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### Title

Clyde A. Milner, II, and Floyd A. O'Neil, eds. *Churchmen and the Western Indians, 1820- 1920*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1985. xvi + 249 pp. Introduction, illustrations, maps, notes, and index. \$19.95 (cloth).

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Clyde A. Milner, II, and Floyd A. O'Neil, eds. *Churchmen and the Western Indians, 1820 - 1920*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1985. xvi + 249 pp. Introduction, illustrations, maps, notes, and index. \$19.95 (cloth).

The chapters in this volume were originally presented as conference papers. As such, they cover a wide range of issues, stress unrelated themes and only loosely comprise an organized whole. Each paper concerns itself with a different Euroamerican missionary or Indian reformer, representing such diverse denominations as the Presbyterians, Methodists, Mormons, Catholics and Episcopalians; and relates his experiences at time periods as far apart as the 1820s and the 1920s with Native American peoples equally diverse—Choctaw, Kiowa, Ute, Nez Perce and Chippewa (or Ojibwe) among them. The editors, Clyde A. Milner, II, and Floyd A. O'Neil, fully cognizant of the potential unconnectedness of the work, have provided a useful, guiding introduction that suggests areas of overlap and comparison beyond the superficial focus on the lives of six individuals who more or less shared a common vocation. They have also divided the book into three parts, pairing essays that speak to related themes, such as ecclesiastical institution-building on the frontier, for example, or the activities of nationally prominent Indian reformers.

Although the editors make efforts to suggest parallels in Native American-missionary encounters, they make the additional claim that the book's diversity represents an important strength. Quite correctly they remind us that "neither the western Indians nor the churchmen represented cultural monoliths" (p. xii). The articles reveal that no single response to missionaries and their interwoven religious and cultural message characterized all Native American peoples as indeed, missionaries themselves pursued a variety of conversion strategies. Historical circumstances, intratribal political issues, denominational ideologies, rivalries and mission-organizing techniques combined to produce experiences as varied as the tribes and missionaries under discussion.

These articles take their place in developing literature on Native American-missionary encounters, a literature that increasingly recognizes the sophistication of native assessments of and adaptations to Christianity. The authors recognize that old understandings of Native American responses to Christianity are inadequate. Indian peoples did not only accept Christianity when they were defeated and powerless, for example, nor did Christian conversion simply mean acceptance of 'the conqueror's religion.' Native people shaped Christianity to meet their own needs, frequently developing syncretic amalgams of Christian and traditional religious belief. Unfortunately, the editors' format of presenting biographical sketches of missionaries and reformers is not one that necessarily allows Indian people to emerge as equal participants in cross-cultural exchanges. It is still all too easy to focus on

the works and words (and interpretations) of the Euroamerican missionaries to the exclusion of the Indian peoples.

This difficulty is evident, for example, in Floyd A. O'Neil's chapter on the Mormons and the Ute. In keeping with the organizational focus on single missionary individuals, O'Neil grounds his discussion in the life of the Mormon, George Washington Bean. Like other Mormons of the first generation to move to Utah, Bean was involved in a wide range of church- and community-building activities in the 1850s and 1860s, including a stint at an Indian mission. Through Bean's life, O'Neil examines the process of Mormon colonization of their Great Basin 'Kingdom' and analyzes the conflict between Mormonism's unique theological conceptions regarding Native Americans and the realities of Native American/Euramerican conflict over land and resources. In spite of a theological imperative to convert Native Americans, Mormons made few converts of the Ute. O'Neil argues that the Mormon failure is to be found in the realities of economic competition in the harsh desert environment combined with the unique organizational style of their missions (like Bean, all young Mormon men performed several years of missionary work for the church, then moved on to other occupations, resulting in a constantly changing missionary population and no sustained individual commitment to a given mission or tribal group).

Competition over land and resources certainly did play a role, but O'Neil's interpretation relegates the Ute to the position of passively accepting and responding to non-Indian initiatives. One is left to conclude that had material circumstances not intervened, Mormon efforts to convert the Ute would have been glorious successes, for one is given no insight into the Ute view. Presumably, they had no objections to Mormon theology, only to Mormon colonization efforts. This is particularly unfortunate, as O'Neil makes clear that the Ute were anything but passive in their political relations with Euroamericans.

Other articles—by W. David Baird on the Choctaw and the Presbyterians, by Bruce David Forbes on several Oklahoma tribes and the Methodists, and by Martin Zanger on the Chippewa and the Episcopalians—are better able to transcend the limits of the format to reveal particular sensitivity to Indian adaptations. Baird, for example, details Choctaw interest in Presbyterianism in the 1820s and 1830s, revealing how different groups within the Choctaw population used Christianity to address very different issues. Choctaw mixed-bloods, many of whom had already accepted social and economic elements of Euroamerican society (including education, private property ownership, participation in a market economy, and a male descent system) accepted Christianity as part of a strategy to avoid tribal removal from central and northern Mississippi. By presenting themselves as Christianized and well on the road to civilization, the Choctaw mixed-bloods sought to undercut the prime rationale for removal, namely that 'civilized' agrarian Euramericans and 'savage' hunting native peoples could not coexist peace-

fully. Choctaw full-bloods on the other hand, more committed to traditional cultural elements that the mixed-bloods were willing to jettison in their 'civilization' effort, turned Christianity toward validating and sustaining their vision of proper Choctaw life. Full-blooded Christianized Choctaw men, for example, believed they became better hunters upon conversion. One such man asserted that God caused a deer to linger in one place while he went home for his gun as an indication of divine favor. Clearly, Christianity meant different things to different Choctaw, and the acceptance of Christianity signalled not decline and cultural decay but instead suggested particularly subtle adaptations to Euroamerican society.

Overall, these articles succeed in demonstrating the diversity of Indian/missionary contact. As case studies of the exchanges between certain Indian peoples and certain denominations, they make an interesting collection. They frequently provoke new questions. Beyond all this, however, they suggest the importance of understanding contact between Indian peoples and missionaries as a dialogue in which both sides participated. They further remind us that Christianity is a double-edged weapon. Dominant classes and social groups have often used it as an instrument of control and oppression; the subordinate and less powerful have also found in it a tool they could wield in defense of their own needs.

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Sheldon B. Liss. *Marxist Thought in Latin America*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984. + 374 pp. Glossary, abbreviations, bibliography, notes, and index. \$8.95 (paper).

In the past Latin American intellectuals have adopted European philosophies which have had no connection to the socioeconomic reality of the region. European philosophy has loomed over Latin America's struggle for change and development. European philosophy has served an ideological function for those groups in power or those seeking power since the Conquest. Scholasticism was the dominant philosophy in the major universities of the New World during the colonial period. The late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth century saw the penetration of Enlightenment thought as a weapon to use against the moribund colonial regime. During the late-nineteenth century, in a search for "order and progress" to replace the chaos and anarchy which engulfed many Latin American countries during the post-Independence period, Positivism became the ruling philosophy. The twentieth century has seen the rise of Marxism as the major influence on many of the social movements struggling for change in the region. Is Marxism an-