

Chapter Eight

Abuse of Native Americans

The human cost of serving Mammon is often the abuse of people and power. This may be the second most prevalent defective spiritual gene in Tidewater. American human rights abuses began here; the “land of the free” was always that way. Many British Anglicans excelled at abusing Native Americans, indentured servants, then Blacks, women and other Christian denominations. Our spiritual genetic pattern of abuse has several roots in Tidewater.

Native American Roots of Abuse



The first abuses of Native Americans in Tidewater probably started with the Native Americans themselves. Abuse was part of the culture for indoctrinating and controlling the upcoming warriors of the tribe.

Indian boys were forced to endure the Husquenaw Ritual in preparation for becoming a warrior. Like many other Native American rites of passage rituals, this one involved drugs. In this case, it was from a root of a plant. The roots of abusing people (no pun intended) may start here. Indians used root poison to induce madness in a young Indian brave, brainwashing him into loyalty to the tribe over loyalty to his family. Taken to a remote area, the boys were “fed root poison that induced raging madness, and confined for weeks in a cage while mad on this drug. If the braves still showed signs of loyalty to their families, they underwent the torment again and not infrequently died from it. Thus transformed or ‘reborn,’ a young man’s primary loyalty abruptly shifted from family to tribe.”¹¹⁷ Abusive control over people was apparently common among the tribes.

The great Chief Powhatan continued to develop this pattern of abusive control by forcing the surrounding tribes to submit to him and to provide for him. He ruled approximately thirty tribes in his confederacy when the settlers sailed into Chesapeake Bay in April of 1607. Powhatan learned to use people to meet his needs. Most Indians were hunter-gatherers and farmed or hunted to feed themselves. Powhatan discovered that you can

¹¹⁷ Thomas C. Parramore, [*Norfolk: The First Four Centuries*](#) (Charlottesville: University of Virginia, 1994) 7.

force others to take care of your needs—just as the Spanish and Portuguese had begun doing in the New World. Powhatan guarded his kingdom with ferocious tenacity.

According to William Strachey, Secretary to the colony from 1610-12, just before the arrival of the three small ships, an Indian seer told Powhatan that unnamed people “from the Chesapeake Bay should arise, which would dissolve and give end to his empire.” Strachey claims that this is why the Chesapeake Indian tribe on the south side of the bay was extinct just before the English arrived. Powhatan had them eliminated, thinking that they must be the ones mentioned in the prophecy.¹¹⁸ He probably realized soon after that the prophecy referred to the white men under white sails with their thunderous “death stick” guns that no bow and arrow could match.

Spanish Abuse

The Spanish visit to Tidewater in June 1561 added a small piece of the first European DNA to the spirit of abusive control here. Their short visit to the Chesapeake area ended up with the abduction of an Indian teenager named Paquiquino and his servant to Spain so that they could use him to gain entrance into the Indian culture. They did not bother to return him



until 1570—nine years later!¹¹⁹ Spain was accustomed to almost any cruelties to get what it wanted from the New World. Fortunately, the Spanish left and Tidewater was spared from the ruthless Spanish conquistadors, but not before they taught the Indians how deceitful and selfish whites could be!

British Abuse of the Native Americans

Manteo—Although it did not last as a colony, the first British colony at Manteo, North Carolina, planted by Sir Walter Raleigh in 1585, was where the British first began to abuse the Indians. In their amazingly detailed chronicle of the colony’s early days,¹²⁰ Thomas Harriot described and John White pictured with drawings and watercolors (as in the two above) Native American life there. Overall, the British were kind to the Indians, who were

¹¹⁸ Parramore, 2.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 4.

¹²⁰ Thomas Harriot, [A Briefe and True Report of the New Found land of Virginia](#) (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1972).

likewise respectful and even worshipful of the British with all their strange, new weapons, books and knowledge. Harriot became a friend and confidant of the Indians, learning their language and listening carefully to them for hours. As a result, Harriot chastised his fellow colonists for being “too harsh with them and killing a few of their number for offenses which might easily have been forgiven.”¹²¹

Jamestown

These first settlers had a terrible start with the Indians. Going well beyond the intermittent harshness that the English showed the Indians in the earlier short-lived Roanoke Colony,¹²² the Jamestown settlers saw themselves as superior to the Indians and treated them with much deceit and often with violence for years. The cocky, pugnacious John Smith personified that attitude. To be fair, Smith was only reflecting what many English leaders felt about our Native Americans. King James himself in 1604 described Native American people as “these beastly Indians, slaves to the Spaniards, refuse to the world, and as yet aliens from the holy Covenant of God.”¹²³ Smith and Powhatan played, as historian Timothy Stiles says, “a deadly game of smiling deceits and open attacks” between the colony and the Indians.

Both sides gave as much as they received, but the English, always more desperate initially, even violated the basic rules of Powhatan warfare by destroying entire villages—including the women and children—like the village of Paspahegh.¹²⁴ These English atrocities only escalated the tensions and intrigue between the Indians, whom the English supposedly came to Christianize, and the very vulnerable colony. The picture to the right depicts Smith in



“C. Smith takes King of Pamunkey prisoner, 1608”

¹²¹ <http://www.nps.gov/fora/newworld.htm> (14 May 2006)

¹²² Harriot, 28.

¹²³ <http://www.gospelcom.net/chi/pastwords/ch1052.shtml> citing King James ‘s A COUNTERBLASTE TO TOBACCO

¹²⁴ Marty O’Rourke, “Community Transformation” (Unpublished paper for Regent University, Virginia Beach, VA. 2001), 19.

battle with a local tribe.¹²⁵ The hideous treachery of the Indians in the 1622 massacre of the colony may seem more justified in the light of these earlier English war crimes and deceptions.

These abusive and deceitful attitudes towards our Native Americans have carried down to modern Virginians—as spiritual DNA often does! In the

You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you... (Matt. 5:43-44).

August 11, 2003 edition of the Virginian-Pilot on page A10, there was a story outlining the continued legal fight of Virginia's remaining eight tribes to get federal recognition. It was only in 1983 that the state of Virginia officially recognized them as Native American tribes. Unlike other states with Native American populations, Virginia has tricked and deprived its Native Americans repeatedly. The Pilot article states that Virginia:

...long denied education and employment opportunities to Indians. Later, the Virginia General Assembly tried bureaucratically to eliminate Indians by passing the Racial Integrity Act of 1924. The law mandated that only two races be recorded on state birth records: White and Negro.

The Act also would not allow anyone to get a marriage license until they could prove what race they belonged to. Therefore, it was easy to force Indians to claim being Negro since they often could not prove their Native American roots on paper. Somehow, many of the courthouses where those Native American records were kept had burned down over the years. This infamous Act also prohibited whites from marrying Indians or any other racial group. "It shall hereafter be unlawful for any white person in this State to marry any save a white person, or a person with no other admixture of blood than white and American Indian."¹²⁶ Hypocritical laws for a state that prides itself on the marriage of Pocahontas to John Rolfe!

The Racial Integrity Act was zealously enforced by a devout Presbyterian named Walter Ashby Plecker, Virginia's first Registrar of the Bureau of Vital Statistics, who, "starting in 1912, forced Indians to classify themselves

¹²⁵ <http://lumen.georgetown.edu/projects/posterTool/data/users/Captain-John-SMith.jpg> (3 June 2006)

¹²⁶ http://www.vcdh.virginia.edu/lewisandclark/students/projects/monacans/Contemporary_Monacans/racial.html (13 May 2006)

as black,” He worked with a vengeance. Plecker was a white supremacist and a zealous advocate of eugenics – a now discredited movement to preserve the integrity of white blood by preventing interracial breeding. “Unless this can be done,” he once wrote, “we have little to hope for, but may expect in the future decline or complete destruction of our civilization... The tribes, according to Plecker, had become a “mongrel” mixture.¹²⁷ “Plecker’s icy efficiency as racial gatekeeper drew international attention, including that of Nazi Germany. In 1943, he boasted: “Hitler’s genealogical study of the Jews is not more complete.”¹²⁸

Woe to those who enact evil statutes and to those who constantly record unjust decisions... (Isaiah 10:1).



Plecker systematically changed the race recorded on many birth, death and marriage certificates from “Indian” to “Negro” until his retirement in 1967 when the Racial Integrity Act was struck down by the U.S. Supreme Court. But by then, it was too late for thousands of Native Americans to recover their real identity and the benefits that went with it. The State of Virginia, with a great deal of help from Plecker, pictured to the left, committed ethnic cleansing of Native Americans by systematic, massive identity theft.

As one Native American who lost her identity as an Indian through Walter Plecker remarked, “I thought Plecker was a devil...I still do.”¹²⁹ If he could have responded to her, Dr. Plecker might have quoted a line he wrote in a 1925 essay, “Let us turn a deaf ear to those who would interpret Christian brotherhood as racial equality.”¹³⁰ One of his co-workers said of Plecker, “I don’t know of anyone who ever saw him smile.”¹³¹ Small wonder.

Virginia Congressman Jim Moran confirmed this shameful treatment of Virginia tribes in his June 2004 article in the Falls Church News Press:

¹²⁷ Warren Fiske, *The Virginian-Pilot*, *The black-and-white world of Walter Ashby Plecker*, August 18, 2004, including the picture of Plecker.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Ibid

During our country's early history, the Virginia tribes were subdued, pushed off their land, and up through much of the 20th Century, denied full rights as U.S. citizens. In more recent times, racial hostility culminated with the enactment and brutal enforcement of Virginia's Racial Integrity Act of 1924...To call yourself a "Native American" in Virginia was to risk a jail sentence of up to one year. Married couples were denied marriage certificates and were even unable to obtain the release of their newborn child from a hospital until they changed their ethnicity on the state record. For much of the 20th Century, admission to public schools education was denied. These and other indignities are part of a shameful legacy experienced in our lifetime.¹³²

The Virginian-Pilot article continues to tell of the “devastating impact” this law had on the Indians who could now not prove who they were. They were, consequently, not able to get the federal assistance that all the other tribes in America do for food and shelter and school scholarships.

What can we learn? The early European settlers mistreated the very people whose ancestors actually kept our first settlers alive with donations of food. Virginians broke many treaties with them and stole their land. Then, Virginians stole their identity to deprive them of the very benefits our state and federal government might have given them for taking their land away from them.

*So show your love
for the alien, for you
were aliens in the
land of Egypt.
(Deuteronomy
10:19)*

"We were victims of statistical genocide," said William P. Miles, chief of the Pamunkey.¹³³

What appalls me even more is that many other Virginia politicians knew of it...for over 40 years! Some of those politicians, such as Plecker, called themselves Christians. This is a great shame!

There has been a mean spirit in Virginia government against Indians; real Christians must act differently! God commands His followers to love their neighbors. Indians are— and were—our neighbors whom we are to love as ourselves. Anything else is sin.

¹³² <http://www.fcnp.com/416/moran.htm> (13 May 2006)

¹³³ Virginian-Pilot, 10

Sins like these have probably brought God's curses on Virginia. Federal recognition for the eight Indian tribes in Virginia—the Chickahominy, the Eastern Chickahominy, the Mattaponi, the Upper Mattaponi, the Monacan, the Nansemond, the Pamunkey, and the Rappahannock. —is painfully long overdue.¹³⁴



The Church of Tidewater needs to do all it can to help these tribes get all the benefits that all the other federally recognized tribes get in America. It is my hope that this is done before the 400th Anniversary of America's founding. That would really give our Host People here something to celebrate!^x

While in Washington, DC in 2004 for the opening of the National Smithsonian Museum for Native Americans, my wife and I met some wonderful native Americans from all over the Western hemisphere. It was the largest gathering of native peoples in the history of our hemisphere: Aztecs from Mexico, Incas from Peru, Hopi, Navaho, Apache, Sioux and others from North America. It was thrilling to see them so honored and so sad to hear their stories as we talked to them while watching the parade that warm October day on the Mall.

These once great peoples are still being treated shamefully by our government. One older gentleman from California told me that his mother had been taken from her family by the Federal government and forced to attend a school for whites far away, and against the will of her parents. She never saw her parents again. "Why did our government do that to Indian children?" I asked. "Because they wanted to break up the Indian way of life and force them to assimilate into white America," he quietly replied. I was amazed at his gentleness and apparent forgiveness to whites for such ruthless behavior by our federal government—even in the last 100 years.

After 400 years of exposure to the white man's churches and "Christian" government, only about 3 % of Native Americans are born-again Christians! Could our treatment of them—past and present—have anything to do with that? There is still time for the Church to repent and make restitution for the

¹³⁴ <http://www.indiancountry.com/content.cfm?id=671> (13 May 2006)

crimes our government and our Church has committed against them. As current Indian leaders declare, “It has been said that America will never be right until they right themselves with the American Indian.”¹³⁵ The full blessing and protection America longs for may depend more on securing the blessing of our Native Americans than we realize!

Again, II Samuel 21 is instructive: If Christians break covenants even with unbelievers, God is not pleased and will often punish that land for those broken treaties and covenants. I believe there are just curses on America from God because America, and especially the Church in America who should have known better, has not dealt honestly and lovingly with our Native Americans. The silence of the Church on this—as on the other sins of our founding fathers—is deafening. Only the Church can bring healing to this land: financial, physical, emotional and spiritual healing, according to II Chronicles 7:13-14. It cannot be overstated that America needs the blessing of its native tribes!

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¹³⁵ See Appendix A