

100 YEARS OF WELS IN APACHELAND:

*A Mission of Success and Salvation, or...  
Biased Exaggeration?*

by  
Jeff Mittelstadt

Church History  
Prof. Brenner  
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Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Library  
11831 W. Valley Drive. 65W  
Mequon, Wisconsin

The Lutheran Apache Mission (LAM)... just the title of this mission along with its 100 year heritage seems to give this writer a sense of excitement and challenge. My interest in this particular foreign mission of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod started out as only a casual one. There was the 1993 Mission Seminar to get ready for and the Apache Mission was the assigned focus of Session 2 - of which I was a part. Instead of a dry and boring record of what the mission has been through, however, I met with an intriguing description of unending Christian heroics and self-sacrifice on the part of the missionaries who served there.

As for personal experience in the Apache field I truly have none. I once visited the East Fork mission and enjoyed a tour of the facilities back in 1984, but even this was at a time when I did not feel the need to pay real close attention to the situation or try and evaluate everything that might have been going on around me. At the same time, there was a bit more than the average interest since I knew my cousin had served there in the nursery for a few years.

As my preparation for the Mission Seminar continued, I realized that this, the oldest mission of our Synod - the Apache mission, would be the logical choice for my church history paper as well. Since it is the 100 year anniversary of our Synod's beginnings in this field my feelings were drawn even more strongly in this direction. Then, call it naivete or whatever you like, but as I was reading the introductory paragraphs of a historical paper by E.C. Fredrich which focused on the Apache mission, I was suddenly reminded that the books, papers, periodicals and other information I had been researching were all subject to the writers interpretation - an obvious fact that is really unavoidable, but one I had not applied to this particular situation. The words which lead me to this not so brilliant discovery were these:

“As small and late as Wisconsin's Apache mission effort might appear in the total picture of such endeavors, it always was and still remains very dear to the sponsoring synod. Even those Wisconsinites, who in their heads understand how little and how late the effort really was, have difficulty in being totally objective about the matter in their hearts and with their words. You are being put on notice that an oversell may well be in the making and that the results need to be weighed carefully on the scales of historical objectivity... Once more you are being alerted to the possibility of biased historical presentations.” (essay, p. 2)

This quote supplied for me an angle from which I could approach the LAM. An angle that would try to evaluate sources for what they were and try to bring into view a fuller perspective of the struggle it has been to keep this mission endeavor alive. For as Fredrich's quote alludes... the past century of Arizona mission work has had anything but a rosy and problem-free existence.

The more I research and do background checks on various subjects, especially in synod proceedings, the closer I get to understanding the reality that there is rarely 100% agreement on anything we as a synod do or have done. Again, this may be no surprise to you the reader, but it is a fact the depths of which I am just beginning to comprehend. In an effort to sort through the various information and keep the above mentioned fuller perspective, I will start by relaying what I perceive to be the most commonly heard reports concerning the mission, and then follow that up with what may be a conflicting report of what the work of the mission has been like. Both views will be supported by simple *facts* on the one hand, but then also the *feelings* of the various authors as they expressed them. It will be of great benefit to the reader, if we are going to strive for an objective evaluation of this issue, to keep track of which we are hearing... fact, or feeling.

The only appropriate place to start is in the beginning. Already back in the middle of the 16th century a Spanish explorer by the name of Coronado came across the Apache Indians and described them as 'gentle people, not cruel, faithful in their friendship and skilled in the use of signs.' This may not sound all that shocking to us at first, but if we recall how in the 19th century most American frontiersmen and settlers were labeling the Apache as bloodthirsty 'cruel savages', the Coronado's description becomes enlightening.

Why the drastic difference in descriptions? No doubt it was due to the ever-increasing pressure the white man was placing on the Indian as he (the white man) steadily moved westward with settlements and industry and began to threaten the homeland and very existence of the nomadic Indians. This pressure turned cruel and violent as whites would frequently employ any means necessary, from trickery to cheating to killing, whatever it took to get the 'savages' out of their way. It was in these times that names of famous Indian leaders like Cocheese and Geronimo rose to the forefront, as they stubbornly opposed the white man's efforts to take over their domain.

The United States cavalry slowly but surely subdued and disbanded the groups which these men led. The government along with its troops tried to justify their bloody and often cruel put down of these Indian bands by labeling them 'rebellious uprisings'. After it was all over it still was not really over, because there were permanent scars left behind from all the bitter fighting that had gone on. Both sides had committed horrible atrocities.

This was the situation which our synod walked into when they began their first mission down in southeastern Arizona. It was only seven short years after the last of the skirmishing had ceased. There was still plenty of resentment and tension toward any white man. After all, the government that the Indians were now forcefully under demanded that they now live on what was called a reservation. After the Apaches had been accustomed to roaming around at will throughout what is now known as Arizona, New Mexico, and northern Mexico, this new restriction compelling them to remain on the reservation must have been frustrating and very humiliating. So much did the Apache detest the white man's way of life being imposed upon him, that for decades into the future, it was not uncommon to find police forcefully 'dragging' the Indian children to the required government schools.

The means and methods which our synod workers first employed to spread the Gospel hinged directly on the attitude of the Apache and how the Apache people perceived the actions of the typical white man. So, basically, if we were going to be received on the reservation, our synod would first have to overcome their fear that we may be there to take something else away from them. Our actions would have to earn their trust and reassure them that our intentions were not to take, but to give... to give them a priceless treasure!

The means of bringing them this treasure, seemed apparent right from the start. Maybe it was just common sense which told the first missionaries that one way to win the hearts of the adults (humanly speaking) was through their children. Whatever was behind their decision, this was the direction which our first missionaries - Plocher, Mayerhoff, and Harders - took right from the start. "The strategy was simple: win the children for eternity through the Gospel, and through them the older folks." (SJW, 49) This has continued to be the dominant strategy of mission work in Apacheland right up to the present time.

One of the high points of this spiritual work came in 1922 when a Indian man named Alchesay, the Apache Chief, was baptized at the dedication of our church in Whiteriver. This event has been written in every synod history book and told and retold by every guest speaker who ever spoke about the LAM. It was certainly a monumental occurrence! Not only was this chief baptized before the entire congregation, but 100 like-minded members of his tribe, both young and old, also followed suit. As the decades passed, fruits of faith were becoming evident! God was bringing in His harvest!

As the years of history rolled by, other victories also seemed apparent. Throughout the 1930's and into the following decades, "There were concerned but misguided efforts to cut back or close down the costly mission in Apacheland. There were pleas to divert some Apache mission money to more energetic evangelism in the cities. It was the dedicated efforts of the veteran Apache missionaries that squelched opposition from within and without. The veteran mission of the Wisconsin Synod would not and could not and did not die." (Fredrich, 171-2)

A specific instance of these heroic efforts took place when the missionaries, lead by Ed Guenther, were of the opinion that the synod should open an academy for the high school age Apache students. Synod leaders agreed with the idea, but disagreed with the timing of it, and decided not to send any synod financial support which would have allowed the school to come about. Nevertheless, Guenther especially, felt conscience-bound to follow through on his dream. He dug into his own pockets, not uncommon for him, and after much toil and effort managed to open an academy anyway. The situation has been documented in the *Apache Scout*.

" 'Arizona must have that Lutheran Academy!' Ed Guenther wrote in the *Scout* in 1931. Then in October, 1933 he wrote that such an academy 'has been established at Whiteriver.' ...After the announcement there followed this paragraph: 'No, there need be no arching of synodical eyebrows. Synod is not involved. Thus far the school is purely a private undertaking.'"

"But alas, Apacheland wasn't quite ready as yet for its high school. It soon closed its doors. Nevertheless, the good seed had been sown." (SJW, 49) It was the year 1948 when an academy was finally formed for good, and called East Fork Lutheran Academy.

A common problem between a mission and its founding and supporting church body, is often a lack of communication. The Mission houses and other separate congregations always seemed to lose truth touch with the missionaries they had sent out and promised to support. The LAM, for 100 years has succeeded in overcoming communication problems. A continuous line of communication between the missionaries and their appointed synod contact persons running by both letter and phone helped greatly to alleviate this problem. There was also the obvious difference in that the Apache mission was not overseas and therefore more easily contacted and visited. Yes, there were occasionally times, especially in the early years, where communication broke down or was misinterpreted. But on the whole, the close contact and rapport between mother church body and daughter mission was really very good.

Today the LAM has a recently and specially called a Mission Counselor. He is to serve as coordinator of church planting and indigenization programs on the Apache reservation. He is also to work with the coordinator of Christian education in planning and conducting workshops and seminars for the adult members of the congregation. This new addition to the Apache mission field will aid needed communication tremendously.

Inside the reservation there are currently eight congregations being served by six pastors. Off the reservation we have also managed to establish three more congregations being served by a single pastor. Put together, these congregations make up a visible church of 3,346 baptized souls and 1,382 communicants. Notice the large number of unconfirmed Christians in this number! The young adults and children make up a large part of our church body in Apacheland.

This is exactly where our schools fit into the LAM. Our synod has succeeded in starting and maintaining four high quality grade schools and one high school. These schools enjoy a very respected reputation among the Indian people. One author writes, "The sects can't match them (our schools) and our commitment to excellence in education." This is an important point, since the heathen sects such as Mormons, Jehovah Witness', and others have been gaining in popularity over the years. Not only this, but there is a public school system to compete with as well. And

with the recent popularity of "rediscovering your culture" going around, the public schools are calling out their own numerous temptations.

There has been a renewed effort to lead the mission into self-sufficiency. Though their abilities are often very limited, the congregations still have given their energies as well as their monies to strive for this goal. At this time their efforts have only been able to cover a certain portion of their pastor's salary:

-Whiteriver = within "striking distance" of supporting their own pastor.

-Peridot = almost 11,000 per year for church support

-Other congregations = 19,200 toward pastor's salary

21,258 toward tuition... and others with lesser amounts but still contributing toward tuition to cover about 1/5 of costs.

But one congregation, the one in San Carlos, is the exception and is setting an inspiring example. It has already reached total self-support for their pastor's salary. Full support of the schools is the next step.

In line with this progressive plan to continue taking on more responsibility, the Executive Committee members of LAM adopted an objective or purpose statement in 1989 which reads, "Compelled by the love of Christ our purpose is to share the Gospel with the intent of establishing an independent Native American church body that is self-governing, self-disciplining, self-propagating, and self-supporting; in fellowship with the WELS." (Cox, 2) This was the same purpose statement presented to the Board for World Missions at their January, 1993 meeting.

Interest, and most importantly, a sense of Christian responsibility among the Apache people does seem to be growing. One Apache church council member expressed his feelings this way, "We have a voice and we want our voice to be heard." (Cox, 4) Initially this may sound rather harsh and ungracious to us, but on the other hand it may really not be as defiant, as ungracious or as unusual of a comment as it appears.

Consider a comparison to a teenager. As the child grows and matures, the parents place an increasing amount of responsibility and expectations of that child. And the transition from little or no responsibility to complete accountability is rarely if ever smooth and frictionless. At times the young adult may fade away from further maturing when in reality it's exactly what is needed. On the other side, the parents may often refrain from giving more freedom when more freedom would be the best answer. In this type of situation and others like it where there is loving communication there is also Christian spiritual growth.

Regardless of how we decide to look at it, the faithful mission efforts have continued. One of the most recent *Apache Lutheran* articles records another positive step that has been taken. "There is a newly established Parent/Principal Council that is meeting regularly and organizing itself to take a more active role in the actual running of the schools and in the decision making." (Feb., 93) May our efforts to make known the Kingdom of the Lord continue and increase!

This is a very basic summary of the positive activities and attitudes that are presently standing behind the WELS mission efforts in Apacheland. Many of these facts and figures are truly uplifting! The confident reports of the missionaries and visitors to the mission field are enough to get any "outsider" fired up about continuing the work there!

These are the most common facts and figures which the average member of the Wisconsin Synod will hear. And there is not the slightest doubt about whether or not these reports are true. Is this the whole of the story, however? Some have posed the question, "Are they telling us everything... or possibly wording the reports so as not to include any "negative publicity?" These questions reach to the heart of the purpose for writing this paper. It goes back of the first quote of

this paper, where Fredrich submits a warning that our ideas and impressions and opinions concerning the Apache mission may not necessarily be objective. How can you and I sort through all of the solid facts, whether they be inspiring or worrying, and then reach an accurate God-pleasing perspective regarding the LAM?

Whenever an accurate perspective is desired on any issue, the full picture needs to come into view. To see that fuller picture let's now give equal opportunity for the more negative viewpoints to be discussed. And there most definitely are those who have expressed their displeasure with the Apache Mission. In some cases they disagree with how certain areas of the mission have been dealt with, while in other cases some feel that the WELS should have "pulling out" of the mission completely long ago.

E. Fredrich acknowledged this difference of opinion when he wrote, "Unfortunately, not all the synod's pastors were as enthusiastic about this one foreign outreach of the church body as one might expect... One hesitates to say that anyone heartily opposed it, but certain misgivings surfaced." (p. 101)

A few misgivings were already under consideration during and shortly after the mission effort began. Prof. Koehler goes into some detail in describing what he felt was a lack of common sense on the part of those in charge of initiating the outreach in Arizona. The candidates chosen to begin the Apache ministry were in reality not chosen, but volunteers. And since this was a brand new effort, these volunteers, two men named Adascheck and Plocher, never did receive adequate training for the incredible responsibilities that would be expected of them. One source even goes so far as to say the only distinction between them and the other students was that their tuition was written off by the Synod - most certainly a questionable trade-off for adequate training. "A further misstep," Koehler writes, "was to train young men who were still unknown quantities in this inadequate way and then put them on their own in strange surroundings, which were equally strange to the authorities." (p.198)

Now, it is commonly known that Professor Koehler tended to be quite outspoken and unafraid to criticize if he felt it necessary and beneficial. But before we dismiss his words as too harsh we ought take note that the other WELS historians come to very much the same conclusion. On top of this, Koehler's criticism continues as he points specifically to mistakes which later became very evident to everyone and were quickly corrected. One of these mistakes was, as Koehler puts it, "To have sent someone down there who couldn't handle the English language even. Just as unintelligent was the procedure of releasing a missionary before having had his successor initiated by him into the work to some extent at least." (p. 199)

When he spoke of an inability to handle even the English language, Koehler was referring to Missionary Adascheck. Adascheck evidently relied on his German speaking and writing abilities and had to struggle over the English, not to mention the much more difficult Apache language. This understandably hindered his efforts to communicate with the Indians in every way. With hindsight such as we have now one might wonder why the other historians of our synod chose to pass over acknowledgement of this error.

A later missionary, Gustav Harders, had a similar problem coupled with partial deafness, so his ministry was greatly impeded as well. Yet in his case there were health reasons involved with his being in the Arizona climate, and in the beginning at least it was his decision to be there. The synod therefore did not "make a mistake", but took advantage of a God-given opportunity which presented itself.

The other matter of using the veteran missionaries, especially the extremely talented ones like Mayerhoff, to educate and initiate the incoming missionaries was one of those "one-time" mistakes our Synod made. It was a lack of experience with mission work that allowed this to

happen. Needless to say, the value of this chance to train the incumbents was not overlooked again. Men like F. Uplegger and E. Guenther were used extensively for the supervising and training of other called workers on the reservation throughout their ministries.

Admittedly, some of these initial mistakes seem so obvious that we wonder how they could ever have been allowed to happen. Some will say that the reason for this is simply a matter of the 20/20 vision of hindsight that we now enjoy. Others disagree and point to the mission houses abroad which had been sending missionaries into foreign lands for centuries. These mission houses usually provided special training and sent missionaries who were much more experienced and better prepared to handle the demands that would be placed on them. Couldn't our Federation of synods have looked to these mission houses for methodology that would help with preparing the missionaries?

Again, Koehler suggests an answer, "These mistakes, outside of being a part of the general slipshod management, also arose from the lukewarm attitude of Synod's leadership that dreaded the added cost to the budget." (p. 199) Naturally, we dare not judge hearts here and conclude this was definitely the case. But we may benefit by pondering over how a "lukewarm attitude" or a "dreaded addition to the budget" fear may offset our Synod's actions as they are being carried out today.

The next several questions have arisen directly out of situations where our mission work has had the most visible success. The first question is one which we will never be able to answer completely because it deals with the hearts of the Apache people. It was described earlier in this paper how a certain Apache chief named Alchesay was baptized at the dedication of one of our churches back in 1922.

A sort of mass conversion followed, with around 100 members of his tribe also being baptized. The question almost naturally comes to mind... was this a 'come one come all' type situation where the people were only following through with the baptism because of loyalty, desiring the favor of their chief, instead of a desire to receive the favor of their God? Or another question... were the Indians willing to be baptized only in the hopes of receiving handouts from the tall black-robed missionary E. Guenther and the church body that was supporting him? Were they stepping into the role of "rice-Christians"?

When discussing this very issue with Pastor Thomas Schmidt, a veteran pastor who served in Apacheland his vicar year, he said the peer pressure among the Apache people is *twice* as strong as it is among white Americans - especially when it would mean offending a respected leader. "The culture is so strong," he continued, "that rights and wrongs often get buried under family ties and blood lines. They definitely seek to avoid laughing at, ridiculing, or hurting each other's feelings in any way." Does this mean those baptized at the dedication service were insincere? These are questions only God can truly answer. Putting the best construction on the situation demands that we say they were. We dare never become guilty of doubting someone's faith on a mere hunch. At the very same time we may be avoiding the obvious if we do not even consider that the peer pressure in the Apache culture is very strong. There is a cultural trait here we dare not forget, because it will help us achieve our desired accurate perspective of the mission and its dear people.

The second area where questions seem to arise has to do not with the Apache people, but with the missionaries called to serve them. I am referring to men like E. Guenther and the Upleggers and Henry Rosin. These men gave their very souls into their lifelong mission efforts in Apacheland. They loved the work. They loved the people. They gave all their energies - their lives - to them! There is no question whatsoever about their dedication and faithfulness to God's calling.

At the same time we can see from their attempt in 1933 to independently start a high school, that in their zeal to spread the Gospel they did not always work through proper "channels". Did this bold independence signify an "it has to be done my way" attitude? Was it an act of desperation which said, "Do whatever it takes...?"

It's a recorded fact that in the 1930's there were those who were in favor of closing down or at least cutting back on this costly mission in Apacheland. And Fredrich states that it was "the dedicated efforts of the veteran missionaries that squelched opposition from within and without." (p. 172) With their unequaled experience in the mission and their unique perspective of the Apache people, combined with the respected positions they held in the Synod, the temptation must have been there at least to begin perceiving the Apache mission as *their* Apache mission, the decisions for which would be made by *their* personal authority. Did any of them ever give in to this temptation? Were there ever instances of "high-handed paternalism" where the Apache people themselves had no say in the matter?

*[These are not meant to be accusations of wrongdoing, only honest questions seeking understanding.]*

This issue of paternalism (a system of governing causing dependence) is one that has been associated with the Apache mission for many years. Back in the 1950's already our missionaries were aware not only of the meaning of the term, but also of the spiritually dangerous dependence which this paternalism often brings.

The federal government was fostering this type of dependence before we even began our mission among the Apaches. Various special funding opportunities and numerous tax breaks have together succeeded in bringing on a welfare type mentality in which the people are encouraged to simply wait around for what they need or want, instead of inspiring them to earn it. This dependence is still being fostered and indirectly encouraged by the federal government to this day.

In the very beginning supplying everything for our ministry to the Native Americans in Arizona was something we had to do. We had to earn their trust and a chance to be heard. Then however, as the years rolled by and the mission began to mature it was always a struggle trying to determine how much support the synod should give in order to have the best effect on the faith of those in the mission - the Apache people.

Starting around the middle of the century especially, the missionaries began to train Indians as church leaders and to lay more responsibility upon them. "Apaches were trained as Sunday School teachers, mission school teachers, Apache congregations organized an election of officers and attempts were made to establish a native pastorate." (Brown, 118) Others, such as Pastor Schmidt, spoke of this also saying that there was definitely an awareness of this paternalism concept and "we were looking toward indigenization."

However, then, these intentions must have become a bit bogged down in the application, because Schmidt pointed out that, "Yes, we often talked about no paternalism, but we were definitely paternalistic. There were no Board of Elders, no Evangelism training, no Indian talking to Indian..." This, in Pastor Schmidt's opinion, was one of the larger reasons for any slow spiritual maturing of the Apache people.

Today, in early 1993, our God-given leaders are still struggling to reach the proper decisions on this matter of paternalism. They've been trying to avoid bringing it into any policies or plans they make for the future. They've also been trying to turn back the tide of the negative affects it has had on the Apache culture over the last century and a half [if we include the "fathering" of the government which started even before we got there].



But are our leaders all united in purpose and agreed on the direction that the mission should take in the future? At this point they have indeed come together on a focused purpose, as the purpose statement earlier in this paper shows. However there has been a of shifting of opinions on this issue in the last few years. Only six years ago, in 1987, the purpose statement for the LAM read like this:

“We see neither the need for or the possibility of an independent Apache Church body in fellowship with the WELS. We do, however, hope and pray for the day when each Apache congregation can stand side by side with the other congregations in the WELS as self-governing, self-supporting, self-propagating, and self-disciplining. As such, our Apache congregations could still retain and address their unique cultural identity through a strong active Apache conference.” (Cox, 2)

Why the 180 degree change between this statement in 1987 and the 1993 statement which gives full support to indigenization? Some say its a desperation decision which gives evidence that our leaders are confused and not sure what to do about the situation. Others, members of the Executive Committee of LAM who are in the middle of the decision making policies, say it's a renewed dedication to the old intentions of indigenization. Here are some of the reasons they gave for this 'renewal of the old':

- “While many men of the past recognized the distinct advantage of involving the Apaches in the work, an indigenous approach as we understand it today was for the most part not known or followed.”
- “There appears to have been a paternalistic attitude that guided and shaped the approach to the work.”
- “There appears to have been little long range planning or anticipation of what today's work would mean for the future.”

[Concerning the above statements, Counselor Cox insisted that we refrain from looking upon these comments as a definite indication of some mistake in the past. Instead he explained: “None of the above is intended to be said by way of criticism... if early missionaries did not do things the way we would do them today that does not necessarily make them wrong. It merely reflects different times, different thinking, different perspectives, and a lack of experience.”] (p. 3)

What about the Apache people? How do they feel about all these plans for their future? In order for this plan to work, humanly speaking, the Apache's themselves have to be behind it and committed to it. This is exactly where our plans seemed to have fallen apart in the past, in the acceptance by the people mode.

There was that enthusiastic plea by an Apache church council member, “We have a voice and we want our voice to be heard!” Was he sincere? Is this the feeling of the people in general? Once again we are dealing with matters of the heart. We must at the very least take *this* man's words as truth. Of all the things criticized in the past, it has been words like these, which seem to voice care and concern, that have received the most criticism. Many claim there is a general lack of willingness to back up the concern they speak about. One of the Apache missionaries was heard to say, “The Apaches spoke a good game but have done very little by way of concrete action.” And this feeling of frustration evidently has not only affected the missionaries, because it was an Apache Council member who said, “The people don't want to do anything - everything is done for them and they are comfortable with that.” Another man, a member of the LAM, added, “Perhaps we don't appreciate what we have. We've had so many blessings for such a long time that we take so much for granted... it gets to the point that people expect and demand things.” And finally, just in case any of us are looking for a more objective opinion on this point, there are Apaches who are

not even a part of our mission and still speaking along these same lines. An Apache named Jason Betzinez writes, "As long as the Indian remains on the reservation he will develop only very slowly. He is, if anything, too well taken care of today. He doesn't learn to stand on his own feet, to earn his living entirely by his own efforts." Mr. Betzinez seems to be referring primarily to the government "handouts" which are affecting the lives and attitudes of his people, but the role of our mission and our practices also logically fall into this same context.

The picture that has just been painted seems pretty bleak. In some ways, there is reason to grieve. From the physical aspect, because of the "fathering" of the government, the lack of a work ethic, and the widespread lack of money-management skills, there is an unemployment rate of around 70%. And we may occasionally hear that the Apache people have an abundance of this or that material possession, but these things are not usually owned by the person in possession of it. Comparatively speaking with the rest of the United States many of them are living in what would be classified as economic poverty.

From the even more important spiritual aspect, "The percentage of Apaches that are Lutheran Christians today is smaller than it was 30 years ago." (SJW, 60) Due to the opening of the government door which had previously not allowed other church bodies on the reservation, today the various cults and "hoop-n-holler" emotion oriented Christian groups have enjoyed wide appeal among the Apache. And there is also an ongoing revival of the native Apache religion which involves the spiritualism and witchcraft of the medicine man along with many other heathen and damnable practices.

Numbers and statistics like these are usually what get the detached observer excited. "Why aren't we doing anything to stop the way the pendulum is swinging?" someone might ask, completely unaware that this is exactly what the missionaries are warning the people against and trying to prepare them to withstand. But where does our future lie? What needs to be done?

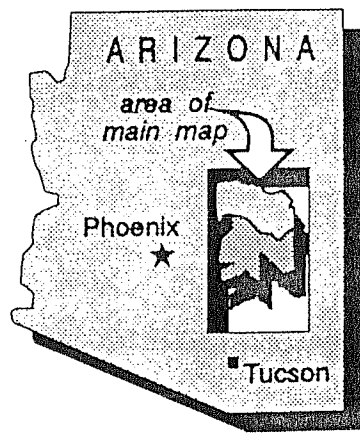
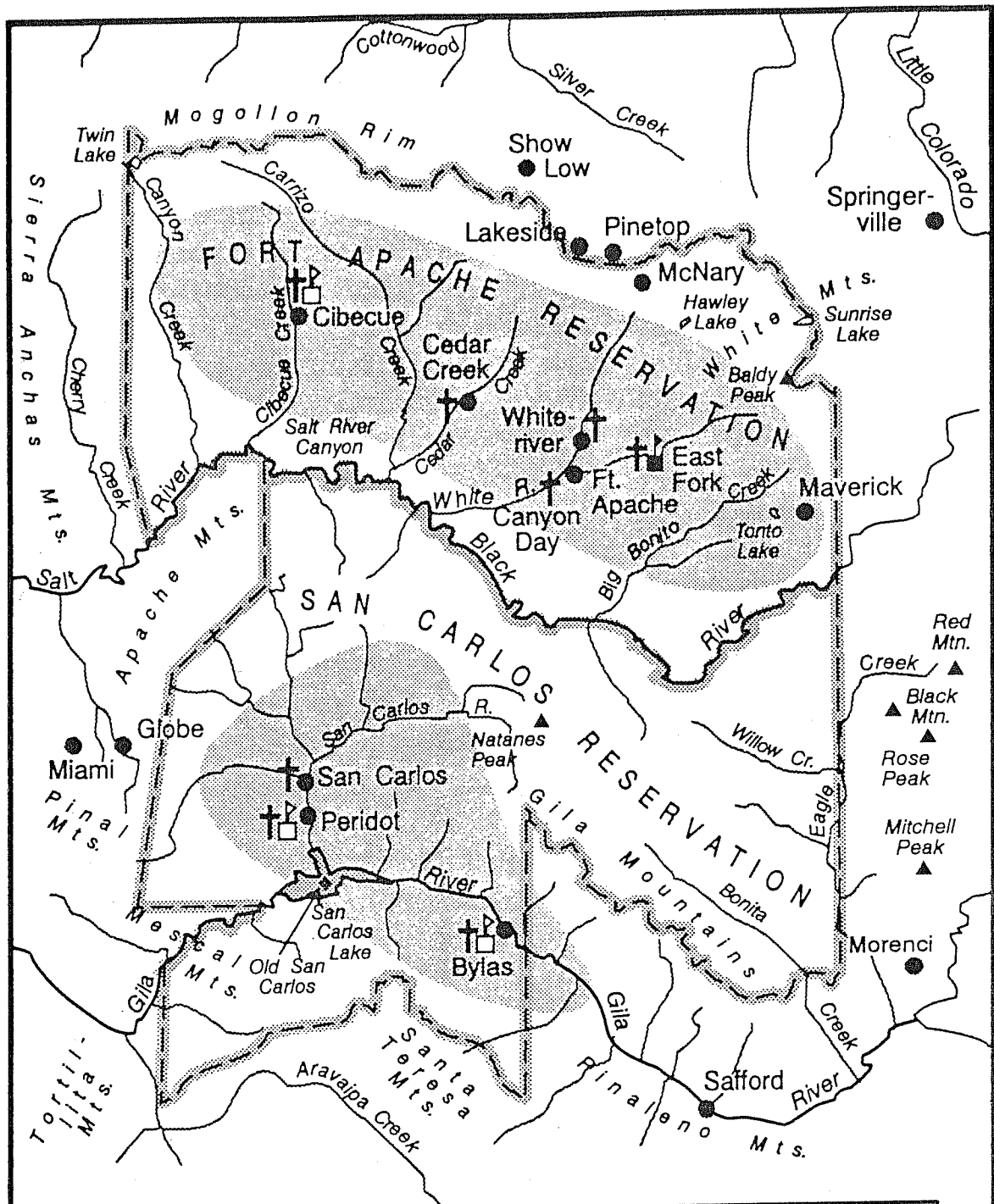
These are questions to which only God can give answers. As the men whom God has specifically called to carry out this work continue to seek God's answers and follow in His ways, our duty as Christian brothers and sisters lies not in trying to control the situation ourselves or in randomly criticizing what God's chosen men decide. But rather to put the best construction on their motives as well as the direction of the action they decide to take.

Our duty is certainly not to point to past errors and current weaknesses and thereupon hold sinful grudges against individuals or committees. But it is to forgive all mistakes and even questionable actions of past and present. No matter what the appointed leaders decide, it deserves our consistent and full support in words and actions, whether it was the outcome we desired or a different one.

"The care of the Apache souls will remain the object of the mission effort in the years ahead, however many there may be. If the strides forward in moving from mission status to self-support continue until they wipe out the mission field, well and good. Until then Wisconsin's Apacheland mission will continue in the spirit in which it was begun five score years ago." (Fredrich essay, 21)

May the success and salvation of The Lutheran Apache Mission continue for another century!

[ I would like to express my regret that I was unable to make use of more primary firsthand sources such as interviews and telephone calls. Although I realized their potential to add <sup>to this</sup> ~~research~~ effort, practicality and time limits did not allow further ~~research~~ ]



## Lutheran Apache Mission

- † Apache congregations
- Apache elementary schools
- East Fork Lutheran High School & elementary school

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