Missionary’s address to the Chiefs of the Six Nations of Indians and their response.

ID_TEI: SW_1805_00_00
TYPE_OF_MANUSCRIPT: Manuscript
CALL_NO: Mss 004/ 1805
DATE: 1805
LOCATION: SW
AUTHOR: Jacob Cram
SUMMARY: Address of Red Jacket at Buffalo Creek in response to speech by Massachusetts missionary Jacob Cram.

How to cite: Accessed online Thu 14 Mar 2019 03:38 PM EST
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An Indian Speech

In the summer of 1685, a number of the principal chiefs and braves of the Six Nations of Indians, principally those assembled at Buffalo Creek in the state of New York, at the particular request of a Gentleman Missionary from the state of Massachusetts,

The Missionary being furnished with an Interpreter and accompanied by the Agent of the U.S. for Indian affairs, met the Indians in Council, then the following talk took place:

First by the Agent

Brothers of the Six Nations, I rejoice to meet you at this time, and thank the Great Spirit that he hath preserved you in health, and given me another opportunity of shaking you by the hand.

Brothers, the person who now sits by me is a friend who has come a great distance to hold a talk with you. He will inform you what his business is, and it is only request that you should listen with attention to his words.

Missionary

My friends, I am thankful for the opportunity afforded me in meeting together at this time. I had a great desire to see you and enquire into your state and welfare for this purpose. I have traveled a great distance being sent by your old friend the Boston Missionary Society, you will recollect they formerly sent Missionaries amongst you to instruct you in religion and lead you to good, although they have not heard from you for a long time yet they have not forgotten that Brothers of the Six Nations, and are still anxious to do you good.

Brothers, I have not come to get your lands or money but to enlighten your minds and to instruct you how to worship the Great Spirit, agreeable
An Indian Speech

In the summer of 1805, a number of the principal Chiefs and warriors of the six Nations of Indians principally Seneca assembled at Buffalo Creek in the state of New York, at the particular request of a Gentleman Missionary from the state of Massachusetts. The Missionary being furnished with an Interpreter and accompanied by the Agent of the U States for Indian affairs, met the Indians in council, when the following talk took place.

First by the Agent Brothers of the six Nations, I rejoice to meet you at this time, and thank the Great spirit that he hath preserved you in health, and given me another opportunity of taking you by the hand who has come a great distance to hold a talk with you, he will inform you what his business is, and it is my request that you should listen with attention to his words. Missionary My friends I am thankful for the opportunity afforded us in meeting together at this time, I had a great desire to see you and enquire into your state and welfare, for this purpose I have traveled great distance being sent by your old friends the Boston Missionary society; you will recollect they formerly sent Missionaries amongst you, to instruct you in Religion and I aboud for your good, Altho they have not heard from you for a long time yet they have not forgotten there Brothers of the six Nations, and are still anxious to do you good. Brothers I have not come to get your lands or Money but to enlighten your minds, and to instruct you how to worship the Great Spirit agreeable
agreeable to his mind, and will, and to preach to you the Gospel of our Saviour Jesus Christ; there is but one Religion, and one way to serve God, and if you do not embrace the right way you cannot be happy; therefore you have never worshiped the Great Spirit in manner acceptable to him; but have all your lives been in great errors and darkness, to endeavor to remove these errors and open your eyes, so that you might see clearly in my preaching with you.

Brothers, I wish to walk with you as one friend to the other, and if you have any objections to receive the Religion which I preach I beg you to state them, and I will endeavor to satisfy your minds and remove these objections.

Brothers, I want you to judge your minds freely for I wish to reason with you on the subject, and if possible to remove all doubts by these truths in your minds. The subject is an important one and it is of consequence that you give it an early attention while the offer is made you, you know of the Boston Missionary Society will continue to send you good and faithful Ministers to instruct and strengthen you in Religion, if in your part you are willing to receive them.

Brother, since I have been in this part of the country I have visited some of your small villages, and talked with your people, they appear willing to receive instruction, but as they look up to you as your Father in Council, the want first to know your opinion on the subject; you have now heard what I have to propose at present, I hope you will take it into consideration and give me an answer before we part.

After about two hours consultation amongst themselves, the Chief Commonly Called Red Jacket by the white people arose and spoke as follows:

Friend and Brother, if ever the will of the great Spirit that we should meet together this day,
agreeable to his mind, and will, and to preach to you ytf the Gospyle of his son Jesus Christ, there is but one Religion and one wayytf to serve God, and if you do not embrace the right way you cannot be happyytf hereafter; you have never worshiped the Great Spirit in a manner acceptableytf to him but have all your lives been in great errors and darkness, toytf in-devour to remove these errors, and open your eyes, so that you mightytf see clearly is my business with you ytf Brothers I wish to talk with you as one friend talks with another,ytf and if you have any objections to recieve the Religion which I preach lytf wish you to take them ytf and I will, and I will endeavor to satisfy your minds andytf remove the the objections ytf ytf Brothers I wish to reasonytf with you on the subject, and if possible to remove all doubts if there beytf any on your minds the subject is an important one, and it is of conseuytf ence that you give it an early attention, while the offer is madeytf you; you find the Boston Missionary society ytf will continue to send you good and faithful Ministers to instructytf and strength you in Religion, if on your part you areytf willing to receive themytf ytf ytf Brothers Since I have been in the part of the country I have visitedytf some of your small Villages, and talked with your people, they appearytf willing to receive instruc tion, but as they look up to you as your Olderytf Brother in council, the want first to know your opinion on theytf subject; you have now heard what I have to propose at present, I hope youytf will take it into consideration, and give me an answer before we parytf ytf ytf After about two hours consultation amongst themselves, the Cheif commonlyytf called Red Jacketytf by the white people arose and spoke as followsytf ytf Friend and Brother It was the will of the great spirit that we should meetytf together this day,
in orders all things and gave us a fine day for our
Council. He has taken his garment from before the
fire, and caused it to shine with brightness upon us,
our eyes are open that we see clearly, our ears have
been unstopped that we have been able to hear distinctly
the word you have spoken, for all these favours we
thank the great Spirit, and him only.

Brother, This council fire was kindled by you, it
was at your request that we came together at this
time we have listened with attention to what you have
said, you requested us to speak our minds freely.
This gives us great joy, for we now consider that we
stand upright before you, and can speak what we
think, all have heard your voice and all speak to
you now as one Man, our minds are agreed.

Brother, you say you want an answer to your talk
before you leave this place, it is right you should have
one, as you are a great distance from home, and
we don't wish to detain you, but we will first look
back a little and tell you what our fathers have
told us, and what we have heard from the white people.

Brother, listen to what we say. There was a time
when our forefathers owned this great land, their
land extended from the rising to the setting sun, the Great
Spirit had made it for the use of Indians — he had cre-
ated the Buffalo, the Deer, and other animals for
food, he made the Bear & the Beaver, their skins served
us for clothing, he had scattered them over the Country
and taught us how to take them, he had caused the
earth to produce Corn for bread, all this he had done
for his red children because he loved them; if we had
done dispite about hunting ground they were generally
satisfied without the shedding of much blood; but an
Evil day came upon us your forefathers crossed the
great water and landed on this Island; their number were
he orders all things and has given us a fine Dayytf for our
council. He has taken his garment from before the
Sun, andytf caused it to shine with brightness upon us,
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Brother listen to what we say. There wasytf a time
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some disputes about hunting ground they were generally
settledytf without the shedding of much blood; but an
Evil day came upon us youytf forefathers crossed the
great watter and landed on this Island; theirytf number were
were small, they found friends and not enemies, they
told us they had fled from their own country for fear of
wicked men, and had come here to enjoy their religion,
they asked for a small seat, we took pity on them,
granted their request, and they sat down amongst us,
we gave them corn & meat, they gave us poison (alleged
it is supposed to agree with spirits) in return. the white people
had now found our country, tithings were carried back,
and more came amongst us, yet we did not fear them,
we took them to be friends. they called us brothers. we
believed them, and gave them a larger seat, at length
their numbers had greatly increased, they wanted
more land, they wanted our country, our eyes were
opened and our minds became uneasy, we took
Indians were hired to fight against Indians, and
many of our people were destroyed. they also brought
strong liquors amongst us, it was strong and power-
ful, and has driven thousands.

Brother, our debts were our large, many were small. you have now become a great people;
and we have scarcely a place left to spread ove.

Brother, you say you are sent
to instruct us how to worship the Great Spirit according to
his mind, and if we do not take heed of Religion which you
teach, we shall be unhappy hereafter; you say that you
are right, and we are not, how do you know this to be
true? we understand that your religion is written in a
book, if it was intended for us as well as you, why has
not the Great Spirit given to us, and not only to us,
but why did he not give to our forefathers the know-
ledge of that book, with the means of understanding it rightly? we only know what you tell us about
it; how shall we know when to believe, being so often
decided by the white people.

Brother, you say there is but one way to worship
and serve the Great Spirit, if there is but one Religi-
Transcription

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Indians were hired to fight againstytf Indians, and
many of our people were destroy'd, they also brought
ytf strong liquors amongst us, it was strong and power-
ful, and has slaintyf thousands. ytf Brother, our seats were once large and yours
were small, you have nowytf become a great people;
and we have scarcely a place left to spread our
ytf Blankits, you have got our country, but are not
ytf satisfied, you want to force your Religion upon us,ytf
to instruct us how toytf worship the Great spirit agreeably to
his mind, and if we do not take holdytf of the Religion which you
teach, we shall be unhappy hereafter, you sayytf that you
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and serve the Greatytf spirit, if there is but one Religion


Religion, why do you white people differ so much about it? why not all agree, as you can all read the Book?

Brother, we do not understand these things, we are told that your religion was given to your forefathers, and has been handed down from father to son, we also have a Religion, which was given to our forefathers, and has been handed down to us their Children, we worship in that way, it teaches us to be thankful for all the favours we receive, to love each other and to be united, we never quarrel about Religion.

Brother, the Great Spirit has made us all, but he has made a great difference between his white & red children, he has given us different Complexions & different customs, to you he has given the arts, to these he has not opened our eyes, we know these things to be true; since he has made so great a difference between us in other things, why may we not conclude that he has given us a different Religion according to our understanding? The Great Spirit does right, he knows what is best for his Children, we are satisfied.

Brother, we do not wish to destroy your Religion, or take it from you, we only want to enjoy our own.

Brother, we are told that you have been preaching to the white people in this place, these people are our neighbours, we are acquainted with them, we will wait a little while and see what effect your preaching has upon them, if we find it does them good, makes them honest and life disposed to cheat Indians, we will then consider again what you have said.

Brother, you have now heard our answer to your talk, and this is all we have to say at present, as we are going to part we will come and take you by the hand and hope the Great Spirit will protect you on your Journey and return you safe to your friends.
Religion, why do you whiteytf people differ so much about it? why not all agreed, as you can all usedytf the Book?ytf that your religionytf was given to your forefathers, and how been handed down from father toytf son, we also have a Religion, which was given to our forefathers, and hasytf been handed down to us their Children, we worship in that way, itytf teaches us to be thankful for all the favours we Recieve, to love eachytf other and to be united, we never quarrel about Religion.ytf ytf Brother, the Great spirit has made us all, but he has made a greatytf difference between his white & Red children, he has given us differentytf complexions & different customs, to you he hasytf given the arts, to these he has not opened our eyes, we know these thingytf to be true; since he has made so great a differenc between us inytf other things, why may we not conclude that he has given us a differentytf Religion according to our understandings; The Great spirit does right, heytf honors what is best for his children, we are satisfied. ytf or take it from you, weytf only want to enjoy our own. ytf ing to the white people inytf this place, These people are our neighbours, we are acquainted with them.ytf we will wait a little while and see what effect your preaching hasytf upon them, if we find it does them good, makes them honest and lessytf dispos'd to cheat Indians, we will then consider again what you haveytf said. ytf ytf Brother You have now heard our answer to your talk, and this is all weytf have to say at present, as we are going to part we will come and take youytf by the hand and hope the Great spirit will protect you on your ytf journey and return you safe to your friends.
As the Indians began to approach the missionary, he rose hastily from his seat, and replied, he could not take them by the hand, that there was no fellowship between the Religion of God and the ways of the Devil, this being interpreted to the Indians, they smiled, and retired in a friendly manner.

It being afterwards suggested to the missionary that his reply to the Indians was rather indiscreet, he observed, that he supposed the ceremony of shaking hands would be acceded to them as a token, that he is aptened to what they had said, being otherwise informed. He said he was sorry for the expression.

The missionary's address to the chiefs of the Six nation Indians.

Their answer.
As the Indians began to approach the missionary, he rose hastily from his seat and replied, he could not take them by the hand, that there was no fellowship between the Religion of God and the words of the Devil, this being interpreted to the Indians, they smiled, and retired in a peaceable manner. It being afterwards suggested to the Missionary that his Reply to the Indians was rather indiscreet, he observ'd that he supposed the ceremony of shaking hands would be receiv'd by them as a token, that he assented to what they had said, being otherways inform'd he said he was sorry for the expression.