treaty Nez Perce, the Jew and the Christian; it is the tragedy

fulfilled in the completed comedy. In some manner Coyote's prophets spoke here in the same symbolic language of the ancient Hebrew prophet about a similar millennial day to come. This symbology of the two sticks being joined would not end with these prophets.

From the place MacMurray called "*the fountainhead*" of the Dreamer's doctrine, Smohalla's voice went out to many tribes from his humble abode at Priest Rapids. As his message went it picked up tragic baggage. This is no different than the tragic baggage of the law that assimilated into the Christian message as it traveled out from the original disciples. Paul struggled to reintroduce the comic frame, the message of grace, back into the church who had received the firstfruits of the completed sacrifice of the scapegoat Christ. Paul's message was a comic corrective. On the plateau, the comic voice of the trickster Coyote, proclaimed his comic corrective, awaiting the day when the firstfruits festival of the Prophet Dance would be filled with the substance of the resurrection.

Even today Coyote's voice is still heard on the Plateau. Smohalla never saw the twentieth century. He died in 1895 remaining resolute in his faith. Over the decades most Indians drifted away from the faith as they were pushed into the tragic frame. They were driven by the encroaching whites away from the fisheries and the root grounds, sent to reservations and boarding schools, their Indianness bound from them. But even as late as the 1980's modern day Smohallan disciples called the So-Happy family defied Washington and Oregon state laws regulating salmon fishing. They claimed they had been given the right to do so by the Great Spirit. The tragic frame may still have to deal with Coyote's voice in the Pom Pom, or Seven Drum practitioners that remain today. Their ceremonies do not call for the demise of the whites, rather they bring to remembrance what it means to be Indian. Puck Hyah Toot conducted the First-roots feasts well into modern times. Ruby reports that, "*One participant told a white visitor, 'This is one day of the year when they [the children] can be Indians.'*" But irony is also alive and well at the ceremonies. "*When a young lad was caught reading a comic book during the ceremonial, his mother quickly snatched it from him.*"

## Wovoka

The debate created by Leslie Spier's thesis that the Prophet Dance was aboriginal in origin is not as intense as the debate over his premise that it was also the prelude to the Ghost Dance of the Plains Indians. Scholars have argued for years whether or not the Ghost Dance was a product of deprivation or the diffusion of the Prophet Dance doctrine. It does not seem that these two theories need to be viewed as mutually exclusive. Spier believed that Jack Wilson's religion was a version of the Prophet Dance known to the Northern Paiute, and that elements of Christianity were very much a part of the religion by the time it reached the



Paiute. The continuum proposed by Spier: aboriginal Plateau Prophet Dance (1790 and earlier), to Christianized Prophet Dance, to Great Basin Ghost Dance of 1870, to Wovoka's (Jack Wilson's) Ghost Dance 1889, to Plains Ghost Dance 1890-?)

Michael Hittman took exception to this continuum pointing to the fact that there was very little evidence to support such a view other than the similarities in doctrine. He proposed that there is sufficient evidence to support the deprivation theory. White expansionism at the time caused loss of territory and the decline of traditional foods, which resulted in starvation and epidemics claiming the lives of approximately 125 persons of the Northern Paiute on the Walker River reservation. During the 1860's, a fish Lake Valley Paiute named "Wodziwob" or "Fish Lake Joe" migrated to the reservation. In 1868 or 1869 he proclaimed two prophecies: the dead would be resurrected, and the earth would be made new again. He was perceived as a shaman who could "cure 'loss of soul,' i.e., resurrect the recently deceased." This was a curing rite in which the prophet chose to use a traditional round dance ceremony. The Paiute believed that Wodziwob also had power to control the weather. Hittman summarizes:

*"The activities of 1870 Ghost Dance prophet Wodziwob led us to define his role as that of crisis-broker, in that he utilized two time-honored and time-tested Paiute techniques of crisis mediation--shamanistic resurrection of the dead and weather control--in order to help alleviate the sufferings of the Walker Reservation Paiute."*

The conditions present here in the 1860's would seem to present sufficient "stress" (the term utilized by Wallace) to spark a revitalization movement. The accounts of this revival are sketchy. There is little evidence one way or the other to indicate whether the revival had the nativistic tendencies that Smohalla's did, but there is evidence for the comic frame of reference in the vision. According to one informant, Wodziwob went into a trance where he learned that the:

*"Supreme Ruler...was then on his way with all the spirits of the departed dead to again reside upon the earth and change it into a paradise. Life was to be eternal and no distinction was to exist between the races. Another Paiute recalled, in the 1920's, that Wodziwob preached that, Our fathers are coming, our mothers are coming, they are coming pretty soon. You had better dance. Never stop for a long time. Swim. Paint in white and black and red paint. Every morning wash and paint. Everybody be happy."*

These two accounts show the absence of the racial scapegoat and a dance with the command attached to it--"be happy." Whether inherited from the Plateau or not, the comic tone of a firstfruits festival dance in Coyote's tradition are rhetorical elements of the doctrine.

Mooney recorded Wovoka's father to be the 1870 Prophet of Mason Valley, "Tävibo." He also stated that "Waughzeewaughber" was another name for the

prophet. Cora Du Bois demonstrated that the founder of the Ghost Dance was "Wodziwob" which Hittman reported meant "Grey Head." He showed that he was also known as "Fish Lake Joe" and "Hawthorne Woziwob." Wovoka's father's name was "Numu-tibo'o" which is translated "Northern Paiute-White Man." This has often been the cause of thinking that Wovoka was a half-breed; he was not. Hittman makes a distinction between these two, Wodziwob and Numu-tibo'o, saying that *"the exact role in the 1870 Ghost Dance played by Wovoka's father has yet to be determined."* Mooney also noted that it was not quite certain that the Paiute Prophet of 1870 was Wovoka's father, but informants had reported it to be true. Wovoka himself said *"that his father did not preach, but was a 'dreamer' with supernatural powers."*

Few Indians have been as misunderstood as Wovoka. Mooney writes that:

*"Different writers have made him a Paiute, a half-blood, and a Mormon white man. Numberless stories have been told of the origin and character of his mission and the day predicted for its final accomplishment. The most mischievous and persistent of these stories has been that which represents him as preaching a bloody campaign against the whites, whereas his doctrine is one of peace, and he himself is a mild-tempered member of a weak and unwarlike tribe...He has been denounced as an impostor, ridiculed as a lunatic, and laughed at as a pretend Christ, while among the Indians he is revered as a direct messenger from the Other World, and among many of the remote tribes he is believed to be omniscient, to speak all languages, and to be invisible to white men."*

The books that have been written concerning the prophet since Mooney's day also leave much to be desired. In a review of Michael Hittman's recent book on the prophet, Åke Hultkrantz writes that *"Hittman has accomplished an important task. The story of Wovoka now rests on firmer ground."* Hittman offers a well documented picture of Wovoka. What appears is a man who is kindly disposed to everyone, made no distinction between races, worked hard, was upright, truthful, and well liked by those who lived near him.

Wovoka means "Cutter" or most probably "Woodcutter." He got the name Jack Wilson from the David Wilson family with whom he lived and worked. Here, at the Wilson farm as a boy, he was subjected to the Presbyterian religion. To what extent has never been accurately determined, but chapters from the Bible were read aloud every day before work. How much was understood or even listened to by the young boy cannot be known. Mooney reports that when he was about 20 years old he married and continued to work for Wilson. He had never been away from the Mason Valley and only spoke Paiute *"with some little knowledge of English."* He could not read or write and knew no sign language. Wovoka reported that he received his vision on the day *"the sun died."* This is most likely the total eclipse of January 1, 1889. Mooney's record says:

*"...he fell asleep in the daytime and was taken up to the other world. Here he saw God, with all the people who had died long ago engaged in their oldtime sports and occupations, all happy and forever young. It was a pleasant land and full of game. After showing him all, God told him he must go back and tell his people they must be good and love one another, have no quarreling, and live in peace with the whites; that they must work, and not lie or steal; that they must put away all the old practices that savored of war; that if they faithfully obeyed his instructions they would at last be reunited with their friends in this other world, where there would be no more death or sickness or old age. He was then given the dance which he was commanded to bring back to his people. By performing this dance at intervals, for five consecutive days each time, they would secure this happiness to themselves and hasten the event. Finally God gave him control over the elements so he could make it rain or snow or be dry at will, and appointed him his deputy to take charge of the affairs in the west, while 'Governor Harrison' [President Harrison] would attend to matters in the east, and he, God, would look after the world above. He then returned to earth and began to preach as he was directed, convincing the people by exercising the wonderful powers that had been given to him."*

Wovoka's message has all the elements of comic millennialism inherent in the Prophet Dance, but unlike Smohalla's message it is not nativistic. On the contrary, when questioned directly about his attitude toward whites, he said he believed that it was better to follow the white man's road and to adopt the habits of civilization. This is not unusual considering his being raised on the Wilson ranch. He earnestly denied that his religion was in any way hostile toward whites asserting that it was a religion of universal peace. Some have suggested that Wovoka's religion was nothing more than a sham as it proceeded from the prophet, that he claimed to be the Christ, that he resorted to cheap trickery to keep up the impression of having miraculous power, and that it was an income which he was truly after seeing that he sold his clothing, feathers, paint, and other items of spiritual power. Yet, it is clear that he never claimed to be the Messiah. As his message spread across the Plains many of his disciples began to believe that he was, but by and large he was considered a prophet. Mooney wrote, *"He makes no claim to be the Christ, the Son of God,...He does claim to be a prophet, who has received a divine revelation."* Whether he used trickery or not does not enhance or detract from his message, for this is not uncommon among Coyote's prophets and compatible with the trickster frame of reference. It is always the claim of those who fundamentally disbelieve in miracles, and every *"faith healer"* of the modern age has this label attached to them. As to regulating Wovoka to the category of conducting a personal cargo cult, one wonders what was said by the critics of the day when Elijah took the last bread from a widow woman and her son for himself. The tradition of receiving material substance for spiritual ministry is clearly established when Mary Magdalene offered the perfumed ointment on Christ's feet. When the disciple complained of such waste saying, *"This could have been sold and given to the poor,"* Jesus said that what she had done would be remembered where ever the Gospel would be preached. Giving to

the one who has taught you spiritual things is, according to Paul, an act of worship, and receiving such gifts in the name of God is a requirement of a prophet. It is unlikely that Wovoka was dishonest. Mooney says, *"I accept his statements with several grains of salt, but on the whole he seemed to be honest in his belief and his supernatural claims."*

Wovoka's message spread across the plains with a fury greater than that of a prairie wild fire. L. G. Moses writes, *"Like Joel, Paul, and countless other prophets and religious leaders, Wovoka dreamed a dream and had seen a vision. That his vision was unshared by the majority of his countrymen should not diminish his contributions..."* His vision did not always retain its comic frame as it flew across the plains, but the power of Coyote's message is strong. Even through its many tragic interpretations the Word of promised peace would survive. Wovoka's message often took on the baggage of tragedy. Alice Kehoe writes:

*"Jack Wilson was a prophet of peace. Like Jesus, he was both model and teacher of pacifism. His Gospel, like Jesus', spread far beyond his native land, carried by men often of languages and cultural traditions different from his own. Jack Wilson's professed disciples, like those following Jesus, in time came to include persons who failed to grasp the central importance of peace in the gospel. The Roman Emperor Constantine took the monogram of Christ for a magic sign to bring him victory in battle; the Teton Sioux (Lakota) leader Kicking Bear, in the spring of 1890, introduced to his fellow western Sioux a special shirt about which he claimed, 'The bullets will not go through these shirts and dresses, so they all have these dresses for war. A Prince of Peace was again betrayed.'"*

Yet, there would be one important man, from that far off tribe of Lakota, who would hear Wovoka's gospel, who would wear the Ghost Shirt, who would hear the song of Messiah, and while dancing Coyote's dance, would find himself dancing the tragic dance of war. He was a *"wicaša wakan,"* a holy man, his name was Nicholas Black Elk.

## **Black Elk Speaks**

*"...for Lakotas symbols were not merely empty signs. They expressed identity: the symbol and the symbolized were one."*

It was in August, 1930, when John Neihardt, a *"Wasichu"* (white man), went in search of what he would later perceive to be a fateful meeting with a Lakota holy man.

*"It was a dead-end road that led through the treeless, yellow hills to Black Elk's home--a one room log cabin with weeds growing out of the dirt roof. Two old 'long-hairs,' who lived in similar cabins in sight of the road, mounted ponies and followed us, curious to know what might be going on yonder. Little else but weather ever happened in that country--other than sun and moon and stars going over--and there was little for the old men to do but wait for yesterday."*

Neihardt's Indian guide, Flying Hawk, said he didn't think the old man would talk. Just the week before he had refused to talk to a white woman who was writing an article on Crazy Horse. The famous chief was the old man's second cousin. Neihardt began to worry that the holy man would not talk about the things he held sacred. But the old men, the long hairs on ponies who followed the car up the dead-end road, would see a meeting that day that might itself be considered sacred. It would be the meeting of yesterday, today, and the future, the meeting of tragedy and comedy, the binding of two sticks.

*"When we arrived, Black Elk was standing outside a shade made of pine boughs. It was noon. When we left, after sunset, Flying Hawk said, 'That was kind of funny, the way the old man seemed to know you were coming!' My son remarked that he had the same impression; and when I had known the great old man for some years I was quite prepared to believe that he did know, for he certainly had supernormal powers."*

Neihardt described his experience that day in a letter written shortly after the event:

*"He struck me as being a bit uncanny in his intuitions; not that he favored me, but he seemed to know what was inside the visitor. He told me--the sphinx-like old chap--that, as he sat there, he felt in my heart a very strong will to know the things of the other world and that a spirit, which stood behind me, had forced me to come to him that I might learn a little from him. In spite of the sound of this statement, he was very modest, modest as a man may be who is sure of what he knows and that what he knows is worth knowing. I had no difficulty whatever with him. He seemed to be expecting me and welcomed me as though he had seen me often. He began by saying that he must tell me his whole story in so far as it could be done in the time we had, but it would take a long, long time to tell it all. First, he said he could not speak to me without giving me some reason to know that he had authority to speak. 'I am just a common man, but I have a gift of vision, which has been hereditary in my family and I must tell you of my people before I tell you of my life so that you may trust me.'"*

Thus began a relationship that would result in one of the most important documents ever to be drawn up between an Indian and a white man. In the 1960's, **Black Elk Speaks**, would become a favorite book of the counterculture

which had rejected the materialism of modern America. Through the book's popularity, Black Elk's words would find their way back to not only the Lakota, but to Indians and whites from many tribes, uniting them in a common vision that had seemed for many decades to have been lost.

Black Elk was born an Oglala Lakota in the winter of 1863. He grew up as a member of Big Road's band which wandered and hunted in the western-most part of the Sioux country, on the other side of the Black Hills. In 1863, these western bands still followed the old ways of the spirit beings, and at age nine the young boy received his "*Wakinyan*." His vision came from the Thunder-beings giving him prophetic power. It was many years before Black Elk would seek help from his elders to have his vision "*straightened out*."

During those years his tribe fled to Canada after Crazy Horse was killed in 1877. They stayed there with Sitting Bull for three years. There they must have seen the refugee Nez Perce, who had escaped the battle of Bear Paw, and listened to their tragic stories. Just after returning to the United States his family saw that he was different, afraid of the thunder, and they knew he had dreamed a powerful vision. Black Road, the medicine man, instructed Black Elk when the 17 year old came to him to relieve the fear. The usual course for one who had a vision of the Thunder-beings was to participate in a "*heyoka*" ceremony. The thunder dreamers would play the role of Thunder's messengers by acting foolishly, doing things backwards and making themselves as clowns to be laughed at. But rather than "*heyoka*," Black Road suggested that Black Elk act out part of his powerful vision in a horse dance. From this point forward Black Elk became a powerful medicine man of the Oglala. It was the Spring of 1881. He continued to seek understanding of his vision and he went on another vision quest. This time, when he returned, he sponsored the "*heyoka*" ceremony, and afterward, when his people had moved to the Pine Ridge reservation, he performed many ceremonies and worked that his vision would be understood and established. Of the "*heyoka*" Black Elk said, "*You have noticed that the truth comes into this world with two faces. One is sad with suffering, and the other laughs; but it is the same face, laughing or weeping.*" "*Heyoka*" taught Black Elk much about the paradox of truth.

In 1886 he joined Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show. He wanted to know the white man's ways. They had much power. His people were taking up farming and ranching like the white man, and he thought if he went to their cities he could know their power. First he went to New York and played in Madison Square Garden, and then in the spring of 1887, he went with the show to England. There he played for Queen Victoria. In a letter home he wrote:

*"Now I will tell you about how I am doing with the wild west show. Always in my mind I hold to the law and all along I live remembering God. But the show runs day and night too, so at two o'clock we quit. But all along I live remembering God so He enables me to do it all.*

*So my relatives, the Lakota people, now I know the white man's customs well. One custom is very good. Whoever believes in God will find good ways--that is what I mean. And many of the ways the white men follow are hard to endure. Whoever has no country will die in the wilderness. And although the country is large it is always full of white men. That which makes me happy is always land."*

Black Elk was learning of the white man's God. All of the members of Buffalo Bill's show were required to be Baptized, Indian and white. He also saw their great numbers and thought of his land. Later he would write:

*"I did not see anything to help my people. I could see that the Wasichus did not care for each other the way our people did before the nation's hoop was broken. They would take everything from each other if they could, and so there were some who had more of everything than they could use, while crowds of people had nothing at all and maybe were starving. They had forgotten that the earth was their mother. This could not be better than the old ways of my people. There was a prisoner's house on an island where the big water came up to the town, and we saw that one day. Men pointed guns at the prisoners and made them move around like animals in a cage. This made me feel very sad, because my people were penned up in islands, and maybe that was the way the Wasichus were going to treat them."*

Black Elk got left behind in Europe. He and two other Lakotas got separated from Buffalo Bill and he sailed for America in their absence. They joined another wild west show and traveled to Germany and France. The next year, when Buffalo Bill returned to Europe, Black Elk found him and got a ticket back to the United States. When he returned to the reservation he wrote of his experience:

*"...of the white man's many customs, only his faith, the white man's beliefs about God's will, and how they act according to it, I wanted to understand. I traveled to one city after another, and there were many customs around God's will. 'Though I speak with the tongues of men and angels, and have not charity, I am become as a sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing' [I Cor. 13].*

*So Lakota people, trust in God! Now all along I trust in God. I work honestly and it is good; I hope the people will do likewise...Across the big ocean is where they killed Jesus; again I wished to see it but it was four days on the ocean and there was no railroad. If horses go there they die of thirst. Only those long necks [camels] are able to go there. [It would require] much money for me to be able to go there to tell about it myself."*

Black Elk had learned a great deal about the essence of both white customs and Christianity while with the white men. He certainly understood the one scripture that all prophets of the Great Spirit should understand. He also saw how the white man did not follow its truth. This letter was published in December 1889, one year before the massacre at Wounded Knee.

Shortly after his return to Dakota, the Ghost Dance fire burned into the Pine Ridge reservation. Black Elk said that at first he stayed away from the Dance, but at last, he went to find out for himself what the new religion was all about.

*"So I got on my horse and went to this ghost dance on Wounded Knee Creek below Manderson.*

*I was surprised, and could hardly believe what I saw; because so much of my vision seemed to be in it. The dancers, both women and men, were holding hands in a big circle, and in the center of the circle they had a tree painted red with most of its branches cut off and some dead leaves on it. This was exactly like the part of my vision where the holy tree was dying, and the circle of men and women holding hands was like the sacred hoop that should have power to make the tree bloom again. I saw too that the sacred articles the people had offered were scarlet, as in my vision, and all their faces were painted red. Also, they used the pipe and the eagle feathers. I sat there looking on and feeling sad. It all seemed to be from my great vision somehow and I had done nothing yet to make the tree bloom.*

*Then all at once great happiness overcame me, and it all took hold of me right there. This was to remind me to get to work at once and help to bring my people back into the sacred hoop, that they might again walk the red road in a sacred manner pleasing to the Powers of the Universe that are One Power. I remembered how the spirits had taken me to the center of the earth and shown me the good things, and how my people could prosper. I remembered how the Six Grandfathers had told me that through their power I should make my people live and the holy tree should bloom. I believed my vision was coming true at last, and happiness overcame me.*

*When I went to the dance, I went only to see and learn what the people believed; but now I was going to stay and use the power that had been given me. The dance was over for the day, but they would dance again the next day, and I would dance with them."*

Before Black Elk danced the next day, his uncle prayed for him under the sacred tree that had not bloomed. He said, *"Father, Great Spirit, behold this boy! Your ways he shall see!"* Black Elk thought of his people who were in despair, and he thought of his vision. In the Thunder-being vision of his youth he had seen that he would lead the people back to a place on this earth where they could be happy again. They were on the wrong road now, but maybe they could be brought back



into the hoop, to the good road, and the tree would bloom again. He danced that day feeling the power of the Spirit, but he had no vision that first day. In the night, as Black Elk meditated on what he had seen and felt, he thought that maybe the holy tree of his vision was blooming and his dream was coming true. He also thought *"that we would disappoint the white race and only my people would live."*

The next day as he danced he fell into a vision. He flew over a beautiful and plentiful land. When he touched the ground he was met by men in holy shirts. They sent him back with the knowledge of the shirts, and as he flew back he saw the tree with people dancing around it. *"I had hoped to see the withered tree in bloom, but it was dead."* That night Black Elk made Ghost Shirts. As he worked, he *"thought that if this world would do as the vision teaches, the tree would bloom."* The next day he was asked to lead the dance. He prayed, *"Father, Great Spirit, behold me! The nation that I have is in despair. The new earth you promised you have shown me. Let my nation also behold it."* This prayer would one day begin to be answered, but first more tragedy was at hand for him and his people. But in the vision he would have today, he would see powerful things. As they danced they sang this song:

*"Over here they have said, over here they have said.*

*Father, in tears I have said. The Wasichu have said."*

During the dance he floated away. He saw the good land again. Before he got to the land, he had to fly over the ridge with the great flame where there was an enormous rumbling sound. There was tragedy to pass over before he arrived at the promised land. He glided over six villages and came down south of the sixth one. Twelve men met him.

*"...as I touched the ground, twelve men were coming towards me, and they said: 'Our Father, the two-legged chief, you shall see!'*

*Then they led me to the center of the circle where once more I saw the holy tree all full of leaves and blooming.*

*But that was not all I saw. Against the tree there was a man standing with arms held wide in front of him. I looked hard at him, and I could not tell what people he came from. He was not Wasichu and he was not Indian. His hair was long and hanging loose, and on the left side of his head he wore an eagle feather. His body was strong and good to see, and it was painted red. I tried to recognize him, but I could not make him out. He was a very fine looking man. While I was staring hard at him, his body began to change and became very beautiful with all colors of light, and around him was light. He spoke like singing: 'My life is such that all earthly beings and growing things belong to me. Your father, the Great Spirit, has said this. You too must say this.'*

*Then he went out like a light in the wind.*

*The twelve men who were there spoke: 'Behold them! Your nations life shall be such!'*

*I saw again how beautiful the day was--the sky all blue and full of yellow light above the greening earth. And I saw that all the people were beautiful and young. There were no old ones there, nor children either--just people of about one age, and beautiful.*

*Then there were twelve women who stood in front of me and spoke: 'Behold them! Their way of life you shall take back to earth.' When they had spoken I heard singing in the west, and I learned the song that I heard.*

*Then one of the twelve men took two sticks, one painted white and one red, and, thrusting them in the ground, he said: 'Take these! You shall depend upon them. Make haste!'*

*I started to walk, and it seemed as though a strong wind went under me and picked me up. I was in the air, with outstretched arms, and floating fast. There was a fearful dark river that I had to go over, and I was afraid. It rushed and roared and was full of angry foam. Then I looked down and saw many men and women who were trying to cross the dark and fearful river, but they could not. Weeping, they looked up to me and cried: 'Help us!' But I could not stop gliding, for it was as though a great wind were under me.*

*Then I saw my earthly people again at the dancing place, and fell back into my body lying there. And I was sitting up, and people were crowding around me to ask what vision I had seen."*

Black Elk had seen the Messiah; he had seen the promised land; he had also seen the tragic river that had to be crossed to get there. The only way it could be crossed was to fly on the wings of a mighty, rushing wind.

There were many parallels to the Thunder-beings vision that had first brought him his power. He said that he went to the sixth village because in his first vision he had seen six grandfathers and he was the sixth one himself. He saw two men in his first vision and two in his Messiah vision. He saw twelve horses in his first and twelve men in his Messiah vision. These he thought represented the twelve moons of the year and the villages might represent six generations. In the sixth maybe the tree would bloom as in his vision. He looked at his people; they were poor and lean because of the white man's treachery. When he sang the song he had received from the Messiah, the people wailed and cried. He said, *"I realized now that I had prophesied. The Big Foot massacre occurred and I saw them wailing."*

The whites feared the Ghost Dance. To their eyes and ears it was wild, demonic,

and savage. The Indians no longer worked. They had forsaken making some kind of living for themselves. Black Elk became a very powerful leader of the dance, and Indians from other bands came to participate in his power. He made ghost shirts for his people and those from the other bands. The soldiers came and made a rule that they should only dance three days a month, and the rest of the time they should work. On December 29, the soldiers came to Big Foot's camp and began to confiscate the Indian's guns. There was a struggle and shooting began. The massacre at Wounded Knee had begun. Black Elk said:

*"The night before this [Wounded Knee] I was over in the camp at Pine Ridge and I couldn't sleep. When I saw the soldiers going out it seemed that I knew there would be trouble. I was walking around all night until daylight. After my meal early that morning I got my horse and while I was out I heard shooting over to the east--I heard wagon guns going off....a man who returned from Pine Ridge...said: 'Hey, hey son, the people that are coming are fired upon, I know it.'*

*I took my buckskin and saddled up. I had no gun. The only thing I had was the sacred red stick. I put on my sacred shirt. This was a shirt I had made to be worn by no one but myself...This was a bullet-proof shirt.*

Black Elk went to fight for his people's rights, but he was of a double mind. *"I just thought it over and I thought I should not fight. I doubted about this Messiah business and therefore it seemed that I should not fight for it, but anyway I was going because I had already decided to go."* He was with about twenty other men. When they came in sight of the soldiers, Black Elk sang a sacred song. He said he was, then, depending on his Messiah vision. He sang:

*"A Thunder-being nation I am I have said.*

*A Thunder-Being nation I am I have said.*

*You shall live. You shall live. You shall live. You shall live."*

They headed down to help their people. At the head of a gulch Black Elk saw a baby all alone. *"I was going to pick her up but I left her for she was in a safe place."* Later the baby was adopted by his father-in-law. They rode into battle. Black Elk said, *"I could feel the bullets hitting me but I was bullet proof. I had to hang on to my horse to keep the bullets from knocking me off. I had the sacred bow with me and all I had to do was hold the bow toward the soldiers and you should have seen the soldiers run!"* Black Elk saw the bullet marks on his shirt and he heard them whizzing by. He said, *"I got shot but not much. I could only feel a bullet graze my body, was all."* During this time he said, *"I did not use my first vision, but I used the power of the vision about the Messiah...I just thought I would probably die before this thing was over and I just figured that there would be a day when I could either take revenge or die. I did not recall the vision that I should have recalled at this*

time." The Indians gathered at a place between Manderson and Oglala where Black Elk again prayed. This time he recalled his first vision and prayed:

*"Yeah heh!*

*Yeah heh!*

*Yeah heh!*

*Yeah heh!*

*Grandfathers, behold me and send me a power for revenge."*

Fighting continued. The next day Black Elk was wounded. He described hearing *"the bullets hitting my clothes. Then something hit me on the belt on the right side. I reeled on my horse and rode on over the hill...I was in fear and had forgotten my power...I doubted my power right there...and my fear for the moment killed my power and during that moment I was shot."* A companion grabbed him and wrapped him in a blanket that *"kept my insides from falling out."* Black Elk said that it was a good day to die, but his friend said, *"You must not die today, you must live, for the people depend on you."*

The next day Black Elk called an assembly where he remembered his first vision. He took white paint and put a little on each gun to make them sacred. Then the people faced the west, to the direction of the Thunder-beings, and pointed their guns there. Black Elk then sent his voice:

*"Hey-a-a-a-a. Hey-a-a-a-a. Hey-a-a-a-a. Hey-a-a-a-a. Grandfathers, the six grandfathers that I will thus recall to you today, behold me! And also to the four quarters of the earth and its powers. Thus you have said if an enemy I should meet that I should recall you. This you have said to me. Thus you have set me in the center of the earth and said that my people will be relative-like with Thunder-beings. Today my people are in despair, so, six grandfathers, help me."*

A storm began to appear. It was winter, but the Thunder-beings appeared with lighting and thunder. The people raised their hands, crying out. They were ready to go out again for revenge. Black Elk said of his feelings, *"Revenge is sweet."* But there would be no revenge. That day the elders made peace. General Miles sent for Young Man Afraid of His Horse who came to the chiefs to make peace. Chief Red Cloud and the others agreed. Black Elk said, *"We all agreed. I wanted revenge anyway. I knew that when those clouds had appeared the Thunder-beings had talked to me. I did not want to have peace, but the people insisted..."*

John Neihardt was a great poet. When he wrote Black Elk's story he edited it for his white audience. He crafted and interpreted it according to his frame of reference. His version of Black Elk's story ends here in a poetically tragic ending.

Although tragic, Neihardt cleanses the tragedy of the fiery revenge that filled Black Elk's heart at the time. Rather, the picture is of the bitterness of a defeated man full of regret. He ends his story with words which are from his own view, not the words Black Elk used of this time filled with revenge:

*"And so it was all over.*

*I did not know then how much was ended. When I look back now from this high hill of my old age, I can still see the butchered women and children lying heaped and scattered all along the crooked gulch as plain as when I saw them with eyes still young. And I can see that something else died there in the bloody mud, and was buried in the blizzard. A people's dream died there. It was a beautiful dream.*

*And I, to whom so great a vision was given in my youth--you see me now a pitiful old man who has done nothing, for the nation's hoop is broken and scattered. There is no center any longer, the sacred tree is dead."*

A moving tragic catharsis, but the people's beautiful dream did not die there, and Nicholas Black Elk was far from the pitiful old man that Neihardt painted in the close of his book. What the old prophet said to Neihardt, as he looked back from the hill of his old age, was the most powerfully prophetic-comic discourse that any of Coyote's voices have uttered. He said:

*"You have heard what I have said about my people. I had been appointed by my vision to be an intercessor of my people with the spirit powers and concerning that I had decided that sometime in the future I'd bring my people out of the black road into the red road [of life]. From my experience and from what I know, and in recalling the past from where I was at the time, I could see that it was next to impossible, but there was nothing like trying...[Black Elk did not look back at the fierceness of his desire for revenge with guilt or remorse. In the true spirit of the comic frame, he saw it and learned from it.] He continued:*

*At that time I could see that the hoop was broken and all scattered out and I thought, 'I am going to try my best to get my people back into the hoop again,' At this time, when I had these things in my mind, I was abroad with strange people. [In other words, this period of soul-searching and apprehension of the blackness of the Lakota's road was the time of his peregrinations in Europe, well before Wounded Knee.]...At that time the wilds were vanishing and it seemed the spirits altogether forgot me and I felt almost like a dead man going around--I was actually dead at this time, that's all [he means that his healing power had left him while he was away from his homeland]. In my vision they had predicted that I was chosen to be intercessor for my people so it was up to me to do my utmost for my people and everything that I did not do for my people, it would be my fault--if my people should perish it seemed that it*

would be my fault. If I were in poverty my people would also be in poverty, and if I were helpless or died, my people would die also. But it was up to me to scheme a certain way for myself to prosper for the people. If I prosper, my people would also prosper. [He saw the central symbolic role that the intercessor-prophet plays--his very life mirrors the truth of the people.]

*I am just telling you this, Mr. Neihardt. You know how I felt and what I really wanted to do is for us to make the tree bloom. On this tree [of life] we shall prosper. Therefore my children and yours are relative-like [kin] and therefore we shall go back into the hoop and here we'll cooperate and stand as one...our families will multiply and prosper after we get this tree to blooming."*

Black Elk did not have the tragic, defeated attitude of a "pitiful old man." At the time of Wounded Knee he had only taken up the sacred red stick, after Wounded Knee he learned also to use the white stick, and now he was working with Neihardt to bind them together.

Between 1892 and 1930 Nicholas Black Elk continued as a holy man interceding for his people. In 1904, Black Elk was treating a child using a traditional medicine ritual when a Jesuit priest came into the tent and grabbed the medicine man's tobacco offerings, deposited them in the stove, and took his drum and rattle and threw them out of the tent. He then grabbed Black Elk and commanded, "Satan, get out!" Black Elk went with the priest back to the Holy Rosary Mission. He stayed there for two weeks of training and was baptized on December 6, 1904. He was given the Christian name Nicholas.

There has been much speculation as to why Black Elk converted to Christianity. Mary Sheldon posted an internet letter on the subject that sums up the situation well:

*"Bruce:*

*I agree with you that there is an important distinction to make between Black Elk's belief in 'Jesus' and 'European materialism'--or we might add 'American capitalism.' Yet I still believe the question as to WHY Black Elk converted is important.*

*The Catholic Church used pressure and coercion to force many Lakota to end their traditional ways. Even Raymond J. DeMallie (an apologist for the Catholic Church it seems to me) in his introduction to THE SIXTH GRANDFATHER: BLACK ELK'S TEACHINGS GIVEN TO JOHN G. NEIHARDT admits that 'Missionaries moralized it [Wounded Knee] as the will of God, ending once for all the pagan hold of idolatry on the Lakota people' (11). De Mallie goes on to describe how a priest once threw Black Elk and his sacred objects out of a tent as the elder ministered to a dying boy, and yelled: 'Satan, get out!'(4) In Black Elk's talks with Neihardt (as translated by DeMallie),*

*Black Elk later argues: 'The whites think we have the power from the devil, but I'll say that they probably have that themselves' (289). Could Black Elk be responding to the harsh attacks against his traditional practices?*

*By the time Neihardt knew Black Elk, traditional ways were illegal--which had to please the missionaries. For Black Elk to even hold a Rabbit Dance for Neihardt (which the priests denounced as 'one of the chief evils threatening the family'), Neihardt had to get documents from the Board of Indian Commissioners, the Secretary of the Interior, and the agent at Pine Ridge (38). When Neihardt asked Black Elk why he had put aside his traditional spiritual ways, Black Elk replied: 'My children had to live in this world' (47). This is spoken at a time when the Lakota were hungry and the church was in charge of much food distribution, and could influence the distribution of food.*

*Whatever Black Elk believed about Jesus, the fact that the institutional churches used coercion to force conversions is something we should never forget or sweep under the rug. It happened all over this country. In my own area, elders have told me their parents converted so they would have food. In a southern state after a major flood three years ago, I saw boxes of food and clothes simply stacked up in a Christian Church. I asked why they were not being distributed, and the response was too many were sent for the Native American people who attended, and if others wanted to receive help they would have to at least attend one service. (I worked for the Catholic Church in Native American ministry for three years, and along side Protestant Native Americans in ministry as well.)*

*In at least three places in female's translation of Black Elk's words, he quotes Black Elk as identifying himself with a prisoner of war: 'Now, when I look ahead, we are nothing but prisoners of war, but the Great Spirit has protected us so far, and this Great Spirit takes care of us' (289). While there are many words of Jesus in Scripture which Black Elk must have admired and lived better than any Christian or Christian missionary (such as 'Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none; and whoever has food must share with anyone who has none; and whoever has food must do likewise' [LK3:11]), the reason WHY this traditional healer had to give up his traditional practices in public remains a scandal.*

*Mary Sheldon"*

Mary's observations here supply valuable insight, and her castigation of Church policy is appropriate. The Institution of the church, in all denominations, has perpetrated great injury on innocent people for centuries. But this does not negate the spiritual power of the Messiah, a vision that was as much a part of Black Elk as his "*Wakinyan*." Certainly Nicholas Black Elk was able to distinguish between the true spirituality of Christianity and the political hypocrisy inherent in the organization of the church. This does not mean that a prophet would walk

away from the organization. A prophet's concern is to see the Word of his prophecy fulfilled. As intercessor of his people he took upon himself the role Catholic catechist in 1907. Black Elk was no stranger to the teachings of the Bible and he began to give instruction and conduct Bible readings. His home became a center for Catholic counseling and worship.

Alice Kehoe brings up a different point that has a bearing on his conversion. She asks the question:

*"Why...was Black Elk so ready to give up his calling as a 'wapiyapi' and accept full conversion to Christianity? Black Elk told Neihardt that he had grown increasingly anxious over a second power given him in his great vision, the power to cause holocaust through a secret herb from the Black Hills. Neihardt omitted the description of this 'war herb' from his retelling of his vision; he recounted only the gift of healing power. By rejecting his Lakota religion, Black Elk felt he was safely rejecting the destructive power that had been given him in tandem with healing. Perhaps, also, Kate's death undermined his faith in his Lakota power."*

It should be remembered here, in all these speculations, that Nicholas Black Elk had clearly demonstrated that he understood the dialectic demonstrated in "heyoka." He told Neihardt, "You have noticed that the truth comes into this world with two faces. One is sad with suffering, and the other laughs; but it is the same face, laughing or weeping." It should not be too difficult to see that this man could embrace, in one individual, a deep love and understanding of both faiths. Would not such a man be able to see beyond surface politics and people's ignorance to behold the One "face laughing and weeping?" Black Elk had been a professed Christian for 25 years before he met Neihardt, and he remained so until his death. In 1934, to reassure his Christian friends after **Black Elk Speaks** was published he wrote, "While I live I will never fall from faith in Christ." His work in 1947 and 1948 with Joseph Epes Brown is testimony to his ability to see the combined face of God in two cultures. In **The Sacred Pipe**, the Indian tradition of the pipe is ordered into seven sacraments that are a clear parallel to Roman Catholic doctrine.

Nicholas Black Elk and John Neihardt began a process that day in 1930 that continues to this day. Many a historian has cited the massacre at Wounded Knee as the closing chapter on the traditional culture of the Native American. But culture does not ever die, it continually transforms. Wovoka's Ghost Dance did not end at Wounded Knee with the Sioux. Alice Kehoe found the dance alive in the "New Tidings" congregation on the Round Plain Indian reserve just outside Prince Albert, Saskatchewan in the 1960's. As already pointed out, the Drummers of the Prophet Dance survive on the Columbia Plateau, and the vision of Nicholas Black Elk grows across America to this day. Black Elk found the means to assure the renewal of the sacred hoop in the "Wasichu" poet John Neihardt. It took both sticks of his Messiah vision to begin to lead his people from the black road of



destruction to the red road of life.

In 1973 another prophet would take up Coyote's work again. The scripture that Black Elk sent back to his people from Europe to encourage them to trust God and follow love is completed with the following words which he did not send:

*"For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known. And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity."*

It is not possible for a prophet to know all things about the forces that drive him or her. When Leonard Crow Dog brought the Ghost Dance back to Wounded Knee in 1973, he brought all of the substance the symbol carried with it back to the place the historians said it had died.

## CHAPTER 15

# THE AMERICAN INDIAN MOVEMENT

Something strange happened then. The traditional old, full-blood medicine men joined with us kids. Not the middle-aged adults. They were of a lost generation which had given up all hope, necktie-wearers waiting for the Great White Father to do for them. It was the real old folks who had spirit and wisdom to give us. The grandfathers and grandmothers who still remembered a time when Indians were Indians, whose grandparents or even parents had fought Custer gun in hand, people who for us were living links with a great past. They had a lot of strength and power, enough to give some of it to us. They still knew all the old legends and the right way to put on a ritual, and we were eager to learn from them. Soon they had us young girls making flesh offerings or piercing our wrists at the Sun Dance, while young warriors again put the skewers through their breast and found out the hard way where they came from. Even those who had grown up in cities, who had never been on a horse or heard an owl hoot, were suddenly getting it together. I am not bragging, but I am proud that we Lakotas started this.

(Mary Cow Dog)

To judge the effectiveness of the American Indian Movement (AIM) by the common standards or paradigms of rhetorical criticism would do an injustice to the native people of this continent, and it would shed little light into the success or failure of the movement. In 1973, this of course was the manner in which analysts and the media approach the siege at Wounded Knee, South Dakota. The reporters who were sent to cover the protest were disappointed and confused when they didn't find any *"real Indians."* Colin Smith of the **London Observer** described his disappointment writing, *"If only someone would say, 'When the*

*moon comes over the mountains and the leaves fall off the trees when the cherries turn red, we will attack the long rifles.' All I hear is, 'Yeah, man--cool it...' and 'we will study this procedural matter tonight.'" One critic commented that the siege at Wounded Knee was a comic and counterproductive image of a militant struggle: "The AIM rhetorical vision of young, brave Native Americans willing to die...was not a drama the American public took seriously. Instead, the image the media portrayed of hot-headed, irresponsible young Indians who decked themselves out in warpaint and feathers to stage a 'pathetic drama' for media attention became the prevalent believable reality." Another wrote that the occupation was "a symbolic attempt to change attitudes," but it "accomplished very little for the Indian cause." The opinion of **The Washington Evening Star** was, "Through the years there has been a deep reservoir of public sympathy for the American Indians, but it is bound to be diminished by the atrocious spectacle staged here in recent days. It could be dried up almost totally if there are more such dangerous and destructive capers by Indian extremists." And a historian from the Smithsonian believed that "Indian radicals have hindered efforts in behalf of the Indians and that ultimately Indian Power depends not on number of guns, but on the support of whites." **The Chicago Daily News** and **Harper's Magazine's** Terry Schultz said that all she found was "a game of charades played by an Indian Nation that had lost its soul and all hope of resurrection." It is clear that unless Native American's look and act like "real Indians" they will not be taken seriously by the dominant white culture, and that of course is the primary purpose of a social movement, a place within the dominant culture. This may have been true of Chief Joseph's fight before the war of 1877 and maybe even shortly after, but it was not the goal of the Ghost Dance in 1890, nor was it the goal at Wounded Knee in 1973. The true fruit which the American Indian Movement ultimately was producing was what Terry Schultz said the protest at Wounded Knee lacked, "the soul and the hope of resurrection."*

This view of the failure of Native American rhetoric presupposes that the goal was acceptance by the dominant white culture and the desire of the Indian to have an equal place, politically in that society. But as Randall Lake has pointed out, the rhetoric of the Native American is only directed at the white establishment secondarily. The primary audience is the Indian, not the specific tribal Indian but the Indian of all tribes. Lake maintains that the rhetoric of the movement is primarily consummatory, that it is designed to unify the scattered tribal members. Lake states: "In brief, AIM may have been judged a failure only because its rhetoric is expected to do something which it is not intended to do." Russell Means, the co-founder of AIM said that the organization took a "long look" at itself in 1970. "We looked Indian, we dressed Indian, but we didn't know why we were Indians. We decide to go back to seek out the old people and find out. We returned to traditional Indian religion and its values and concepts. We found out that Indian spirituality among traditional people is what rules every aspect of their lives." The American Indian Movement, in 1973, sought primarily to "regenerate traditional Indian religious beliefs and to restore the ancient ways of life." This is the revival which was supposedly crushed at Wounded Knee in 1890, but it was to be revived again in much the same manner and in the same place in 1973 through

the Ghost Dance.

The American Indian Movement might be better labeled The Ghost Dance Movement. Richard Morris and Philip Wander use this label in their essay *Native American Rhetoric: Dancing in the Shadows of the Ghost Dance*. They maintain that the rhetoric of the Wounded Knee occupation was primarily an unifying, identity rhetoric aimed at creating an "ethos" capable of transcending tribal and cultural differences. The purpose of this rhetoric is to form pan-Indian coalitions capable of withstanding encroachments by the dominant white society. In brief, the living history of the original Ghost Dance and the poignant massacre and suffering at Wounded Knee in 1890, were brought forward in time to the same place and recalled, recreated, reinterpreted, and reenacted in the present "so that the past becomes part of the present and the present becomes part of the story." This is Burke's consubstantial symbolic interaction.

The real story of the American Indian Movement is a search for the identity that was lost when the Ghost Dance ended in 1890. It is a search for the identity Black Elk and John Neihardt preserved in the 1930's. The importance of the rhetoric that began at Wounded Knee in 1973 is that it is ontological rather than political. Morris and Wander describe the identification in this manner:

*"For the protesters at Wounded Knee, the Ghost Dance and the story of the Ghost Dance Movement became more than a figure of speech, an informed analogy, or a strategic narrative; it offered both the protesters and those who could hear them a new perspective or, in Kenneth Burke's terminology, a master trope....Through this perspective, the protesters could experience and commend an identity that pressed beyond the given 'I,' an equivocal 'you,' and the loathsome 'it' toward a 'we' out of which a new 'I' able to envision the possibilities and potentialities for a collective action could emerge. As a story and a living memory, the Ghost Dance Movement provided both a new and a traditionally sanctioned 'I' specific enough to affirm what is 'good' in the old 'I' of tribal membership and yet general enough to transcend specific cultural differences...For a large measure of the Ghost Dance's power, both in the nineteenth century and subsequently, derives from its capacity to celebrate opposition while still appealing to members of the hegemonic bloc and the mass audience."*

Is this not comedy? The ability to celebrate opposition. For the participants at Wounded Knee, the Ghost Dance began to answer the questions: Who am I? What am I? How did I come to be this way? Who are we? What do we do now? These questions of identity are, as all questions of being are, spiritual rather than political. The American Indian Movement was in its essence then a spiritual movement, not a political movement. Having prophetic origins, it was not a new movement in 1973, and is, and has been, alive on the stage of history from long before 1890, and it continues today.

There is one other result of the 1973 siege of Wounded Knee that may have repercussions far beyond its effect on the Native American. Because of the publicity that the event received and the counter culture of the day's identification with the ideals of the movement, **Black Elk Speaks** became a popular book. Black Elk's vision found its way into the back pockets of Indians, "*mix-bloods*", blacks and whites. Today discussions flourish as to the roles people should play on today's stage of history in relationship to the old medicine man's words. Full-bloods, half-bloods, and "*wanabes*" can find his vision on almost any bookseller's rack, in almost every shopping mall in the country. Each man and woman that picks it up, regardless of color, will have some of the symbols' substance transferred into their beings. This world, so wrapped in its constant tragedies, would do well to hear the voice of the trickster Coyote, even if his voice is a little muted in the translation.

## CONCLUSION

# TWO FACES OF ONE

"Wic'as'a wakan." "Medicine Man"--That's a white man's word like squaw, papoose, Sioux, tomahawk--words that don't exist in the Indian language. I wish there were better words to make clear what "medicine man" stands for, but I can't find any, and you can't either, so I guess medicine man will have to do. But it doesn't convey the many different meanings that come to an Indians mind when you say "medicine man."

We have different names for different men..."pejuta wic'as'a"--"man of herbs"... "yuwipi"--"tied-one," the man who uses the power of rawhide and the stones to find a cure..."waayatan"--"man of vision" who can foretell..."wakinyanpi"--"winged-ones"... "wapiya"--"conjurer"...

Another kind of medicine man is the "heyoka"--"the sacred clown"--who uses his thunder power to cure some people. If you want to stretch the word out like a big blanket to cover everybody, even a peyote roadman could squeeze underneath it and qualify as a medicine man. But the more I think about it, the more I believe that the only real medicine man is the "wac'as'a wakan"--"the holy man." Such a one can cure, prophesy, talk to the herbs, command the stones, conduct the sun dance or even change the weather, but all of this is of no great importance to him. These are merely stages he has passed through. The "wic'as'a wakan" has gone beyond all this. He has the "wakanya wowanyanke"--"the great vision."

The wic'as'a wakan wants to be by himself. He wants to be away from the crowd, from everyday matters. He likes to meditate, leaning against a tree or rock, feeling the earth move beneath him, feeling the weight of that big flaming sky upon him. That way he can figure things out. Closing his eyes, he sees many things clearly. What you see with your eyes shut is what counts.

(Lame Deer)

Drama cannot exist without the faces of comedy and tragedy. When one dominates the other, the vision is lost. The subtle ironies and the paradoxical entanglements of the religious contacts between Coyote's dancers and the two-

horned Bull of American Christianity demonstrate a fundamental truth about the nature of the bull-like culture pushing toward the ends of the earth. The Bull, by its very nature is bound to the law. He carries scales of justice only to balance his scapegoats. Judgment is in the Bull's path and his head is lowered to gore the clown. Kenneth Burke saw the comic frame as a corrective to the tragic attitudes of Western history. The comic corrective preserves life before the tragic flaw consumes it. The white man brought the Book with the preserving Word of Messiah, the perfect scapegoat, but the frowning mask of the law covered His face. Even so, before the arrival of the *"tigers of church and state"* a new religion manifest itself on the Columbian Plateau that produced a change in the people that can only be described as a model of what faith in the Promise of God should look like. The firstfruit festival of righteousness, which according to Paul is the Spirit of Christ, found a home in comic dancers. When white missionaries brought the iron Law in the form of the Ten Commandments married to the law of civilization, this spirit was quenched. This is just what Paul feared and was so angry about when he wrote, *"Oh foolish Galatians who hath bewitched you..."*

The irony of this image in the story of the Nez Perce abounds. Spalding, who identified with the Apostle Paul in the *"Macedonian Call"* and viewed himself as a Paulinist doctrinally, brought with him the doctrine that Paul so despised in his Gentile churches. Paul, in his anger at the proponents of legalism wrote, *"Let them be accursed"* and of the circumcision crowd, *"I wish they would go all the way and emasculate themselves."* But this is not what was prophesied. The Bull was destined to gore the nations to the ends of the earth.

Nevertheless, while suffering under his horn, the Nez Perce did learn and understand enough of the Gospel, while maintaining their comic frame, to recognize the hypocrisy of the white man's version. Coyote became a comic corrective for a time. The very Indians that participated in the Whitman Massacre had a clearer understanding of the relationship of Spirit and Law than did the white negotiators at the 1855 treaty. To keep peace, like Paul at the first church council, they compromised and placed themselves under a law which they did not believe. Only after the whites, who had brought them the law, broke that law, did they lose faith in it. The non-treaty-heathen Indians returned to the Dreamer religion after the 1863 treaty. They returned to the belief that the future is in the hands of the prophets. But as they sought their visions they were bound by force to the law of civilization, and many were bound to its scapegoats. Yet, even so, a few kept eyes fixed for Coyote's return. Protectors of visions, they tended the withered tree, dancing to mend the sacred hoop.

The Prophet Dance and the Ghost Dance may have looked like heathenism to the early missionary on the Plateau, but it was worship ascending to the Great Spirit that brought the only Scapegoat of freedom into the sight of Coyote's people. Who are we to judge what God calls His? Peter was once told by the Spirit, *"What God has cleansed, call not unclean."*

The spread of Western, technological culture is inevitable. In that respect, Spalding and the other missionaries did the Indians a favor. They supplied a few meager tools to help the people survive the coming onslaught of "*Manifest Destiny*," which even the prophets of both people described. The technological Bull of Manifest Destiny carries a tragic destruction, a tragic inferno. It is the fiery ridge that Black Elk sailed over to reach his sixth village. But if tragedy is only uncompleted comedy, then we all have the return of Coyote to look forward to, and no culture in the history of mother earth has needed Coyote as desperately as today's spreading cultural superpower. Never has the earth needed "*wic'as'a wakan*" who are keepers of -- "*the great vision*" as it does today. With the earth groaning and travailing together with us in pain, we both await the manifestation of the sons of God. "*Heyoka*" can heal the pain for a moment, it can bring a revitalization movement, but only the great vision, can make the two faces one. Only the "*wakanya wowanyanke*" can bind the sticks together. Black Elk looked upon both the faces of comedy and tragedy. He was able to allow both to dwell within him, by doing so he became intercessor for his people, something greater than a comic corrective. He brought the Thunder beings together with partaking of his people's sufferings. In the Sun Dance, the intercessor is pierced for the people, he dances the tragic dance, a symbolic identification with the true Scapegoat. "*He was pierced for our transgressions*," the prophet Isaiah proclaimed. But until the day that the Prophet Dancers, the Ghost Dancers, and all creation groans for arrives, the world needs comic correctives to preserve it, to heal it, to revitalize its withered tree.

Forty years ago, Anthony Wallace drew attention to the dilemma facing the modern scientific culture in his essay on revitalization:

*"Human affairs around the world seem more and more commonly to be decided without reference to supernatural powers. It is an interesting question whether mankind can profitably dispense with the essential element of the religious revitalization process before reaching utopia without stress or strain. While religious movements may involve and can occasionally lead to unfortunate practical consequences in human relations, the same fantasies and emotions could lead to even more unfortunate practical consequences for world peace and human welfare when directed toward people improperly perceived and toward organs of political action and cultural ideologies.[scapegoats] The answer would seem to be that as fewer and fewer men make use of the religious displacement process, there will be a corresponding reduction of the incidence and severity of transference neuroses, or human relationships will be increasingly contaminated by character disorders, neurotic acting out, and paranoid deification of political leaders and ideologies."*

If someone was asked to explain the Christian doctrine of Antichrist in academic discourse, they could do no better than this. The role of Coyote cannot be cast in the tigers of church and state. In light of Wallace's answer to his own question, we

would do well in this age of global neo-tribalism to pay close attention to the ease in which we seek out new and ancient scapegoats. Alice Kehoe observes that, "*Without change, adaptation, reformulation, revitalization, transformation (call it what you will), a society--Indian, European, **any** society--cannot continue.*" The world needs its prophets, and as Lame Deer pointed out in the opening of this chapter, they are usually found away from the crowd meditating against a tree or a rock looking, with their eyes closed, to see what it is that counts. To somehow embrace a Great Vision where comedy does something more than preserve, it pays the tragic price and arises from the death through its innocence. This is what Burke calls the rhetoric of religion. It is what science cannot supply to culture.

The message of the Gospel of Christ Jesus is not an imposition of culture, but a genesis of hope, a promised comic feast after the completed tragedy of the crucifixion. Many celebrate the firstfruits festival of that feast as they await Coyote's return. For us who live in this rational-technological world, we cannot be blinded to Coyote's return, whatever form he takes. I maintain that explicit faith in Jesus the Christ is the greatest of cultural gifts, but He is not bound to any one culture, and I suspect his prophets have appeared in every culture. What ever name they go by, Coyote, Isaiah, Black Elk, Jack, or Paul, the world is in need of them. They carry the rhetoric of the Word. Yet, it seems that the world pursues them with diligence to bind them to tragic crosses. When Jesus said "*You are the salt of the earth...You are the Light of the world...*," it is of these kind of men and women he was talking.

Let us all hope that there continues to be those who embrace "*crude and powerful emotions and irrational fantasies of interaction with nonexistent beings,*" that will be willing to sacrifice themselves to protect the promise spoken to a Plateau Dreamer who went out to lean on a rock to watch the dry snow fall from a groaning mother earth.

" When I return, all spirits of the dead will accompany me, and after that there will be no spirit land. All the people will live together. Then will the Earth-Woman revert to her natural shape, and live as a mother among her children. Then things will be made right, and there will be much happiness."

"*What you see with your eyes closed is what counts.*" (Lame Deer)

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