The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints' Indian Student Placement Service: A History.

Lynette Riggs, Utah State University

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Abstract

From 1947 to 1996, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints operated a foster program that placed Native American children into Latter-day Saint (LDS) homes to attend public schools and be immersed in Mormon culture. This program, the Indian Student Placement Program, is described through LDS perspectives as being generally successful. The children were baptized into the LDS church,
reservations, and relocated to live with white Mormon families where they attended public schools and were expected to conform to white culture. Critics charge that the program was a missionary tool used to assimilate children into white Mormon society, often at a great cultural, familial, and psychological cost.

Although historians and scholars are writing more about Native American education experiences as of late, little has been recorded about this particular phenomenon. This study pulls together what has been recorded about the program perspectives and information provided by past participants via an interview process. There are both negative and positive outcomes suggested by past program participants and researchers. Perhaps the most important contributions this study makes, however, concern the Native Americans themselves and their responses of accommodation, resistance, and, ultimately, resilience in the face of acculturating forces.

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