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**Author**

Castillo, John

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## Spiritual Foundations of Indian Success

JOHN CASTILLO

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American Indians in large numbers began to move off the reservations into urban centers at the end of World War II.<sup>1</sup> The Bureau of Indian Affairs in the early 60s estimated 40 percent of the Indian population lived in an urban area. In 1970 that figure had risen to over 50 percent; today the estimates reach 60 percent or more. The Bureau of Indian Affairs contributed to this migration through their relocation program, Joint Resolution 108. This program was initiated in the 50s and, along with termination of tribal recognition, "assisted" in moving one-third of the People to the cities.

The government could assimilate the Indians faster by removing them from their traditional background into a totally urban area. They would either sink or swim. However, without proper orientation, problems in successful adaptation occur. A strong Indian identity and the attainment of adaptation skills insures urbanization without serious difficulty. But many People have clearly had a bitter experience to their attempt to urbanize. Some indigenous people have urged their children to forget the Indian part of themselves in order to become White; others have taken pride in the Indian spiritual tradition and have drawn upon this strength to aid their urban adaption; still others remain torn between two worlds.

This synthesis of the Old Way and the American Way in Los Angeles is the main topic. This paper proposes spiritual adaptation in contrast to materialistic capitalism, as a way of life. Characteristics of spirituality include an inner balance of the self, harmony with creation, the awareness and understanding of urban pressures. This is a traditional way of life for the Peo-

ple. Today, "migration of the Indian people to the cities, rather than 'submerging' them in the mainstream, has created conditions which have enhanced Indian identity and has led to the establishment of a Pan-Indian power base."<sup>2</sup> Lost in the city, Indians tend to find each other, even though they come from different tribes across the country. They come together in the Indian Centers creating bonds of unity. John Price found that in Los Angeles alone the Native American population represented over one-hundred Indian tribes with predominant blocs of Navajos, Sioux, Cherokees, Choctaws, Chickasaws, Creeks and Seminoles, not to mention native California Indians.<sup>3</sup>

The pressures to assimilate and acculturate became formidable obstacles for individual Indians when their outlook on life does not coincide with that of the mainstream culture. Elaine M. Neils best explains the comparison in outlook between the indigenous people and the mainstream culture:

The Indian view of the world sees time as ever present and unbroken, upholds generosity and sharing rather than accumulation of wealth as a prestigious value, regards a house as a place of shelter rather than as a symbol of status. . . .<sup>4</sup>

This paper attempts to underscore how the People have adapted in Los Angeles. It deals with an individual who has a strong belief in his/her inner self, harmony with nature, all living things and a way of thinking still as foreign to the White person as it was over two hundred years ago. This paper focuses on the Indian spiritual adaptation to the urban setting. It presents a way of life "so rich, so cultured, so human that it could contribute to the cultural void that. . . the urban and suburban man lives in."<sup>5</sup>

The "intellect" that is different from the average urban man must be first defined. Intellect includes not only intelligence but all manifestation of cultural values. Adaption to the urban environment can then be related to the predisposition of the individual within a cultural milieu. The intellect of the indigenous person is related to the idea of Native American spirituality, which reflects the Indian's outlook on the physical world:

The culture of the Redman is fundamentally spiritual. . . His mode of life, his thought, his every act are given spiritual significance, approached and coloured with complete realization of the spirit world.<sup>6</sup>



Just as importantly the Indian sees himself as an intrinsic part of the world.

As Lame Deer points out, "I think when it comes right down to it, all Indian religions are somehow part of the same belief, the same mystery."<sup>7</sup> The idea of spirituality is a common denominator among Native Americans. In examining the Native American one must discuss his spirituality. Measurable, empirical data show only the physical manifestation of assimilation into White culture. The data may not reflect, however, the actual reasons for the various stages of assimilation.

Yet, the Native American can be found in different stages of assimilation. Is this due to enlightened assistance by the federal authorities? Or is it possibly due to the spiritual adaptation of the Native American to the urban environment? Irving Hollowell refers to the Native American as belonging to a small minority of individuals who possess an extraordinary personality.<sup>8</sup> Personality refers to the ability to adapt internally to the urban environment. If the spiritual life is intertwined with physical nature, then by necessity this emerging personality must be able to satisfy both intellectual and physical needs. One means of successful adaptation is to play a dual social role. The extraordinary personality to which Hollowell refers allows the Native American to appear to be conforming while his traditional values and attitudes remain the same.

Playing this dual role allows the individual to function without internalizing the values of the White society. The values of the Indian remain the same. Adaptation takes place in the means of expressing these values. Value placed on economic success seems to correspond outwardly to the emphasis of White society on the accumulation of wealth. In actuality the Native American only values it for its usefulness in allowing him to develop as a spiritual being.

Gordon Krutz refers to this dual process as compartmentalization. This is one way indigenous people have adapted to the urban environment. Krutz referred to the concept of compartmentalization used by Dozier to describe a social process which permits the Pueblos to function in two systems, one of which is exclusively Pueblo.<sup>9</sup>

The urbanized Kiowa had compartmentalized his person so as to establish an identity in both the Indian and non-Indian milieus of San Francisco:

Away from the job the Kiowa works hard to establish his identity as a Kiowa. He maintains his kinship obligations with both urban and rural relatives, spends much of his time representing the Kiowa cause in the Bay Area Pan-Indian Movement and continues to reinforce his Indian identity within himself, his family and with other urban Indians.<sup>10</sup>

The Mohawk and Narragansett Indians also provide a model example of the dual role.<sup>11</sup> The psychological predisposition of these groups of people have allowed them to incorporate with the economic structure of the non-Indian world. The Mohawks are noted for riveting in the steel construction industry. This position allows a warrior to prove his fearlessness. The Narragansetts emphasize cultural events such as the Pow-Wow to keep cultural traditions alive.

The Kiowa, Mohawk and Narragansett represent only one stage of assimilation and acculturation. Different authors have attempted to measure the adaptation of Indians in light of a particular physical or cultural manifestation. Authors often divide groups according to their stage of assimilation. Murray L. Wax, in *Indian Americans*, uses the criterion of economic success as a means of differentiating the Sioux in Rapid City, South Dakota.<sup>12</sup> Wax uses education, skill and physical characteristics as the means of measuring assimilation. The totally assimilated group he refers to as the upper-middle-class White Indian. The only tie this Indian has with the reservation tradition is being on the board of benevolent societies. These Indians have fully incorporated the value system of the mainstream culture. The other extreme is the camp Indian. These Native Americans come from poor rural areas such as the reservation. They tend to be full-bloods, undereducated and underskilled. Economic necessity forces them to migrate to the urban centers. Wax mentions a sub-group which seeks a secure and routine existence. They do not move out of the poor areas once they achieve economic security. They stay as models of the traditional way to other tribal members. While he mentions this sub-group that does not choose to assimilate any further than necessary for financial security, he does not go into the reasons why they choose not to assimilate. Perhaps it is their spiritual nature and their practice of tradition that prevents them from fully assimilating and incorporating the values of White society.



Traditional influence is also used as a means of assimilation. In his speech to the National Conference on Social Welfare (May 18, 1964) Kent Fitzgerald described four categories of Indian.<sup>13</sup> The Native American Research group uses the same guidelines in examining "American Indian Socialization in Urban Life." In both studies, the greater the desire for assimilation, the greater loss of oral tradition and cultural heritage. The research group refers to the highly acculturated Native American as a "Marginal Indian." The mother and child do not have a working knowledge of Native tradition or language. If they return to the reservation, it is not due to strong traditional ties. They merely gather their energies for a new attempt to migrate. Fitzgerald divides this same group into two categories: The Indian American, totally assimilated culturally and physically, and the American Indian whose only difference is his recognition of his heritage. The American Indian recognizes his heritage just as any American might. This group differs from the research group's "Transitional Group." The adult of the transitional group is proud of his ability to speak and think as an Indian. On the other hand he reinforces mainstream values in his offspring, who do not know the oral tradition. Kent Fitzgerald's "Traditional American Indian" resembles the research group's "Traditional Indian." The traditional Indian incorporates only what is necessary for economic success. He has a working knowledge of the language and chooses the traditional ways over the American value system.

What is of importance in both these studies is that they attempt to measure acculturation via cultural traits. Practiced cultural values are directly linked with the spiritual identity. The traditionalists who have made the choice to stay Indian have not done so because of the inability to assimilate. They have done so because their spiritual self would conflict with their environment if they assimilated any further into the mainstream culture.

Assimilation has also been measured by migration patterns. Mark Nagler asserts that unlike other minority groups the Indian who comes to the city finds no "real Indian community." This lack of a particular neighborhood tends to promote assimilation at several levels. Nagler<sup>14</sup> proposes that the Indian will assume the characteristics of whatever class he associates with. Nagler's divisions further delineate Fitzgerald's categories defined by the retention of Indian cultural traits; the differences lie in Nagler's

methodology. He does not measure assimilation by the cultural traits retained or rejected but by permanence in employment and habitation. Using this empirical data he makes assumptions about the level of the individual desire for economic advancement and assimilation. He points out that the unskilled laborer who has returned to the reservation experiences a high degree of alienation. But Nagler fails to explore those who return to the reservation by choice, or the group that partakes in non-American cultural tradition while seemingly being assimilated.

The Wax and Neils studies suggest that a particular neighborhood with class mobility is necessary for successful assimilation:

Indian migrants to the city exhibit the same patterns as European migrants of a half-century ago. Given the opportunity they cluster together residentially and elaborate distinctive institutions. . . which enable them as a community to fabricate a meaningful existence in this new environment.<sup>15</sup>

Wax uses the example of the Sioux in Rapid City and the Mohawk steel workers to illustrate the positive influence of the urban enclave. He further points out, through the example of the Alaskan Eskimo and the Indian in Minneapolis, that this social enclave is not sufficient without class mobility. This mobility is affected by the Indian's ability to achieve economic success and by the chance he is given to assimilate. Among both the Eskimos and Indians a lack of urban enclaves seems to be a contributing negative factor.

John Price emphasizes social enclaves as a means of facilitating assimilation. His article "the Migration and Adaptation of the American Indians in Los Angeles" defines acculturation as the minority's social and psychological adjustment and change of cultural values.<sup>16</sup>

Price does not explore the reason why this "culture shock" occurs. He measures the maladjustments to urban life through social phenomena such as arrests for drunkenness and high unemployment. He does not deal with spirituality, which he might incorporate in measuring psychological health. Price recognizes the existence of the social enclaves, but like Wax, he does not explore the internal mechanism that actually makes the enclave a necessity for the Native American.



Malcolm McFee does touch upon this inner mechanism.<sup>17</sup> McFee divides acculturation into different levels, as did Kent Fitzgerald and the Native American Research Group. He identifies a group that participates in tribal acculturation. They are a part of a "bicultural social structure that provides both models and positions for varied adaptation to reservation life." These individuals know the correct behavior of both cultures. He divides them further into two sub-groups, the "situationally Indian-oriented" and the "full bloods." The former group partakes in all the traditional ways but does not look to participate fully in tribal life. The members of this group offer their services in lieu of this participation. The "full-bloods" are the interpreters of the tribes. According to McFee, they are entirely mobil in either world but identify with the "Indian-Orientated sub-society." McFee recognizes the slight difference between the "situationally Indian-orientated" and the "full-bloods." What he does not pursue is the psychological make-up of both groups, which prevents them from totally assimilating in the White culture.

This paper contends that the common inculcation of Indian spirituality that many indigenous people have in common is the basis of Pan-Indianism. The Pan-Indian incorporates non-Indian means of securing economic success, but he also recognizes his Indianness and tribal responsibility. Pan-Indian awareness is a vital social movement. It encompasses these hybrid individuals who recognize the common cause of the Indian people.

Robert Thomas in "Pan-Indianism" has bridged different groups at different stages of assimilation in locations with no predominant tribal societies. An Indian can still come into contact with others who have a similar world view. Factions within tribes can come together under the auspices of Pan-Indianism. A marginal Indian is as accepted as a traditional Indian. Pan-Indianism recognizes that the commonality the Indian people have is based upon their spirituality. This is why Pan-Indianism is all-encompassing. To be Indian is to recognize one's spiritual self. Recognition of other people as Indian involves recognition of their spirituality.<sup>18</sup>

Urban adaptation is possible only if the Native American can find an environment in which he can freely express his spirituality. As all the aforementioned studies indicate, the total assimilation of the Indian is not necessary for a successful economic life. Programs working through the social enclaves could



perhaps reach more Native Americans. The success rate through these enclaves is evident. Federal policy should consider what environment would nurture the cultural values of the Indian. These values should be used to assist the Indian in functioning as a successful member of society. Studies should indicate why there are high incidents of arrest, alcoholism, unemployment, etc. Once questions like these are answered, then the road to successful urban adaptation will be laid.

## METHODOLOGY

### Theory

Man has a dual character, physical and cultural. Since the two sides are intertwined, the well-being of the individual will reflect his adaptation to the urban environment. If either side of human nature is suppressed, a certain degree of alienation occurs. Satisfaction with one side of man's nature does not assure satisfaction of the other side. Man desires more than a filling of his physical needs. He must be able to express his lifestyle according to the cultural values that he has internalized.

A primary point in the cultural identity of the Indian is his spirituality. While the outward manifestation of this spirituality is as diverse as the numbers of tribes and their members, there are common elements to be found in the spiritual beliefs of most North American Indians. The presence of common spiritual elements are a basic premise of this paper.

It is not to say that the dominant culture does not have one or several of these cultural values. Different emphasis can be placed on certain aspects of cultural values. The Indian spirituality is based upon a certain lifestyle that is not nurtured by the urban environment. If the cultural values of Indians were the same as those of the dominant culture, the only area of assimilation would be in the ability to satisfy physical needs. An Indian could be trained to do a job and then become a fully participating member in the dominant culture. However, successful spiritual adaptation within the urban environment hinges upon the individual's conception of his self. What makes an Indian an "Indian" is the retention of the cultural values that are common to the Indian people.

Different stages of assimilation within the dominant culture reflect varying degrees of internalized values of the dominant culture. An individual from an Indian heritage may be successfully adapted to the urban environment but may hold few, if any, Indian spiritual values. This person could have internalized the values of the dominant culture and be "assimilated." Within the lifestyle or world view that is common to the Indian people, he cannot be considered an Indian for the purpose of this research.

Successful adaptation encompasses the ability to satisfy physical needs as well as the ability to retain certain cultural values common to the group identity. Psychological well-being exists when the physical and spiritual forces are in harmony; psychological distress may result when these forces are in conflict. Given this perspective, two hypothesis will be examined in this study:

1. Urban adaptation will be successful when both the physical and spiritual needs are fulfilled
2. Urban adaptation depends not from the physical appearance of "Indianness" but rather on maintenance of common spiritual values inherent in the Indian cultures

In order to study the urban Indian spiritual and physical lifestyle, the following procedures were used.

### **Sample and Sampling Procedures**

Thirty-eight urban Indians representing over twenty tribal affiliations were interviewed. These people lived in Los Angeles and Orange County. The wide geographical distance covered results from no large Indian communities in one city in southern California. All participants voluntarily agreed to partake in this study.

### **Instrumentation**

The questions asked were open-ended and designed to stimulate discussion. They are listed below:

1. How do you get along in the city?
2. How do you perceive yourself as a spiritual being?



3. How strongly do you identify with your tribe or tribal groups?
4. In regard to urban Indians, what do you see happening in the future?

### Data Collection and Recording

The researcher collected data through note taking throughout the oral interview.

### Data Processing and Analysis

Anselm Strauss and Barney Glaser in *The Discovery of Ground Theory* discuss the use of the field work method—of systematic observations, of comparing and contrasting categories, etc.<sup>19</sup> This analysis followed the field work methodology.

Data regarding the degree of spirituality and the variables of tribal identification, future orientation, spiritual identification and Indian visibility was classified into categories based on content analysis (Berrelson, 1971).<sup>20</sup>

The interviewees were rated high in the degree of spirituality if they expressed in their answers to the questions:

1. harmony with creation
2. belief in communication with the supernatural
3. an inner balance and awareness of the environment

They were rated low if they:

1. expressed a lack of spirituality
2. showed lack of knowledge of the spiritual self
3. believed that spirituality could not exist or was not important

Interviewees were rated high in urban adjustment if they had:

1. lived in or been exposed to the city for a long time (more than 5 years)
2. learned to work within the economic system

They were rated low if they felt uncomfortable and longed to go back home.

Spiritual identification depended on how the interviewee felt about the internalization of the values common to all Indians. Studies done by McFee,<sup>21</sup> Krutz,<sup>22</sup> and Neils<sup>23</sup> indicate a differ-

ent motivation in the accumulation of material goods by the Indian. The dominant culture places value on the accumulation of wealth by the individual. On the other hand, the Indian uses what wealth he has to sustain himself and assist other persons.

The criteria of social sharing was used as a basis for Indian spiritual identification. An individual who saw nothing wrong with the accumulation of wealth beyond the needs of self or family was given a low rating in spirituality. A person who emphasized social sharing and extended this towards other Indians received a high rating. Conversely a lack of tribal identification received a low rating. Expectations in regard to the future of urban Indians received a high rating if the interviewee saw it as positive. Subjects were given a low rating if they believed that the Indian future held total assimilation and consequent loss of Indian culture, or a continuation of the present state with no prospect of improvement.

The physical visibility of the interviewee was rated as Indian or non-Indian according to the racial features that were easily recognized as Indians, i.e., facial characteristics, hair, skin and eye color. If an individual looked like a representative Indian and was consistently identified as such, he was rated high in physical identification. If, on the contrary, he was constantly mistaken as a member of another ethnic group, such as an Hispanic American, he was given a low rating on physical visibility.

### **Limitations**

The limitations of this study stem from the small sample size and recruitment methods. The question arises, "How representative of the urban Indian people are the 38 persons interviewed?" Due to the use of the snowball effect of the recruitment, the subjects tended to be limited to similar socio-economic circles. One must first accept the premise that there are values common among indigenous people. It is then possible to relate to some degree the adaptation of this group to the range of possible adaptation of Indians who find themselves in an urban environment.



## RESEARCH FINDINGS

## Description of Sample

The majority of the interviewees were high in urban adaptation. This could be construed as a result of little variation between different stages in assimilation. Or one could look at the urban adaptation as a result of successful spiritual adaptation. Lack of alienation shows a harmony between the urban environment and Indian spiritual self. If different Native Americans from different tribal affiliations adapted successfully, a common theme must exist. The similarities in certain values might be extended towards other Indian groups.

A high level of adaptation to the urban environment could also have resulted from years of urban residence and ability to commute from reservation to city. But, as past studies by Malcolm McFee<sup>24</sup> and Elaine Neils<sup>25</sup> indicate, there are groups that have the ability to commute and partake successfully of the economic system and still retain Indian values.

These values might be affected by length of prior residence. Would the question of urban adaptation arise in an individual whose family had lived two generations in the city? The physical and economic adjustment may already have taken place. The question then becomes, what does this urban Indian of two generations have in common with the new comer? Has the urban dweller been able to sustain his "Indianness" in the urban environment?

The population interviewed is described by Table I.

TABLE I

|               | Spirituality by Urban Adaptation |             |                        |             |
|---------------|----------------------------------|-------------|------------------------|-------------|
|               | High Group                       |             | Low Group              |             |
|               | Number of Interviewees           |             | Number of Interviewees |             |
| High Response | 28                               | 90 percent  | 7                      | 100 percent |
| Low Response  | 03                               | 10 percent  | 0                      | 0 percent   |
|               | 31                               | 100 percent | 7                      | 100 percent |

The population surveyed was high in spirituality as well as high in urban adaptation. This could be due to the limitations of the snowball sample, i.e., the interviewees were from a similar socio-economic circle that also rated high in urban adaptation.

The seven individuals who saw themselves as being spiritually low tended to believe that a spiritual life could not exist in the city. They felt the urban environment was spiritually demoralizing. They had bad experiences. "The White culture did not allow one to become involved with the inner self," one interviewee responded.

The hypothesis proposes that, if physical and cultural conditions are closely related, the spiritual level of the individual will reflect his adaptation to the urban (physical) environment. Combined with a high spirituality there existed a successful urban lifestyle. This is primarily achieved through employment and knowing how to "work within the economic system." Seven of the total population exist successfully without a high spirituality in an urban setting. Further, the hypothesis stated that a group like this could subsist if successful adaptation occurred as a consequence of internalizing the cultural values of the main urban culture.

The basic premise of this paper suggests spirituality is common among indigenous people. The fact that the 38 people interviewed were from different tribes substantiates this premise. Spirituality crosses all tribal lines and it can be further speculated to cross all ethnic lines.

Many participants had an introspective attitude towards their daily activity. They attempted to achieve an inner harmony in their urban environment. Praying and fasting were common means used to re-enforce the spiritual life. Guidance and inner strength from a higher source was a common goal. "Being aware of the ups and downs of life," as one person stated, "can help you maintain peace within yourself." "Spirituality," as another person said, "comes from the heart; it is a way of life, not an abstraction." Finally the strongest common point found among the interviewees was a strong sense of social sharing. Generosity was emphasized by many of the respondents as a positive attribute.

Table II represents the spiritual identification of the interviewee in an urban setting. Spiritual identification refers to one's urban lifestyle. That is to say, spiritual (generosity and social



sharing) or materialistic (accumulation of wealth) way of life. This table reveals how they feel about spiritualism rather than materialism as the guiding force in their lives.

TABLE II

## Spirituality by Spiritual Identification

|               | High Group             |             | Low Group              |             |
|---------------|------------------------|-------------|------------------------|-------------|
|               | Number of Interviewees |             | Number of Interviewees |             |
| High Response | 30                     | 97 percent  | 5                      | 65 percent  |
| Low Response  | 1                      | 3 percent   | 2                      | 35 percent  |
|               | 31                     | 100 percent | 7                      | 100 percent |

Most of the population interviewed felt spirituality was the guiding force in their life. They placed little value upon the accumulation of wealth for its own sake. These people have been able to retain or enhance a spiritual identity. Many respondents felt that living in the urban environment does not negate the value of social sharing and that generosity prevails. The idea of accumulating wealth solely for its own sake is alien to them. Many have kept to a minimal level of income for a purpose, acquiring only what is absolutely necessary—a car or equipment used in employment. They feel it is easy to fall into the trap of materialism; a few respondents said they caught themselves, once in awhile, falling into that trap. It is important to realize that materialism can seduce the individual, thus threatening his traditional spiritual values.

The respondents recognized that materialism is everywhere and the TV is the primary transmitter. Television affects the attitudes of children towards materialism. A few of the interviewees felt that materialism may be good for some people but not necessarily good for them. Those persons who scored low in spiritual identification usually had grown up with materialism. They admitted owning much more than they needed and trying to "keep up with the Jones." It could be hypothesized that people with a high degree of spirituality would have a positive orientation about the future for urban Indians. However, as illustrated by Table III below, this was not the case.

TABLE III

## Spirituality by Orientation to the Future

|          | High Group             |             | Low Group              |             |
|----------|------------------------|-------------|------------------------|-------------|
|          | Number of Interviewees |             | Number of Interviewees |             |
| Positive | 16                     | 52 percent  | 3                      | 43 percent  |
| Negative | 15                     | 48 percent  | 4                      | 57 percent  |
|          | 31                     | 100 percent | 7                      | 100 percent |

What is interesting is that half of the respondents held a negative orientation regarding the future for urban Indians. According to one person, "the power structure will remain the same: some Indian people will urbanize, others stay rural." This feeling predominated throughout the group viewing the future as negative.

It was also pointed out that in an urban environment spirituality is not nurtured. "As the urban environment exists," said one interviewee, "the spiritual world tends to become more fragmented. Families are losing ground and a new conservative trend will come about. One interviewee felt there was no future—only the present: "Commitment to the future defeats us today." Some interviewees also said they felt less hopeful toward the future because Indians tend to be fragmented politically as well as socially. Some Indians can't seem to come together even in a Pan-Indian atmosphere.

One-half who felt hopeful about the future may believe the future hinges upon individual effort: "You can make what you want from your life." Some felt a growing recognition of the Indian people as being very important if Indians are to function in the political system. One interviewee stated, "We are gaining knowledge about White society; education helps us learn about the White man and his ways."

Others believed in a favorable future only if they retained their culture, established Indian centers and developed skills in dealing with the urban environment. There was a general consensus that spiritual awareness must be taught to all ethnic Peoples. These respondents felt that a strong resurgence of the spirit would occur as a result of this new awareness. There was



a strong feeling that as Indian people they must unite yet maintain respect for all other cultures.

Table IV shows the interviewees' degrees of tribal identification vary.

TABLE IV

| Spirituality by Tribal Identity |                        |             |                        |             |
|---------------------------------|------------------------|-------------|------------------------|-------------|
|                                 | High Group             |             | Low Group              |             |
|                                 | Number of Interviewees |             | Number of Interviewees |             |
| High Response                   | 21                     | 68 percent  | 3                      | 43 percent  |
| Low Response                    | 10                     | 32 percent  | 4                      | 57 percent  |
|                                 | 31                     | 100 percent | 7                      | 100 percent |

This table tends to substantiate the basic premise of this paper, which is that there exists common spiritual values among many culturally diversified American Indians in Los Angeles. First, the interviewees came from various parts of the country and from different tribes. Secondly, and most important, seven of the ten persons who were low in tribal identity were high in spirituality. Growing up on a reservation is not a necessary condition of Indian spirituality, although more Indians who do also retain high spirituality. This suggests that urban Indians never living on a reservation, but growing up in the city, can partake in a spiritual way of life.

It is also important to note that a few of the 24 interviewees who were registered members of tribes did not actually participate in many tribal functions. While the converse held true also, that is, others who were tribal members commuted constantly back and forth to the reservation while others only attended special ceremonies on their reservation. Amongst the 24 tribal members was a predominant feeling that the urban area where they presently lived was not their real home. Their real home was on the reservation with their people. Some interviewees identified as an individual only in the context of their tribal membership.

Two respondents expressed their feeling of alienation upon returning to the reservation. Often they were criticized for living in the world of the White man and "becoming a White man."

Further, one respondent attributed his low tribal identity to the corrupted politics currently practiced on his reservation.

In a multi-ethnic, urban area, American Indians are often invisible or identified as Mexican-Americans, Asian-Americans, Portuguese, or Caucasians. Many urban Indians are of mixed blood (as are most reservation dwellers). How they are perceived by others, and how they identify themselves as American Indians, is an important factor in determining their lifestyle. For example, persons who look like the Indians on the buffalo nickle are open to stereotyping as "savage" or as "romantic heroes." These respondents were classified according to their visible "Indianness," i.e., reddish-brown skin, coarse black hair, etc.

TABLE V

|               | Spirituality by Indian Visibility |             |                        |             |
|---------------|-----------------------------------|-------------|------------------------|-------------|
|               | High Group                        |             | Low Group              |             |
|               | Number of Interviewees            |             | Number of Interviewees |             |
| High Response | 15                                | 75 percent  | 16                     | 89 percent  |
| Low Response  | 5                                 | 25 percent  | 2                      | 11 percent  |
|               | 20                                | 100 percent | 18                     | 100 percent |

Being physically identified as an American Indian did not influence one's spirituality. The second group (N = 16) were high in Indian spirituality yet did not have strong physical characteristics, thus confounding stereotypes. The differences were not statistically significant.

### Significant Findings

Table I indicates there are many Indians who have successfully adapted to the urban environment and have retained their Indian spiritual identity: 82% (N = 28) reflected this way of life. The hypothesis proposes: Urban adaption will be successful when both the physical and spiritual needs are fulfilled. At first the 18 percent (N = 3) high in urban adaptation, but low in spirit-



uality, seemed to contradict the hypothesis. Closer examination actually points to a support of the hypothesis. The degree of spirituality defines what the Indian as a group regards as valuable. If an Indian was totally assimilated into the mainstream culture, he would be rated as high in the degree of urban adaptation, i. e., the values of that particular individual reflect those of the dominant culture.

Further hypothesis: urban adaptation depends not from the physical appearance of "Indianness," but rather on maintenance of common spiritual values inherent in the Indian cultures. Table V shows 53 percent having physical characteristics associated with an Indian stereotype. Of the 47 percent who did not have these characteristics, 89 percent were high in spirituality. Of the physically identifiable group, 75 percent were high in spirituality. Therefore, being physically identified as an American Indian did not influence one's spirituality, rather it rests upon the maintenance of one's values.

### **Discussion of Findings and Their Implications**

Social policy designed to speed up the assimilation of the Indian has ignored his spiritual nature. However, even when removed from the social context of the traditional life at the reservation, the Indian can still maintain a spiritual lifestyle. This study illustrates that a successful physical and spiritual adaptation to urban life can occur simultaneously. Thus, it empirically substantiates the contention of the first hypothesis, which states: urban adaptation will be successful when both physical and spiritual needs are fulfilled.

Barriers to successful urban adaptation occurs when the Indians' spiritual needs are overlooked. Social barriers such as stereotyping by persons of the dominant culture were not determining factors towards the degree of one's spirituality. This study indicates that the chances of successful urban adaptation are increased if the spiritual nature of the Indian is also nurtured.

In addition, this study supports both the premise and previous studies done concerning such common spiritual values among urban Indians. The subjects interviewed represented over 20 tribes. Different geographical origins as well as diverse religious orientations were represented. If in fact there was a sig-

nificant difference in spiritual values within the different tribes, it should have been identifiable.

The theory concerning the need to recognize the spiritual and physical duality of the Indian can be accepted. The theory rests upon the recognition that man has two natures; one biological, the other cultural. This spiritual side includes cultural values and morals. The spirituality of the individual depends on internalized values. A functioning, well-adjusted person has fulfilled both his biological and spiritual needs. The fulfillment of only the biological needs may cause alienation. This alienation can be physically manifested through behavior such as alcohol abuse and suicides.

What constitutes "fulfillment" of the spirit varies with each individual. However, a particular group shares certain values. If Indian spirituality were the same as that of the dominant culture, all that would be needed for total assimilation would be career training. The failure of government programs such as relocation results from ignoring the spiritual values of the Indian. Many spiritual values are held in common by Indian peoples. Many of these same values are present within the majority culture, but they are not emphasized as they are within Indian cultures. Therefore, emphasis should be placed on the values which constitute the value systems of Indians. Being of English ancestry does not make one English. Similarly, being "Indian" involves more than belonging to an ethnic group. *It is a way of life.*

Successful urban adaptation of the Indian identity has not occurred because of, but in spite of, government policies, i.e., Joint Resolution 108 of the Bureau of Indian Affairs. The migration of Indian people to the cities has resulted in social enclaves which have supported the retention of Indian identity. Successful urban adaptation can occur without total assimilation. The values of the dominant culture need not be internalized as a price for adequate functioning in mainstream society. Mutual respect and a recognition of the right to co-exist can enable both the Indian and the dominant culture to live within each others presence.

#### NOTES

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