

DEFINITIONS:

BY **BIBLICAL TRUTH**. WE MEAN THE SOLE AUTHORITY OF THE DIVINE REVELATION OF GOD TO MAN. CLEARLY INSPIRED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE HOLY SCRIPTURES. AND NOT WHAT MAN THINKS ABOUT GOD.

BY **NATIVE RELIGIOUS TRADITIONALISM**. WE MEAN THE INFLUENCE OF THE UNWRITTEN RULES CONCERNING SPIRITUAL CONDUCT IN OUR HISTORICAL CULTURES WHICH ARE NOT IN ACCORD WITH THE REVEALED WORD OF GOD.

BY **NATIVE CULTURE**. WE MEAN THE DYNAMIC LEARNED LIFE WAYS, BELIEFS AND VALUES OF OUR PEOPLE AS REVEALED IN OUR LANGUAGES, CUSTOMS, RELATIONSHIPS, ARTS AND RITUALS. IN NATIVE CULTURE, RELIGION PERMEATES ALL ASPECTS OF LIFE AND IS OFTEN IDENTIFIED AS BEING THE CULTURE. EVEN THOUGH IT IS ONLY AN ASPECT OF IT.

BY **SYNCRETISM**. WE REFER SPECIFICALLY TO THE SUBTLE ATTEMPT TO INTEGRATE BIBLICAL TRUTH AND FAITH IN CHRIST WITH NON-BIBLICAL NATIVE RELIGIOUS BELIEFS, PRACTICES, AND FORMS. THE RESULT IS AN ADULTERATION OF BIBLICAL TRUTH AND THE BIRTH OF "ANOTHER GOSPEL (GAL 1:6-9)."

BY **IDOLATRY**. WE MEAN EXCHANGING THE WORSHIP OF THE CREATOR FOR THE WORSHIP OF THE CREATION. THE BIBLE TEACHES THAT WE MUST NOT "EXCHANGE THE GLORY OF THE INCORRUPTIBLE GOD FOR AN IMAGE IN THE FORM OF CORRUPTIBLE MAN AND FOUR-FOOTED ANIMALS AND CRAWLING CREATURES (ROM. 1:23)."

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A Biblical Position

by Native Leaders on



Native Spirituality

What must I do to have eternal life with the Father?

Preamble:

Deut.

29:9-12

ONE OF THE MOST CRITICAL ISSUES FACING THE NATIVE CHRISTIAN CHURCH TODAY IS THE EFFORT TO REVIVE, ADAPT, AND UTILIZE NATIVE CULTURAL FORMS OF WORSHIP IN THE CHURCH.

IN THE LIGHT OF THE RESURGENCE OF NATIVE RELIGIOUS TRADITIONALISM. THE COMING OF THE PEYOTE MOVEMENT (NATIVE AMERICAN CHURCH). THE INFLUX OF NEW AGE PHILOSOPHY, AND QUESTIONS CONCERNING NATIVE SPIRITUALITY AND BIBLICAL TRUTH...

WE AS NATIVE BELIEVERS IN CHRIST... FROM A SCORE OF TRIBES AND WITH HUNDREDS OF COMBINED YEARS OF EXPERIENCE IN TRIBAL MINISTRY AMONG US. HAVE GATHERED TOGETHER TO SPEAK WITH ONE VOICE ON THESE SUBJECTS TO THE BODY OF CHRIST AT LARGE. BASING OUR RESPONSES ON CLEAR STATEMENTS OF THE REVEALED WORD OF GOD.

1 TIM. 4:1. 2 TIM. 4:3-4. 2 COR. 4:1-2. 1 PET. 4:1.



1. As Native leaders, we believe that God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is personal, eternal, and pre-exists all of creation. God is both the Creator and the Reason for all creation, including the heavens and the earth, plant life, animal life, and man. Life originated from God who is our true heavenly Father, not from earth as our "mother".
Gen. 1:26, Heb. 4:14, Jn. 1:14, 1 Tim. 1:17, Jn. 1:1-3, Col. 1:16-17, Neh. 9:6, Rom. 1:20, Acts 17:26-30, Gen. 2:7, Deut. 32:39, Ps. 104:5, Isa. 51:6, Job 12:7-9.
2. We believe that Christ should have preeminence and permeates all aspects of our lives and, through us, all aspects of our cultures, to promote the glory of God. God will not share His glory with anything in creation. To do so is idolatry. To combine the elements of Native religion and Biblical truth is syncretism. We must renounce and avoid any form of idolatry and syncretism, because they are forbidden in Scripture.
Deut. 32:39, Col. 1:17-19, Eph 1:6,12,14, Heb. 1:3-4, 1 Cor. 10:31, Isa. 42:8, Ex. 20:3-6, Rom. 1:23, Col.3:5, 2 Ki. 17:40-41, 2 Cor. 6:14-17, 2 Cor. 4:2, Acts 19:18-20, 1 Cor. 5:11, Is. 42:17.
3. We believe our salvation is the finished work of Christ and that we cannot add anything to that work to improve our relationship with God. As believers, we should not, therefore, use or attach any spiritual value to items regarded as sacred such as tobacco, cedar smoke, sweet grass, peyote, prayer feathers, fetishes, masks, drums, dances, etc.; to places regarded as sacred such as mother earth, kivas, mountains, sweat lodge, long house, or other traditional religious places of worship, etc.; or to spirit beings such as kachinas, skin walkers, animal and nature spirits, etc.
Jn. 19:30, Eph. 2:8-9,5:8-12, Ex. 20:1-5, Is. 1:13-16, Deut. 18:9-13, Jn. 4:21-24, Deut. 12:2, 2 Chron. 34:4, 1 Thes.1:9.
4. We believe that Christ has always been and always will be the one and only mediator between God and man. Man is totally helpless to reach

God through any traditional spiritual efforts such as Native ceremonies, rituals, and forms of worship. Jn.14:6, Acts 4:12, 1 Tim. 2:5-6, Josh. 24:14-15, Mark 7:1-9, Rom. 3:9-18,23, Col. 2:20-23.

5. We believe we are redeemed and purified only through the blood of Christ for forgiveness of sins and eternal salvation; therefore, we should not teach that a Native can be purified by any other means (smoke, sweats, smudging, other blood sacrifices, etc.). To do so is to substitute or add Native rituals and ceremonies to the finished work of Christ.

1 Pet. 1:18-19, Eph. 1:7, Heb.9:12-14,22, 1 Jn. 1:7, Col. 1:14, Tit. 3:5, Eph. 2:8-9, Col. 2:7-10, Col. 2:20-32.

6. We believe that Christ has set us free and that the liberty we have in Christ should not be used as a license to introduce anything from the native traditional ways that would hinder our lives in Christ, that would offend any of our fellow believers, or that would hinder our witness to unbelievers.
Gal. 5:1, Jn.8:32-36, Gal. 5:13-15, 1 Cor. 8, 1 Cor. 10:31-33, Rom. 6:16-18.

7. We believe that Christ reigns supreme above all cultures.

When Christ redeems and transforms us through faith and obedience to His Word, then Christ will transform our culture through us. (We believe that Christ only redeems people by His blood; the Bible does not teach redemption of culture.) *At the same time, we affirm that there are many good traditions within our Native cultures, which enhance both the lives of both Christians and non-Christians. Such traditions include: respect for elders, love for children, sharing with others, entertaining strangers, considering others before oneself, honoring the accomplishments of others, etc. These are all outstanding examples of the scriptural "law of love" and are to be encouraged.*

Eph. 1:20-23, Col. 1:16-18, Phil. 2:9-11, 1 Pet. 2:9-12,, Gal.2:20, 2 Cor. 5:17, Rom. 12:1-2, Rom. 1:5-6, Tit. 3:5, Gal. 2:16, Eph. 2:8-9, Rev. 5:9, Heb. 9:22. Eph. 1:7-8, , Eph. 2:12-13, 1 Pet. 1:18-19, 2 Thes. 2:15, Phil. 4:8-9.