

A COURSE ON INDIGENOUS CHURCH PRINCIPLES FOR NATIVE AMERICAN LEADERS IN THE NORTH-CENTRAL REGION OF THE UNITED STATES

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This project set out to investigate how many Native American Assemblies of God churches in the north-central region of the United States utilize indigenous church principles and to improve the education of local church leadership on the nature and value of indigenous churches. Initial research began by establishing through official statistics and interviews with Fellowship supervisors that most of these churches were neither self-governing nor self-supporting. The research then focused on finding a clear biblical model for how new churches were supported, governed, and propagated. Existing missionary theory was then examined on the same topics. Finally, missionary outreach to American Indians was examined historically to see what had been the actual practice.

The results of this research were then used to construct a seminar tailored to presenting the indigenous church model to local Native American church leadership in four churches in four states of this region. The results from the pre-session instrument showed that most local leaders who participated in the seminar began with ideas that were not consistent with the indigenous church model. However, at the completion of the seminar, the post-session instrument showed that they were aware of the information supporting the indigenous model and willing to answer according to this information. This change is significant since the seminar contradicts and implicitly condemns current practice.