Achievements and Prospects in Studying Indian Missions

by
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Events leading up to this important conference on Moravians and American Indians are rooted in a variety of important developments. One contributing factor has been a significant shift in perspective among those who study religion as a particular aspect of general cultural exchanges. During the past two decades major writers about native American life and Euro-American late-comers have made considerable revisions in our general understanding of interactions between those major systems. It is my undeserved honor to consider with you today some of the intellectual achievements won through such modifications and further to suggest some possible avenues for continued advance in this area of humanizing studies.

Taking a broad overview of literature concerning Indian missions, it is accurate to say that both historians and missiologists approached their topic from the same one-sided perspective during most of the years in which this kind of literature has been produced. Whether backed by secular or sacred criteria, each group generally viewed the Indians from a vantage point that assumed the superiority of white culture: its technology, social patterns, customs, values, and beliefs. There were a few notable exceptions to this dominant attitude, but by and large early twentieth century scholarship conformed to a remarkably tenacious prejudice that was first imported by New England Puritans, Virginia tobacco planters, and Spanish conquistadors. Indians have perennially been considered inferior, whether described by colonial divines, homesteaders in the early national period, reservation agents after the Civil War, or Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) officials in our own century. Students of westward expansion stressed the theme of superior white culture: its agrarian economy, republican politics, mechanical know-how, literacy, and uniform justice

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under statutory law. Native lifestyles were seen as deficient in every category, with the only options being either assimilation to white cultural standards or extiction as the juggernaut of American civilization spread over the continent. Generations of historians have depicted Indian-white interaction along the general lines of "adapt or get our of the way" because they never had any serious doubts about the superiority of American culture.

In the area of religion too, Indians have customarily been viewed as inadequate. Denounced as devil worshippers by early observers or, perhaps worse, as benighted peoples who had no religion at all, Indians were rarely taken seriously in their belief systems and applied ethics. The study of Christian missions has usually proceeded from some variation of this dominant theme. Natives have been portrayed as superstitious, misguided, beguiled by pagan rituals, slow to recognize biblical truth, truculent in error, given to backsliding after conversion, and dependent on white clerical leadership into the foreseeable future. By contrast missionaries have been described as heroic, long-suffering, altruistic, sacrificial, and high-minded. Mr. Schattschneider, one of our essayists today, will undoubtedly touch upon this perspective in analyzing missions in his presentation. For 450 years of the half millennium known as the "historical period" of North american experience this triumphalist attitude predominated. It was simply taken for granted that lesser civilizations must give way to superior ones, and missions studies conformed to this stereotype because Christianity was manifestly preferable to any other religion. If superior to Judaism, Islam, and "higher religions" of the Far East, how much more so to the "unsophisticated" vagaries found in the American woodlands and plains.

At about the middle of our own century portions of the scholarly community began to rebel against this dominant way of thinking about native Americans. Instead of continuing the civilization-versus-savage motif, many historians reversed priorities and pursued studies that assumed all virtue to lie with unspoiled aborigines, all corrupting influences to stem from white invaders who entered unbidden and destroyed indiscriminately. Without getting into the factors in American culture that stimulated such historiographical changes, we can note that by mid-century some scholars were presenting vigorous indictments of white activity in the New World. Sometimes Euro-American policy was condemned as ethnocentric and exploitative from its inception. If stated aims were less ruthless, at least the actual practices of people on the scene came under censure, and agencies responsible for not keeping white settlers under control.

Historians who wrote in this vein displayed missionaries in a bad light, as they did most white intruders. Evangelists were regarded as either hypocritical or stupid. They either knowingly placed a mantle of piety over ruthless land hunger and political domination, or as

dupes they allowed themselves to be manipulated by secular interests, softening up native groups with gospel messages before government and real estate agents swooped in for the kill. Missiologists rarely went along with this revisionist view. Those who concentrated on missions per se generally remained within the earlier framework of ideas and continued to write apologetics. They stuck to such tried-and-true themes as reporting missionary attitudes, their observations about native life, their hardships, their various attempts to improve both the daily lot and future destiny of native peoples under their care.

This fairly recent addition to American scholarship was not an important achievement. While it succeeded in breaking the stranglehold of long-standing prejudice, the alternative viewpoint was almost as one-sided as its predecessor. No longer blinded by triumphalist attitudes, the replacement still suffered from exaggeration. In its eagerness to condemn imperialism, to bemoan the slaughter of the innocents, to bury our hearts at Wounded Knee, this kind of revisionism was just as prejudiced in its zeal to expose white crimes as the earlier genre had been to celebrate white progress. Both perspectives failed to present either a balanced understanding of native American life or a full appreciation of the complexities involved in intercultural exchange. The end result of such polemics was biased reporting that did little good in helping to grasp the realities of culture conflict. We might recognize that an expose of American expansionism differs from an ode to it, but either one of them yields lamentably biased information.

Materials offering a way out of this apparent dilemma had been gathering for decades on library shelves in the form of anthropological field reports. Without getting into the schools of thought and revisionist battles within that professional circle, suffice it to say that students of Christianity and American Indians have finally noticed the rich potential available to them in works on ethnography and ethnohistory. Anthropology has provided raw data and new insights into questions related to the importance of religion in daily human behavior, patterns of cultural cohesion, and the fascinating phenomena of personal conversions. Since the study of missions focuses on one of the most dynamic areas where two cultures interact, the current stage of missions scholarship in America constitutes an achievement of crucial importance. Anthropology has made it possible to study missions with more complete information and with better procedures than ever before. The advantages of using ethnographic materials in analyzing missions are numerous, and several studies since 1965 have demonstrated some of the potential. Without paraphrasing any specific publication in detail, let me mention some of the areas where the study of Christianity and American Indians has been considerably strengthened.

Probably the most important lesson we have learned from these detailed compilations is that native American societies are knit together by complex, highly sophisticated ideas and behavior patterns. Their manifold world views comprise intricate conceptions of reality, and their different norms for practical action afford pragmatic confirmation of what is real, true, and good. Recognizing this to be the case in our own lifetime, it takes only brief reflection to acknowledge that native life has been this way all along. We can admit that our cultural and theological predecessors slighted Indian civilizations in one-sided characterizations, and until recently we have failed to see what was actually there in half of the intercultural exchange process. We are at the beginning of an era when Indian cultures can be seen to have integrity, coherence, and respectable rationales all their own. By a process known colloquially as "backstreaming", we can see that these varied civilizations have been this way from the beginning, no matter how much the dominant white perspective has maligned or ignored them. This realization allows us a fresh start in studying cultural interaction. It places us in a position that embraces a wider spectrum of evidence and grants some measure of utility to every human civilization as it coped with varying environmental contexts.

Learning about tribal mores and aboriginal concepts has helped us appreciate native patterns in and of themselves. No longer quick to judge all lifestyles by a single standard, we can observe a particular Indian world view and ethos for its own sake, like the Delaware combination of beliefs and values to take one example. We can appraise the intricacies of indigenous rituals, myths, visions, and prophecies along lines of their internal logic, as will one of the presentations by Mr. Revey to which we look forward today. In estimating the importance of native patterns we can see that they have resisted the incursion of white alternatives. They help explain the remarkable persistence of tribal life despite appalling pressures from white society to accept some alien standard categorized as "the American way of life".

The dynamics of cultural interchange are still at work today, and we can inquire into ways in which those resilient native values have operated. Such inquiries can shed light on processes through which native patterns spread from one tribal group to the other as well as from white donor to Indian recipient. But that fruitful area is ancillary to our main concern today. Anthropology has given us greater knowledge of what really existed in native lifestyles. This affords us a heightened awareness of their survivability, and that leads to an improved working hypothesis: we cannot understand what actually happened in exchanges between Indians and missionaries unless we use every possible resource to learn about native life on its own. We must try to grasp tribal patterns as they existed before the whites

arrived if we hope to discern what was at stake in subsequent interaction. There were two cultures involved in each episode, and we have to know about both of them if we expect to do justice to the people involved, the interests at issue, and the consequences that emerged through centuries of contact.

A value judgment often accompanies the intellectual discovery that native worlds exist apart from dominant American attitudes about what is real and proper. I submit that no value judgment is necessarily involved, but people usually espouse one or another of them in any event. Some observers evaluate precontact lifestyles quite positively and deplore the influence of anything brought from Europe. Others admire native patterns and simply regret their deterioration in settings where circumstances brought about inevitable ruin. Others still can admit to plausibility in native views about kinship, ritual purity, land ownership, warfare, and regard for the natural world, but they nevertheless prefer their own orientation to attitudes they consider childish and unworkable. My simple point here is that, whether one endorses or rejects Indian views, they must be taken seriously as a factor of equal importance to white patterns. There is no way to speak meaningfully about interchange unless we take both sides into account. No matter what our personal evaluation is of the alternatives at issue in cultural conflict, we must in this new era of missions study expand our database to include all the relevant information. Indians are real; their cultures have integrity; they always have, and they will continue to do so. Students who ignore this fundamental axiom will produce only self-serving treatises that will obscure our understanding, not clarify it.

Value judgments aside, the study of missions has been greatly aided in our day by inquiries into the role religions have played in Indian life. We have partial knowledge of the myths that explain validating reasons for tribal preferences, and we need to know a great deal more. One of the great tragedies of our time is that, now recognizing the need for such information, we see that white culture has already destroyed most of the sources that could have afforded invaluable additions to our learning. But much surrives, and with that we can glean important material regarding the internal dynamics of private visions and corporate solidarity, individual initiative, and group worship. Such features as these will undoubtedly be mentioned in another essay by Mr. St. John provided for us today. These sorts of studies help us better to understand the religious factor in human experience and expression. They show us that attitudes about the supernatural have been basic to all human civilizations. And they provide an essential ingredient for comparative analyses where we must know about both forms of religion if we ever hope to understand what was at issue in their confrontation.

Granting a fundamental integrity to precontact native folkways

and ideology, and recognizing their postcontact persistence, we can also begin to appreciate the contribution of Indian religions in the history of Christian missions. We are now in a position to see value in native critiques of Christianity as it was presented to them. Local tribesmen were quick to point out the gap between biblical precepts and the way nominal Christians actually behaved. They were not the first ones to notice that white churchgoers failed to live perfect lives inspired by the gospel, but native observations now rescued for us by less biased scholarship show that they took religion seriously and that they were deeply concerned about what the evangelists discussed. Similar studies also teach us that conversions involved a retention of many familiar images and thought categories as well as accepting significantly new concepts. When Indians became Christian, they adopted the new faith selectively, and this opens up many avenues for continuing research. We know a little, and need to know much more, about what parts of Christinity natives accepted, what was most amenable to indigenous habits and what so alien that it seldom transferred. Selective borrowing is something all of us engage in, and perhaps a better understanding of the accounts derived from Indian missions could instruct us about ourselves and the continuing pilgrimage each of us pursues as we try to reflect Christ in our lives.

Whether we take a specific example in biographical focus or expand our horizon to include whole tribes, ethnologically informed studies allow us to broach questions of cultural exchange in a manner rarely anticipated before. If a Delaware Indian in eighteenth century Pennsylvania or Ohio remained an Indian after adopting pacifism and learning to sing German hymns, is not a Delaware in twentieth century Oklahoma or Kansas still an Indian though he drives a pickup truck and watches Jimmy Swaggart on television? What are the roots and essential characteristics of cultural identity? If a Delaware embraces Christianity and continues to depend on guidance through personal visions, is that religious expression qualitatively different from one that depends on New Testament phrases and prayers in English? What are the elemental drives and recurrent patterns in religious identity? Considering those questions about cultural integrity and religious identity are difficult enough when dealt with in isolation. But what are the relationships between the two? What, at bottom, is Indian identity? What is Christian affirmation? How do they interact? Are they exclusive, or can they reinforce each other?

Does conversion to Christianity demand complete cultural transformation to white ideas and behavioral standards? Most missionaries over the past 500 years certainly thought so, but such transformation rarely occurred. Have missions, then, been a complete failure, or does the end result force us to recognize something more important? I submit that we should abandon the old assumptions derived from

religio-cultural aggression and look at missions records with less prejudgment about what must be found there. Then we can learn about how native peoples have incorporated Christian ideas and practices into their own systems of images, rituals, behavioral priorities, and group dynamics. The standard word for this kind of process is "syncretism", and I suggest that missionary activity over the years has provided us with a window through which to observe varieties of syncretistic religious expression. Every type of Christianity exists in some cultural package. We now see the futility of judging all cultures by a single set of human standards, and it is equally impossible to evaluate various Christian forms by means of one rule for theology, worship, or ethics. The challenge before us is to understand manifold combinations of Christian life and native cultures, not to judge their adequacy. We must stretch our understanding of the ways the Gospel can invigorate Indian existence, not appoint ourselves as critics who can decide which expressions are genuine and which do not measure up to God's standards. To presume the latter function is, in my view, both philosophically impossible and theologically blasphemous.

Ethnohistory also teaches us that cultural encounters are an ongoing phenomenon. We are past the era when observers thought Indians had vanished, just as we have superseded the cultural prejudice that assumes they should give way to a superior lifestyle. The process of intercultural exchange involves sophisticated persons on both sides, and their complex dialogues regarding land, manufactured goods, natural resources, political alliances, foodstuffs, and divine powers have been open-ended exchanges. They were never one-way and are not terminal. Indian tribes were often overwhelmed by whites, but their fate was not inevitable or due to internal flaws. Physical destruction did not stem from cultural deficiency. More times than not a tribe's deterioration was due to accidents like viral infections or economic pressures in Europe. But disease and immigration did not extinguish most tribes; they just highlighted demographic factors that displaced natives to areas where missionaries followed and continued their work. My point in this rather rambling discourse is this: we accept Indian patterns as having integrity; we recognize that they have not disappeared under the onslaught of white aggression; the same thing holds in the religious sphere, and there has always been exchange between strong ideological systems; conversions have manifested a blend of biblical idioms and native forms of expression. This interaction opens many possibilities for further inquiry into the nature of religious experience, the standards for evaluating missions, the qualitative and quantitative criteria for defining Christianity itself.

In pointing out avenues for future research, I know I run the risk of emphasizing pet projects. The next few paragraphs do not cover the field adequately, but they raise a few questions that might pos-

sibly enhance missions studies during the rest of this century. The most obvious and least controversial suggestion to make is that we need more of the same sorts of studies that have been produced recently. It has been only a short time since we turned away from biased works that were overwhelmingly pro-white and anti-Indian or stridently pro-Indian and anti-white. Our hard-won neutrality is still fresh, and we shall benefit from a great many more studies conducted from this more balanced perspective.

Moving beyond that and concentrating more specifically on the area of missions and religious interchange, I suggest that we can learn a tremendous amount from ethnograophical data. What were native beliefs and values like before missionaries encountered them? What was at the core of their values and what was marginal? What were the standards of orthodoxy and mechanisms for conformity? These sorts of questions can help us understand what the missionaries confronted upon their arrival and the nuances they faced every day of their evangelical efforts.

Beyond the point of contact and generation of early dialogues, what persons converted to Christianity and why? What reasons did they give (or what factors can we discern); what aspects of the new religion did they adopt and what parts of their old customs did they retain; .what consequences did these decisions have for individuals, kinhip relations, and the tribe at large? I confess to having a personal fascination with the phenomena of syncretism and selective borrowing. We know that it happened all the time, and I submit that it is wrong to indulge any longer in trying to decide what is "really Christian" and what is not. So we are left with a panoply of individual examples whereby we may learn how others have defined Christianity for themselves.

Taking this one step further, I suggest that missions studies has the rich potential for displaying a variety of ways Christianity has been expressed. As important historical phenomena worth our notice, Christianity in North American cultures does not need to depend on a few languages like English or German, use symbols like doves and vineyards, worship in permanent structures with pipe organs, have an ordained clergy, partake of communion with bread made from wheat flour, or rely on images of God as a white man with a beard. Native American Christianity can utilize local dialects, indigenous plant and animal life in imagery, tribal architecture and simple preferences such as sitting in circles on the ground instead of in pews, leadership structures based on something other than educational credentials, the sacred host made from corn meal, and images of God that underscore native images of the Holy Spirit more than anthropomorphic emphases derived from Judaism. All these and more can be found in missions history and in anthropological field reports. These types of Christianity have existed over long periods of time, and they flourish

today. Our understanding of the way faith blends with cultural idioms will be richer the more we learn about these creative expressions. We can become more aware of how Christianity reinforces the kaleidoscope of cultures in America by observing these multiple expressions of native life that continue with such astonishing persistence.

A lamentable fact of missions history is that whites have dominated it for centuries. Generations of evangelists insisted that converts were not yet prepared to incorporate the gospel into their lives or to lead their own church services without supervision. What would Indian Christianity become if whites ceased their control over native proclivities? Admittedly this is speculative, but let me suggest some possible areas where we might see the emergence of distinctive emphases in Indian Christianity. Precontact patterns give us some orientation; their survival after conversion points to vitality in spite of white restrictions; their possible growth outside of white sanctions suggest areas for future inquiry.

In the realm of plastic arts we would see biblical themes depicted with fresh vigor. Imagery derived from native fields and forests would enliven painting, carving, frescoes, clothing and ceramics. A Delaware madonna with the infant Jesus strapped to her back might evoke more native piety than some Caucasian woman who is traditionally dressed in blue robes. The apostles could wear buckskin as easily as Roman togas. Vestments for worship could be beaded instead of embroidered. Pottery and baskets could replace brass and silver on an earthen mound rather than an altar. One could go on and on, but my point is simply this: native art would enhance the dimensions of Christian expression if given the chance to demonstrate indigenous piety through its own forms and materials.

In speculating about liturgical possibilities there is one thing of which I am certain. However much music would find new outlets, whatever new forms prayers would take, Indian worship would incorporate a dimension rarely seen in other types of Christianity. Dancing would become a focal point of praise, thanksgiving and communion with the Almighty. Dancing has been ubiquitous in native life. The earliest explorers and traders noted the importance of dances, and contemporary anthropology continues to indicate their central place in community activities. Dances serve to solemnize significant events like rites of passage, warfare, planting, and harvest. The rhythms of individual and corporate life are celebrated and manifested in the rhythms of collective dance. They are mechanisms for integrating people with their sense of spiritual power, exhibiting that contact through proper action. This form of ritual response would be prominent in a native Christianity at last free to express itself without outside interference. I am at a loss to say what forms these sacred dances would take, but Indians have known about the reli-

gious value of such activity for quite some time, and they would employ that wisdom if left to themselves in developing liturgical priorities.

Ethics is another area that would receive a great deal of attention if native Americans could accentuate their own values without outside influence. Traditional emphases on sharing goods and services were reinforced by kinship relations, clan loyality, and tribal solidarity. Subsequent historical experiences of deprivation, insecurity, and poverty have underscored these deep-seated attitudes. Indian Christianity would have a solid foundation for stressing love of the individual and concern for the community. Values oriented toward sharing, collective solidarity, and corporate wholeness would submerge individualism and self-sufficiency in an ethic of broader parameters. Just as in arts and worship, Indian ethics would enhance the variety of Christian formulations, each adding dimensions not similarly represented in other versions.

Precontact impulses continue in historic times. Basic ethnographic dynamics persist to keep Indian life dynamic. These traits will survive in religion too, and if given a chance would create distinctive features unparalleled in other types of Christianity. I suggest that this process has already begun in a moderate way, and those interested in pointing out noticeable aspects of indigenized Christianity could hardly do better than to investigate native arts, worship, and ethics.

A final suggestion about future research seems at first glance to contradict what I've just said. The difficulty is resolved by distinguishing between cultural traits and separate institutional forms. Culture traits persist in compartmentalized pockets despite variable settings. Institutional forms constitute a more perceptible entity, and this raises a question that, for me at least, bears looking into in some detail. To put the matter on a simple level, why is there no Indian church? Missions ever since Pentecost have planted Christianity in lands that had no knowledge of the Gospel. People in England and Germany, to take just two exemples, abandoned their pagan beliefs and incorporated the new faith into their cultural patterns. We speak eventually of traits discernible as British Christianity or Moravian Piety exemplified at Herrnhut. European churches were transplanted to the New World, and over time mission work among African slaves and freed men has produced a rather loosely defined Black Christianity. Why then can we not point to a Red Christianity with similarly distinctive theological emphases, separate religious institutions, and internally developed leadership? Every culture touched by Christian missions has developed its own version of the faith. Why has this not happened among Indians?

Perhaps the best answer to such questions is that there is a Red Christianity, and asking about it only reveals our ignorance about

the Indian church that is already there. That may be the case, and all I can do is suggest that we need elementary data on the basic facts. But if Indian Christianity exists in institutional form, it does not have a very high profile, and one might ask why that is so. Given the possibility of embryonic Indian churches, what impedes their emergence as a distinctive pattern of religious expression with separate leadership, bureaucratic structure, and associations with different tribes or denominational agencies? Is this state of arrested development another result of white paternalism, or does it point to forces at work but not yet understood in tribal life?

Many people have suggested why Indians would never become Christian in the first place. Upon contact their cultures were whole, and people were not vulnerable to alternate life-styles as were Africans who were snatched away from their cultures and brought here involuntarily. There was, says a second suggestion, plenty of space for them to move away from whites when the intruders became too oppressive. Native ideologies were too different, says a third answer, and their fundamental assumptions did not prize a salvation for which they saw no need. White governments, armies, and swarms of unmanageable backwoodsmen obtruded on every missionary enterprise ever attempted, thus ruining in practical terms any prospects for conversion that evangelists might have contemplated in isolation.

But the bare fact is that some natives in almost every tribe ever mentioned did become Christian. What happened to their successive generations? They did not assimilate into American culture, so were they perpetuated on reservations? Putting my own interest in a nutshell: why did Indian converts, active preachers and often ordained clergymen, not take steps to secure leadership in the generation that followed them? Again the answer may be that they did, but of the few prominent Indian spokesmen that I know of, such as Samson Occom, not one of them showed any concern for building up a cadre of Christian leaders who could have developed a more visible church among native constituents. So my question for continuing investigation has two parts: is this the case, and if so, why. Does this point to some subterranean reverence for shamanism where leaders are expected to emerge without deliberate training, or does it indicate once again the dead hand of white control where missionaries refused to accept fellow believers as equals by not recommending Indian youths for the ministry? Whatever the hypothesis and possible answers, I suggest this category of separate Indian churches as an area worth further inquiry.

So we stand at an important juncture in the field of missions studies. Previous debilities have been at least partially overcome, and we have a great deal more information to use in our investigations. Materials are available for us to learn about indigenous religions and their different combinations with Christian truths. Future

studies are promising in the areas of previous interactions and in future expressions too, whether made in separate Indian churches or in concert with denominations that subsume peoples who retain many ethnic identities. It is invigorating to be associated with such studies at a time like this, and it is a privilege for me to be able to discuss the achievements and prospects of missions studies with an audience as discerning and attentive as this one.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Stand und Aufgaben der Erforschung der Indianermission

Der größte Teil der zwischen 1650 und 1950 erschienenen Literatur zum Thema Indianermission hegte entschieden "weiße" Vorurteile. Die zugrunde liegende Vorstellung von der Überlegenheit der europäischen Technologie und europäischer kultureller Werte führte zu einer entsprechenden Haltung hinsichtlich der Überlegenheit des Christentums über die einheimische amerikanische Religiosität. Nach 1950 kehrten einige Historiker diese Betrachtungsweise um; sie traten für die einheimische Lebensweise ein und machten die euroamerikanische Kulturaggression für den geistigen und materiellen Verfall bei den Indianern verantwortlich, der sich über Jahrhunderte hin vollzog. Jede dieser beiden historischen Sichtweisen hat nur begrenzten Wert, weil jeweils vorgefaßte Überzeugungen sorgfältige Berichterstattung und ausgewogenes Urteil verhindern.

Während der letzten zwei Jahrzehnte hat die wissenschaftliche Erforschung der christlichen Mission einen neuen Weg eingeschlagen. Der neue historiographische Ansatz wertet anthropologisches Material aus, um soweit nur irgend möglich in Erfahrung zu bringen, wie indianisches Leben vor der Berührung mit der Kultur der Weißen aussah, und verfolgt den Prozeß der kulturellen Wechselbeziehung. Dies ist dann besser möglich, weil man die Eigenart der Kulturen vor ihrer gegenseitigen Beeinflussung kennt. Ein anderes Merkmal dieser neueren Forschungen ist eine höhere Wertung der einheimischen Religiosität und deren Funktion, Weltsicht und Lebensvollzug in ihrer Einheit darzustellen. Für die Zeit nach der Einführung des Christentums richtet sich das Hauptinteresse dieser Forschungsrichtung darauf festzustellen, wie Wertvorstellungen und Symbole aus der vorchristlichen Zeit bei den Bekehrungen und in nachfolgenden synkretistischen Ausdrucksformen weiterlebten.

Da die gegenwärtige Missionsforschung sich erst vor kurzem von einer langen anti-indianischen literarischen Tradition und einer kurzen pro-indianischen Phase gelöst hat, müssen die gewonnenen Erkenntnisse noch durch weitere, auf anthropologisches Material gestützte Arbeiten konsolidiert werden. Darüberhinaus darf man neue Forschungen über die Religiosität der Indianer erwarten, besonders in den Bereichen von Theologie, Ethik und Kult - Bereiche, in denen sich die amerikanischen Ureinwohner frei und von der Kultur der Weißen ungehindert ausdrücken. Es bieten sich vielfältige Möglichkeiten, und jetzt, da Vorurteile geschwunden sind, scheinen die Historiker besser dafür gerüstet, ihre Aufgabe zu erfüllen.