

MAGAZINE SECTION

History of the Ojebway Indians

Chapter 16 - Religious Feasts

(written by S.S. based on P.J.)

Among the early Ojebway people religious practices centered around fasts and feasting. During fasts a young person would abstain from food for several days and meditate on the munedoos (spirits). At the same time they paid special attention to their dreams, which were to suggest to them a particular spirit which would then become their special munedoo through the remainder of their lives.

Feasts also played a prominent role. There was the Sahsahgewejegun Feast - a feast of petition. There was the Weedahsowin or Naming Feast - for a child. There was the Ooshkenetaligawin Feast to celebrate a boy's first animal or bird kill. There was the Jeebanahkawin Feast which was an offering to the dead. There was the Kuhgahgeshee or Crow Feast - a kind of thanksgiving feast. And there was the Ulnemoosh or Dog Feast - considered to be a meritorious sacrifice.

Devotional

(by R. Odendahl, rector of St. Paul's and St. Peter's Anglican Churches)

Critics keep saying that the teachings of the Church are not relevant to daily life nowadays, but they are wrong. Christian teaching IS relevant if we wish to apply it. For example in Luke 11, v.39 we read "And the Lord said unto him: Now do ye Pharisees make clean the outside of the cup and the platter, but your inward part is full of ravening and wickedness." (It would be well to read these short texts and note what comes before and after, so that the meaning is not distorted.) How are our Lord's words to the Pharisees relevant to us in our times? Well, if we read newspapers and magazines, listen to radio or watch TV, we find tremendous emphasis on fashion, hair treatments, deodorants, detergents, instant foods, and everything to make the outward appearance attractive and young. Age used to be associated with experience, wisdom and maturity, but now is considered to be a terrible thing of gray hair, wrinkles and senility. Then there is great emphasis on freedom to do what we like. Away with old-fashioned morals, down with discipline and self-control. So in appearance and character, the important thing is impress other people that we are young and up-to-date. How much do we see, hear or read about the inside - visible only to the God who made us? Are we today any different from the Pharisees? This is where the Christian should be different - not concerned with approval of other people, but concerned with the kingdom of God, where he will spend eternity. Christians, by their lives, advertise the kingdom of God, so that "their light will so shine before men that they glorify their Father who is in heaven." Christian teaching is always relevant to daily life in every age, if we choose to apply it.

From Where I Sit

(by R.O.)

A Game With A Purpose

This is the age of rapid mass communication, particularly electronic communication. Except for the most remote regions, almost everybody in the world can be reached by radio or television. Consequently it should be possible to educate and inform the world more easily than ever before. Often we are told a common cause of trouble is failure to understand other people, so all this communication should make for better understanding and less trouble. Actually this is not the case. There are more troubles, more serious troubles, in more places than ever. But without leaving North America we can find disturbing influences on this continent - caused by the very communications which should be capable of avoiding them. This sort of thing is possible simply because THINKING is being done for us and we accept it. The difficulty is that this is being done so insidiously that we don't realize what is happening. "Interviews", "Panel Shows", "Studies in Dept" etc. are so presented that they leave impressions, without actually making direct statements. An adjective or two, carefully placed, can pass unnoticed and yet leave an impression, either favourable or otherwise. Questions may be asked, dealing with just one aspect of a situation, with no reference to other (perhaps more vital) aspects. Words are thus put into the mouths of people being interviewed. The process is something like that of the lawyer who asked the defendant in a trial "have you stopped beating your wife? answer yes or no." No explanation is allowed. Programmes of this kind do not want truth; their purpose is to mould public opinion by suggestion, hoping the public won't think for itself - which it usually doesn't. This system is being used to destroy public morals, to guide public tastes and to undermine order, Christianity and common sense. The only safeguard we have is to do our own thinking, and to carefully analyze every word sent out over the air. It is in our own best interest to think out the actual meaning of what is said, and not allow ourselves to be brain-washed by fast, smooth talk.