

NAH-IH-ES

THE APACHE SUNRISE DANCE

BY

Steven Kahrs

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Professor Fredrich

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When one serves among a foreign people as a missionary, he finds himself immersed in a different culture. Things are done differently there than what the missionary might be used to. This is true for the man who is sent to Japan, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Africa, South America, Mexico or wherever he might be sent. This is also true for those who are sent to work among the Apaches on the two reservations in Arizona. Conditions there are not like they are in the Midwest. As the missionary comes into contact with the different aspects of the Apache culture, he must make a decision. How much of what is going on is mere tradition and how much is a part of a false religion? The missionary struggles with this question as he seeks to guide his people in the way that God would have them live.

An example of this close-knit relationship between culture and religion is the Sunrise Dance. The local newspapers advertise the various dances in the area. They are very much a part of the people's lives. Now, the missionary is faced with the decision of how much, if any, can this dance be condoned and how much must be condemned. This paper will show what goes on in connection with this dance, current attitudes to the dance, and how the question is being addressed by the missionaries on the reservations.

According to the Apache mythology, there was once a time when Changing Woman lived alone. She was created by Yusun, the Life-Giver, who sent her down to live on the earth. Longing for children, she slept with the Sun, and gave birth to Slayer of Monsters, who is the Apache's foremost culture hero. Four days later, Changing Woman became pregnant by water and gave birth to Child of the Water. Changing Woman instructed the two brothers how to live. They left home, and following her advice, rid the earth of most of its evil.

Changing Woman never became old. Once she reached a certain age, she went

walking toward the east. After awhile she saw herself walking in the distance walking toward her. When she came together, there was only one, the young one. She was then the young girl all over again. Changing Woman was perpetually young by this process. Her powers she possessed as the older Changing Woman were passed on to the younger one.¹

This bit of mythology shows us several important things. First of all, it shows the importance of Changing Woman. She is the mother of all good. Secondly, it points to the idea of passing her powers on to a younger woman so that she stays forever young. This slice of Apache mythology helps to explain what goes on in the sunrise dance.

A sunrise dance is held to celebrate a girl's passage into womanhood. The ceremony marks the occasion of the girl's first menstrual cycle. The decision to have a sunrise dance is made long before the girl has her first period. The actual preparations for the dance, however, do not begin until it has occurred. Her parents select five or more older people to help them with the preparations.

Regardless of when the girl has her first period, the dance usually occurs in June, July, or August. There is no religious significance to this. It is just that this is a time when there is good weather. Once the date has been selected, the site for the dance must be chosen. It must be large enough, fairly level, and free of obstructions. There must be an abundant supply of water nearby, trees to cut for structures, and space for temporary buildings. There are several places that are regularly used for these dances. At these places, you can probably find a dance going on most every weekend of the summer.

After the date and site are chosen, the girl's father selects a medicine man. They are to meet at sunrise, and the father puts a pollen cross on the medicine man's hand, on which he places a gift of money. He also gives him

an eagle feather with a piece of turquoise tied to its butt with a deer sinew.

The girl's family also selects a di-yin, who has the power through the Gahns to choose and prepare dancers for the ceremony. The Gahns are mountain spirits, who have been sent by Yusa to show the Apaches how to live. They gave the Apaches powerful ceremonies to end diseases and to invoke blessings.² Men impersonate these spirits at all the important functions. Asking a man to assume this role is very risky for several reasons. One practical reason is that he will have to miss the dance himself. The one who dressed and painted the Gahn dancers had to stay in a little camp removed from the festivities. He is asked for four days of demanding and dangerous work. Although the Gahns dance for the entertainment of those at the gathering, they still represent the Supernaturals. There is some risk involved in the employment of these powers. If the di-yin does anything wrong during his work, he risks harm to himself, the dancers, or those at the celebration. The di-yin is also responsible for rounding up four men who are willing to dance, and he might have trouble getting enough men to dance for the same reasons that were described before. Once a Gahn di-yin is engaged, though, he knows he will be well-paid for his efforts.

The woman who is selected to act as sponsor for the girl plays a vital role in the ceremony, and in addition, is expected to make a large financial contribution. The principle criterion governing her selection is that she not be related to the girl in any way. She must also be of good character, good-natured, wise, and well-to-do. It is preferred that she has gone through the ceremony herself. The father visits her and asks her to accept the role. If she agrees, the father gives her an eagle feather, turquoise, and cattail pollen. The acceptance of these gifts begins a very formal relationship between the girl, her parents, the sponsor and her husband. The girl and her

sponsor act as mother and daughter toward one another from then on.

The effectiveness of the dance depends on its being performed according to an established pattern. If anything is not done as it should be, the "powers" might see it as a lack of respect. Numerous precautions are taken to ensure that nothing goes wrong. One woman put it this way, "Everything has to be done right, there is no other way,"³

Four to nine structures are constructed at the dance site by the girl's relatives. One of these is a temporary wickiup for the girl and her family. There are also places for preparing food, and several smaller huts for the storage of the food and clothing.

The primary objective of the dance is to transform the girl into Changing Woman. The powers of Changing Woman offered the girl longevity and the physical capabilities of one who is perpetually young. This longevity is symbolized by a decorated wooden staff with which the girl dances, and years later might use as a walking stick. The staff varies in length from thirty to fifty inches.⁴ The day before the ceremony, a male relative of the girl looks for a straight piece of wood, strips off the bark, bends one end over in a curve, and fastens it securely with a rawhide thong. Next, at a sweat-bathing ceremony, the medicine man paints the cane with a mixture of water and yellow ochre. Two eagle feathers are tied to the rawhide thong. A turquoise prayer bead is tied to the base of one and two oriole feathers to the base of the other. The eagle feathers are for protection against power caused illnesses. The oriole feathers promote a good disposition. Four or more ribbons are also tied to the thong. Small bells might be added also to help the girl keep time while dancing.

A straight drinking tube is fashioned from a cattail. It is approximately two inches long and is painted yellow like the cane. A wooden scratching stick is also fashioned. It is slightly longer than the drinking tube and is also

covered with the ochre. Both items are tied to a rawhide thong, which is worn around the girl's neck. During the ritual and for four days later, she can only drink through the tube and scratch herself with the stick. If she drank in any other way, she would develope unsightly facial hair. If she touched her face other than with the stick, her complexion^x would be marred.⁵

A special buckskin ceremonial dress is made for the girl. Five buckskins are required for the costume: one for the moccasins, two for the top, and two for the bottom.⁶ During the sewing, an older woman, who knows the proper songs, is given sustantial presents to sing over it day by day, which sometimes takes weeks. The entire costume is dyed or rubbed yellow, to represent pollen, before being finished with fringes, studs, bead-work, tin cone tinklers, and painted with symbols associated with Changing Woman.

Tied to her hair at the forehead is a small abalone shell that identifies her as White Shell Woman (another name for Changing Woman). A single eagle feather is also fastened to her hair. This also symbolizes longevity. It is either white or gray, and it is expected that the girl will live until her hair turns the same color. A large tanned buckskin is also painted yellow and an eagle feather is attached to symbolize a plentiful supply of deer meat and assured that the girl would never go hungry. There are many preparations that must be undertaken before the ceremony begins.

The rite begins with two similtaneous occurences. Shortly before sunrise on the day of the rite, an open tipi is constructed of four saplings to house the girl and her attendant/sponsor. A large hide, blanket, or canvas is spread on the ground near the center of the dance ground, and as many as twelve blankets are placed on it. The large buckskin that was mentioned before, is placed on the top of the pile, with the head pointing to the east. Next numerous containers filled with candy, other sweets, and fruit are placed in two rows directly in front of the buckskin, and two small baskets and four drums are set



to the west. One of the baskets used to contain tobacco. It now contains cigarettes. The other basket is filled with cattail pollen.

Before dawn the girl places herself entirely in the hands of her sponsor, who washes the girl's hair in a yucca root or soapweed. Just before the sun comes up, the girl faces east as the praying sponsor marks her with pollen down the part in her hair and across the bridge of her nose. She dresses her, beginning at the feet, in her costume. From this instant she is a woman, and for the next four days she is White-painted Woman (Changing Woman) and must be addressed as such.

The sponsor gives her a ritual feeding, perhaps of cactus fruit sprinkled with pollen and held out to the directions, and then placed on her tongue after three feints. This is to give her a good appetite throughout life. She is reminded of the fact that she is only to drink through her drinking tube and scratch with her stick. She is also reminded to be cheerful and gracious, but not to laugh or make fun of people, as this will cause premature wrinkling. She must also not wash off the pollen with which she has been coated for the next four days. It must wear off naturally. With these final instructions, it is time for the ritual to begin.

After the tipi is erected and the girl is outfitted in her costume, she is led to the tipi by an attendant. At the invocation of the medicine man, the power of Changing Woman enters the girl. The girl kneels on the buckskin that has been laid there by her attendant. The attendant again marks the girl with pollen across the bridge of the nose and down the part in the hair and is marked in return. Now the people in attendance form a line to the south. Each person takes a small sack of pollen, offers it to the four directions and marks the girl's face with it. The girl blesses each person in turn and prays for his good luck and long life. These exchanges are thought to be curative.

Young women bring their babies to be blessed. The girl, because she has the powers of Changing Woman, might briefly massage the aching joint of an older person.

The actual dance has been divided into eight parts.⁷ Each phase has its own name. Each is begun and ended by a particular group of chants, and each is followed by a pause that might last as long as twenty minutes, during which no chants are sung, and the girl is allowed to rest.

Phase 1, "Alone she dances". The girl dances lightly and alone on a buckskin, striking the base of her cane on the skin, keeping time to the beat of the drums. The chants sung during this time deal with creation and all the contributions that Changing Woman has made to the Apache people.

Phase 2, "Kneeling". The girl's sponsor walks to the buckskin and replaces the attendant who escorted the girl into the tipi. From here on the sponsor instructs the girl and gives her moral support. Phase 2 recreates Changing Woman's impregnation by the Sun. Prior to its start, the girl puts her cane down and kneels on the buckskin. As the chants begin, she raises her hands to shoulder level and, looking into the sun, sways from side to side as she symbolizes the first menstrual experience of Changing Woman.

Phase 3, "Lying". The girl lies prone on the buckskin, with her arms at her sides and her legs together. Her sponsor, using both her hands and feet, massages her legs, back, arms, and shoulders. By these actions, Changing Woman causes the girl's body to become soft, so that it can be molded to give her straightness, beauty, and strength. She begins on the left and works her way to the right.

Phase 4 "Cane set out, she runs around it". Before the start of this phase, food may be distributed to the guests. The girl's cane is taken by the medicine man, who places it standing upright about twenty-five feet east of the buckskin. As the first of four chants begins, she runs to the cane, circles

it once, and returns. She is followed by her sponsor, who, after circling the cane, returns with it to the buckskin. The sponsor hands it to the girl, and the remainder of the chant is danced in place. At the start of each dance, the cane is placed farther and farther away from the buckskin. Each of the four runs symbolizes a stage of life through which the girl has or will pass through: infancy, childhood, maturity, and old-age. After completing the final run, the girl has, like Changing Woman, symbolically passed through all the stages of life and is assured of long life.

Phase 5, "Running". Phase 5 is like phase 4. The cane is set out to the east, then to the south, then to the west, and finally to the north. The running in this phase enables the girl to run fast without getting tired.

Phase 6, "Candy, it is poured". The girl stands on the buckskin. The medicine man blesses her by pouring pollen on her head, shoulders, and cane. He then pours the contents of a small basket filled with candy, corn, and coins over her head, and the guests scramble for them. After he pours the contents over her head, they become holy. The people are assured of food, good crops, and money for the future. After this male relatives go through the crowd with baskets full of candy and fruit, inviting the guests to take as much as they can.

Phase 7, "Blessing her". The girl and her sponsor dance in place, while all adults who so desire line up before the buckskin and request for themselves the blessing with pollen that began phase 6. This (Si) of great significance, for those who bless her may request the power of Changing Woman to grant them a personal wish for help. It is believed that every such wish will come true.

Phase 8, "Throwing them off". The girl steps off the buckskin, picks it up, shakes it, and then throws it to the east. She then throws a blanket from the pile in each of the three other directions. This assures that she will always have plenty of blankets and that her camp will always be clean. The

thrown buckskin means that there will always be deer meat in her camp and good hunting for everyone.

The ceremony ends with phase 8. The girl and her sponsor retire immediately and everyone else goes home. About four hours have elapsed since the ritual began. Changing Woman's powers, however, continue to reside with the girl for four days and, acting through her, may be used to heal or to cause rain.

In the afternoon, a feast is served. During this time, the di-yin prepares and paints the dancers and, perhaps, a Clown, if someone wishes to dance that role. This takes place in a small camp removed from the festivities. When night has fallen and the dancing fire is lit, the arrival of the Gahn dancers is heralded by the clattering of their headdresses. As they perform their dances to entertain the crowd, there is a singer inside the tipi leading the girl and a few other women in quiet, mystical long life songs. After they are done and the Gahns are finished, the remainder of the night is filled with social dancing and risqué songs. With this the ceremony officially comes to an end.

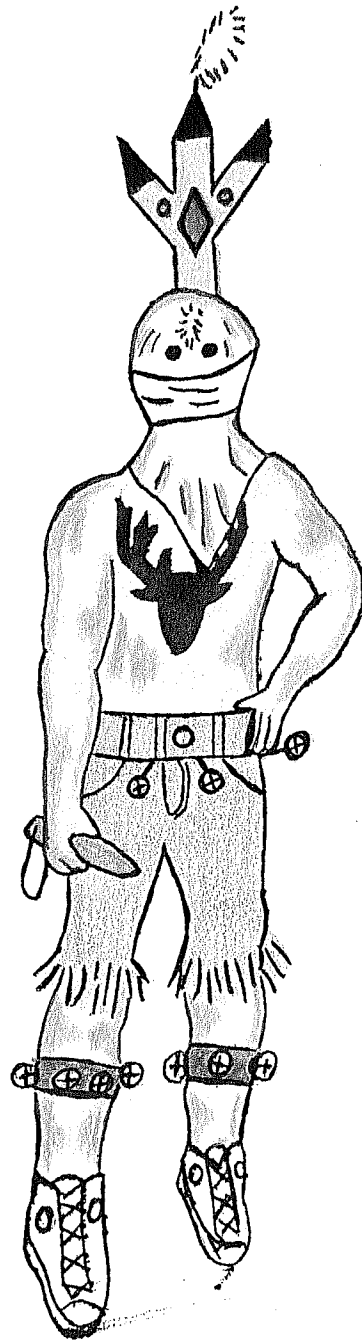
It should be noted that this ceremony is not always carried out this elaborately today. Some shortcuts are taken at times. It is also rare that dancing will take place for four days, as is prescribed. It is usually a two day affair, often taking place on a weekend. Rather than the dignified ceremony it used to be, Missionary Eric Hartzell describes it as a "free-for-all, a big feed, a party, a get-together, replete with barking dogs and flocks of little children running and screaming through the 'sacred' ground."⁸

It should also be noted that the ceremony does not take place as often as it used to be. Thomas Mails points to two different reasons for this.⁹ He, first of all, mentions that the "missionaries who have strongly criticized the 'old way religion', causing younger Apache to doubt that the ceremony will actually assure the pubescent girl ... of long life and prosperity." Obviously included in those missionaries are our men who have been called to serve among the Apache.

GAHN DANCERS



THE GAHN CLOWN



the Apache people. The second reason that Mails cites is the prohibitive cost. The figure that he gives is around \$750.¹⁰ That is a 1974 figure. I would imagine that this figure would be low compared to today's prices. The cost makes people think twice whether they want to pay for such an elaborate ceremony. (They can, however, declare it as a religious expense for tax purposes.)

Attitudes have changed toward the dance since the beginning of this century. Then it was assumed that a girl would have a dance. That was just the way things were done. If the girl did not have one, she was not ostracised from their society, but pitied as doomed to sickly health, poor disposition, and early death. This peer pressure caused many girls to undergo this ordeal.

What about today? We have seen that they are not as frequent as they used to be. Yet, what is the attitude of today's Apaches toward the dance? In this next section, we will look at some current attitudes that have been expressed by some Apache teenagers.

We, first of all, look at the way that a girl, who had recently undergone the dance, feels about the dance. The February 1980 edition of the National Geographic follows a girl as she goes through the ceremony. (The reader is encouraged to look at this edition for pictures that help to show what goes on during the ceremony.) Nita Quitero tells the way that she feels about the dance.

"When my time came at 14, I didn't want to have one. I felt embarrassed. All my friends would be watching me. But my parents really wanted it. My mother - she never had one - explained it was important. 'Then you will live strong to an old age.' So I didn't say no." (12)

"I am praying too, saying to the sun, 'Thank you, and bless all these people to have a good life and be happy.'" (13)

"Blow in the baby's mouth! That's because during the dance I have power to keep evil spirits away." (14)

"I'm really glad I had a Sunrise Dance. It made me realize how much my parents care for me and want me to grow up right. They know my small age is past and treat me

like a woman. If I have a daughter, I want her to have a Sunrise Dance too." (15)

She has a high regard for the Sunrise Dance. She would fit under the category that Mails describes in this way: "More than once in recent years, a skeptical modern girl who wondered whether the ancient ritual was really worth going through has been literally transformed into a believer by passing through it."¹⁶

Before Missionary Hartzell wrote his paper on the Sunrise Dance in 1985, he gave a questionnaire to students in the eleventh and twelfth grade religion class at East Fork Lutheran High School. What follows is a sampling of questions and answers:¹⁷

QUESTION: What is the Sunrise Dance?

ANSWER: "Where people dance, have a good time, like getting drunk, fighting. Where people don't care what happens to them."

"Don't know what to say."

"Where people believe that a girl has to get massaged after she has her first period. She dances for 3 days toward the sun and the people bless her and she blesses them too."

"It's a cheap dance of stange beliefs of my ancestors. Some still believe in it, but I don't yet. I'm still an Apache. It's some kind of dance for a young girl. I don't know much about it myself."

"It's part of our Apache culture that should be kept. It's like a celebration and it is important to our people."

QUESTION: Is the Sunrise Dance religion? Why or why not?

ANSWER: "I don't know."

"No. Is baseball a religion? I don't think it is because it is our way of life, the same with baseball."

"Yes. You are praying to gods and asking for powers."

"I think so. I don't really know from what I've heard. I think so. I don't really know much about it and I'd prefer not to know about it so it won't bother my faith in God alone."

"Yes, because like other churches you join in with a group and pray for the girl who is dancing. It's like you are worshiping her."

"In a way I don't think so since there are so many people do wrong things during Sunrise Dance. Seem like the devil there to tempt people to drink and having a good time. I think it is sort of not like religion."

QUESTION: Some people say there is no difference between the faith they have in God in church and the faith they have in God at the Sunrise Dance. How do you feel about this? Is there a difference?

ANSWER: "I say there is a big difference because God didn't say a Sunrise Dance was a place to worship, and if it was people wouldn't be drinking there."

"It's wrong because there is only one true God."

"A Sunrise Dance is another way to pray to God."

"If you are a true believer it doesn't matter where you are. You will always be surrounded by sin. Even at this school. As if you are a believer and have faith at school, you can be at a Sunrise Dance and still have the same faith and believe."

"I feel that at a Sunrise Dance God isn't there. I couldn't see how God could be present at such a place of evil. Drinking, fighting, people having sex out in the open. I feel it's very wrong to think that. What good comes of it? I haven't seen a girl who had a Sunrise Dance become a good citizen. Faith in God at church is far better than a Sunrise Dance."

QUESTION: Do you consider the Sunrise Dance a part of your culture that should be kept? Why or why not? Explain.

ANSWER: "Yes, because the white man took everything and they are trying to change us. To keep it is all we have."

"Nope, according to God's Word it is wrong to have other gods."

"I don't know."

"Yes, because it would be like losing a part of yourself, that is what I think, they've had it for years."

"We should keep it up as our people did in the old days, because we are now into the white man's ways."

"No, I hear it is a belief much like idolatry."

"No, because it is just a dance to me."

QUESTION: If you had a daughter and she was of age would you have a Sunrise Dance for her? Why or why not?

ANSWER: "Nope, costs too much for nothing."

"No, because it would be against my religion."

"Maybe, it would depend on my spouse."

"No way because I don't believe in the Sunrise Dance."

"No I wouldn't go to one. It is a waste of money."

"No because the dances are what other people think is a party (drink). That's the trouble with it."

"No because Sunrise Dances aren't as they were in the past. I never had one and my daughter won't have one."

"No, since there is too much work, the things you can't afford it. I would just let the Lord bless her since I only believe in Jesus Christ."

There is obviously a great deal of diversity in the answers that were given by these students. Because of this, it is difficult to place exactly how they feel about the dance.

One thing that might have been noticed by the reader is the tendency to try and syncretize Christianity and the Apache religion. This seen by the surgence of a new religion that is showing itself on the reservations. It tries to mix the two together. This fact is brought out in the Sunrise Dance. Some of the prayers that are spoken at these dances are spoken in the name of Jesus. Pastor Hartzell speaks of a prayer in which "Jesus was called on to bring peace to the world, and the prayer referred to Jesus coming from the holy land far away."¹⁸ This tendency adds a wrinkle in the

way that the missionaries must deal with the Sunrise Dance.

What can and do our missionaries do when they are confronted by the dance? This question must be asked every time we deal with any foreign peoples when culture and religion are so closely mixed. It is no different with the Apaches. Our missionaries have had to struggle with this question ever since Missionaries Plocher and Adascheck first came to the reservation. Pastor Edgar Guenther in the August 1929 issue of The Apache Scout wrote an article entitled "What's the Use?". He hoped to show his readers the things that were wrong with the dance. He asked the Apaches a number of questions which were prefaced by the following words:

"I am not going to lecture you on this subject. I want to be fair. For that reason, as said before I am asking the sober-minded among you to take stock and find out for yourself ... I am going to ask a few questions about the dance. I leave it up to you to find out the answers." (19)

What follows is the list of questions Pastor E. E. Guenther asked his readers. (It should be noted that today's missionaries still find these questions relevant today. This is shown in the fact that they were reprinted with slight modifications in the April 1983 edition of The Apache Lutheran.)

1. How many fields were broken into by cattle during the two or three weeks spent at the dance?
2. How many fields went hopelessly to weeds during that time?
3. How much less will those calves weigh at market time that have been abused and set back by roping practice for rodeo?
4. Would the calves show greater gain if cowboys roped each other instead?
5. How much money did you spend unnecessarily at the dances?

6. How much money have you left for buying necessary things for your children during the coming winter?

7. How many auto tires were punctured by broken white mule bottles?

8. How many of the girls for whom tyhe dances were held and who danced all night are left weakened and will contract T.B. as so many before them have done?

9. How many babies have already died from sicknesses they caught at the dances?

10. How many daughters are misled and ruined at the dance?

11. How many sons traded their birthright in the kingdom of God for sin and shame?

12. Could God listen to the prayers that were spoken there when those who said them do not love the Lord Jesus and did not pray in his name?

13. Did you hear anything in the songs about the Lord Jesus, and the necessity for the forgiveness of your sins?

14. Were there as many in church the next Sunday as at the dance?

15. Did the clown in the dance not make it seem as if Satan were making fun of you all?

16. Does the Bible not say "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrightewousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Beliel or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idpls?" 2 Cor. 6:14-16

17. Does the Bible not also say "Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever you do, do all to the glory of God? 1 Cor. 10:31. Could you say that of yourself at the dance?

18. If the Lord Jesus had Himself appeared at the dance could you have been glad to show him about or would you have hid?

Pastor Guenther concludes his questions by saying:

"Do not let these questions anger you and then throw them aside. Be fair and try to answer them honestly. Perhaps you will be led to say, 'What's the use?'" (20)

During the war years, there seems to have been a decline in the Sunrise Dance practice. However, during the Indian power move-

ment in the 1970's, this practice reappeared on the scene.²¹ Dealing with the resurgence has become frustrating for pastor and church council alike. One member of the church council at East Fork, as they talked about the sixth case for the summer, said, "What's the use? This thing is going to go on forever."²² We can hear the frustration in his voice. No doubt the missionaries also at times feel this frustration as well. Having talked to the missionaries over this past year, you can be assured that the Sunrise Dance is constantly on their minds.

They face different attitudes when they speak to others about the dance. One of these is "We can't explain it to you. You don't speak Apache. You are not Apache. If you could speak Apache, maybe you could understand." This might, at first, just seem to be making excuses. Yet it is true. At times the missionaries may overreact, because they read things into what happens that their people never thought of.

"The Bible is a white man's book" is also offered as a defense. "Indians have their religion, white people have their religion." Yet, the Bible is not a white man's book. To be truthful, it is more of a Jewish book. It is as foreign to those of Germanic background as it is to Apaches.

Another problem that is dealt with is superstition. The Apaches all fear it. One man told Pastor Hartzell, "Pastor, I don't want the Sunrise Dance. I don't want the feather (the way of showing you are to be the sponsor). I don't believe in what is going on there. But I can't say no. I am the only one in the whole family relationship that is against it. If I say no and we don't go through with our part in the dance and something

happens to anyone in the whole family relationship, I am going to be held responsible."²³

The missionary faces these attitudes as he meets with people to talk with them. What is the pastor to do? Is he to throw his hands in the air and echo the words of the East Fork councilman, "What's the use?" Of course not. He must do something about this dance and his members' involvement in it. At worst, it is idolatry. At best, it gives occasion to the flesh to sin. What about the example set for the weak?

The pastor must follow the steps as they are outlined in Matt. 18, if it is known that someone attended a dance. From what is found in 1 Tim. 5:20, we see that this discipline must be public. This is not to say that every person must be dragged before the congregation on a Sunday morning and there read the riot act. Rather, it should be done with the knowledge and consent of those on the church council. Again church discipline is never done to try and clean out all the dead wood and troublesome characters. It is always done in the hope of restoring the person(s) through repentance and absolution.

Pastor Hartzell shows his care and concern for the people when he speaks of discipline. "Our actions must be gentle. A heavy fast hand on the gun of excommunication can very likely put our people beyond our reach forever."²⁴ He calls attention to Paul's words to Timothy, "Those who oppose him he must gently instruct, in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth, and they will come to their senses and escape from the trap of the devil who has taken them captive

to do his will." (2 Tim. 2:25, 26) A genuinely gentle spirit must be there when discipling.

How does one administer preventative medicine to this situation? It does not seem to be the wisest choice to use every sermon text to make a public condemnation of the Sunrise Dance. Pastor A. Guenther said once, "The Sunrise Dance is not the only sin on the reservation."²⁵ Also to do so would give some credence to the statement, "All you ever talk about is the Sunrise Dance!" The sermon would not be the best place to do this.

Rather, the best way to prevent members from going to a Dance is by instruction. This could be done with passing remarks in Bible Class. In Sunday School Teachers meetings, it could be pointed out when the occasion arises for an application dealing with the Sunrise Dance. Perhaps, the best place to talk about this would be in the confirmation class. This is just about the time that the girls will be approached to have their dances. What better time could you reach them than when it is so much on their minds?

One lady offers this advice in dealing with the Sunrise Dance. She said, "Just preach the Bible. If you do that the people will decide for themselves that the Sunrise Dance is not what God would have them do."²⁶ She tells us that the best way to build up the New Man. Let him see what God wants. Let him see that it is wrong to, in any way, worship another God. Let him see that this is not just culture, but rather idolatry is involved. Then the people will see that the Sunrise Dance is wrong. This will only happen with patient instruction, as the Holy Spirit increases their

faith. This is the best way to face the question of the Sunrise Dance.

The Sunrise Dance is an ancient Apache custom. It has built up many traditions that go with it. Even though it is not as popular as it was some time ago, it is still around. Our missionaries face this in their dealings with their members. Not all of their members face into this temptation. Some that have fallen have repented and have been restored. We thank God for his work among these people. There are those who have not yet repented. We pray that God would lead them to see that they have sinned. We also pray that God would be with our missionaries, giving them the hearts of shepherds, gently guiding their flocks, and also the strength to deal with all these things. May God continue to bless his work among the Apaches. To him alone be the glory.

ENDNOTES

- 1 Thomas Mails, The People Called Apache, (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice Hall Inc., 1974), p. 76.
- 2 James L. Haley, Apache: A History and Culture Portrait, (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Co., 1981), p. 74.
- 3 Mails, p. 72.
- 4 Mails, p. 72.
- 5 Mails, p. 74.
- 6 Haley, p. 135.
- 7 Mails, pp. 76-82.
- 8 Eric Hartzell, "The Sunrise Dance", presented to the missionaries of the Apache Conference at Globe, Arizona, January 3, 1985.
- 9 Mails, pp. 82, 84.
- 10 Mails, p. 84.
- 11 Haley, p. 135.
- 12 Nita Quintero, "Coming of Age the Apache Way", National Geographic, February 1980, p. 262.
- 13 Quintero, p. 269.
- 14 Quintero, p. 269.
- 15 Quintero, p. 271.
- 16 Mails, p. 85.
- 17 Hartzell, pp. 16-21.
- 18 Hartzell, p. 12.
- 19 Edgar Guenther, "What's the Use?", The Apache Scout, August, 1929, p. 1.
- 20 Guenther, p. 2.
- 21 Hartzell, p. 10.

- 22 Hartzell, p. 11.
- 23 Hartzell, p. 14.
- 24 Hartzell, p. 27.
- 25 Hartzell, p. 23.
- 26 Hartzell, p. 30.

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