

## **“History Revised – Indian Relations in Early America”**

**By Doug Anderson, President, America Reclaimed Ministries**

Those who wish to assault the Christian influence of our nation have worked hard to recast history in order to make the white Europeans who were Christian, to appear as evil invaders of America and the Indians who were living here at the time as angelic martyrs. Why should we be concerned? Because such revisions of history are really part of a larger agenda to diminish the positive impact of Christianity upon a nation.

As we view this early period of our nation’s founding, it is important to consider the spiritual dynamics, something public school textbooks intentionally ignore. During the early 1600s, this nation was inhabited by Indians who had never seen a Bible, or heard of a man named Jesus. They believed in many false gods but had not been shown the One True God. In order to give the Indians an opportunity for eternal salvation, the Lord had to send a people from outside these shores who knew of Christ and the Bible.

In order to provide that opportunity of salvation for the Indians, God chose a people, in the Pilgrims and Puritans, who knew and loved both Christ and His Word. Through their persecution in Europe, and the spiritual motivations they received, He provided their reason to leave their own homes to come to America to share their faith and lives with the Indians who were already here. Moreover, through their Christian desire to evangelize, the Pilgrims and Puritans move to America represented, in a very real sense, a type of church planting operation with a missionary calling. It was not at all as some extreme revisionist history has portrayed it: a military invasion that sought to take over the land and commit genocide on the local population. When you read the actual writings of these early settlers from Europe, it is undeniable what their spiritual motivation was.

Recall the language of their first political document on these shores, the Mayflower Compact. It said they came “for the glory of God and advancement of the Christian faith.” That is far more consistent with a church planting operation with a missionary purpose than it is to a nefarious invasion to kill the local population. Their motives were to live in harmony with the local population, not to destroy them. This spiritual motivation and dynamic is essential to understand when reading historical accounts of this period of the 1600s.

While the Pilgrims and Puritans were not perfect, they were devoutly Christian and they did seek to conduct their lives in accordance with the Bible and the love of Christ. They came with a heavenly vision and brought Biblical principles to this land seeking to transform this land into one where light overcomes darkness. They rightfully viewed the Indians as a people in need of salvation. Indeed, their desire for peace with the local tribes resulted in their entering into a peace treaty with the local Indians that endured for 50 years; one of the greatest examples of peaceful relations between the Indians and the white Europeans in our history.

Were there problems between the Indians and the Pilgrims and Puritans? Of course; just as you would expect from any situation where foreigners arrive into a new community. Communication issues, and some real distrust between them were certainly understandable factors on both sides. What is critical to recognize is that any bad behavior by anyone is not the result of their skin color; but of their lack of Biblical character. All people, regardless of color, culture, or belief system, have a sin nature. There isn't a single group of people or specific skin color, whether they are Indians, European Caucasians, African Americans, Latinos, Asians or anyone else, that can claim superiority in behavior because we are all human and we all have the same sin nature.

Therefore we must be wary of any historical account that seeks to demonize an entire group, whether they are Indians or whites, because of their bad behavior. **Any person who acts badly is not acting that way because their skin color is white, or red, or brown. They act badly because they have a sin nature.** Any problems between the Indians and the Pilgrims or Puritans was not really an issue of race, as liberal historians seek to portray, but of sinful man in need of a savior, or in need of repentance for failing to follow Christ.

We should also clarify another historical revision in this equation: the Indian culture in the Americas during the 1600s was not the idyllic one portrayed in many of our movies, and certainly not as portrayed in Howard Zinn's revisionist history book, *A People's History of the United States*. The Bible should give us a clue that such portrayals of any people do not match that of man's fallen nature portrayed in Genesis. Doug Phillips, President of Vision Forum captured a different perspective of the Indians prior to Christian influence coming to the lands; a perspective the Bible implies is true of any culture without Christ.

*"Prior to the arrival of Christian culture in North America, approximately 1 million people, none of whom were united under a single banner, were sparsely distributed on a vast land mass that was in excess of 3 million square miles. These cultures constantly warred against each other, had no written language, worshipped demons and animal spirits, practiced cannibalism and child sacrifice, had no biblical concept of property ownership, and because of insufficient cultivation of the land, sometimes starved, despite access to vast resources." (World Net Daily, April 20, 2007)*

It is critical for us to maintain a Biblical perspective on history if we are to see through such blatant revisionist attempts to undermine the Christian influence of the past. From a Biblical perspective, the Indians were without Christ and were in desperate need of evangelization by a people with knowledge of the Bible and a relationship with Christ. From a Marxist perspective the white man represented an oppressive invasion, theft of land, and genocide of innocent native people. Such a perspective is not only racially divisive, it ignores and distorts facts. Consider the following example.

#### **Example of the Pequot War.**

When a liberal historian talks about early atrocities, he will always be referring to Indian atrocities by the white man, not the other way around, and invariably he will refer to the Pequot War from 1636-1639 in which the claim is that the Pequot tribe was nearly wiped out by the Puritans. He or she will also invariably exaggerate any blame upon the Puritans. For example, in a book by Alfred E. Cave, called, *The Pequot War* (1996), Mr. Cave asserts the fault lay exclusively with the Puritans. In laying out his case, he intentionally omits some key facts.

Cave describes the war was caused by the Puritans who transformed "petty squabbles" into "a cosmic struggle of good and evil in the wilderness," that the Puritans had little respect for cultural diversity, that they viewed many of the Indian practices as Satanic, and that their own actions of warring against the Pequot's was required of "Saints." In other words, Cave seeks to place all the current liberal labels of Christian intolerance and bigotry upon the Puritans and make that the cause of the near genocide of the "innocent" Pequot tribe.

Such narratives not only are completely false, if accepted, they can lead to the belief that Christian influence in any nation is actually dangerous! Therein lies the hidden agenda to remove Christianity from the public arena. In Zinn's textbook, the Pequot violence against whites that led to the war is almost entirely absent from the text. In his one-sided portrayal of wrong behavior, the author details only the atrocities committed by the Puritans. While graphic descriptions of Puritan violence are highlighted, Pequot atrocities are brushed aside.

In actuality, the Pequot tribe was an extremely violent tribe that was despised by all the surrounding tribes. Moreover, the Puritan defense of their people against the Pequots was a legitimate need, given the fact they had been attacked by that tribe on several occasions.

Also absent from Howard Zinn's devious narrative are the atrocities that the Pequots committed against other Indians of the Connecticut Valley. The Pequots not only waged war on whites, but on their fellow Native Americans as well. They were a belligerent people feared by weaker tribes.

### **Myth of the Fort Mystic Massacre of 1637.**

The deceptions about the Pequot tribe are enhanced by the characterization of what is often referred to as the "Fort Mystic Massacre." Some revisionist narratives refer to a massacre by the Puritans or Englishmen of some 700 Pequot men, women and children at Mystic Fort, burning many of them alive in their homes and shooting those who fled.

Yet never do you read that it was primarily Indians from other tribes who attacked and massacred the Pequots. Though objective facts are difficult to come by on this issue, it is clear that the attacking force at Fort Mystic, was approximately 500 men; of which only about 70 were Puritans. The remaining 400 plus members of the attacking force were a

confederation of opposing Indian tribes who did not like the Pequots. The few Puritans involved had been requested to join the other Indian tribes against the hated Pequots. The violence towards the Pequots was primarily violence rendered by Indians against Indians. It is far from truthful to claim it was a massacre by violent white men against peaceful Indians.

Such accounts undermine the truth: that the Pilgrims and Puritans had an evangelistic zeal that sought good relations with the Indians. They sought to glorify God with a missionary intent toward the Indians, not to conquer and destroy them like an invading military force. As a result, the relations between themselves and the local Indians was extremely good overall, due to the Christian influence that was so strong.

Sadly, that Christian influence weakened over time and as it did, treatment of the Indians by the whites later in our history deteriorated badly. As a result of such non-Christ-like treatment, there continue to be deep wounds and anger in the hearts of many people. The devil can use that animosity to promote division, which is bad enough. But we don't need to fuel the fire of hatred through revisions of our history that seeks to portray the Christians in a negative light and make it a race issue instead of the spiritual issue it really is.

When Christians act wrongly, as they sometimes do, it is contrary to their Biblical worldview and beliefs. Therefore, the lesson to remedy such conduct should always be to encourage greater faith and reliance upon Christ, not less, and to encourage more of God in the public arena, not less. As you read accounts of violence between the Indians and white men in our nation, do so through spiritual eyes. Such violence is not caused by a person's skin color; it is caused by sinful hearts in need of forgiveness and salvation.