

## **Native American spiritualism / Shaman beliefs.**

The term "shamanism" was first applied by Western anthropologists as outside observers of the ancient religion of the Turks and Mongols.

Shamans have always been recognized leaders in their communities healing the injured and sick, performing sacred ceremonies, singing, chanting and dancing, expressing themselves artistically, acting as the bridge between the living and the dead, and communicating with the spirits to receive knowledge and teachings of plants, animals, and the elements.

While not everyone can apprentice with a traditional shaman or become an official shaman today, it is still possible to practice the techniques of shamanism for gaining physical, mental, and spiritual health, accumulating vitality and power, and for self-development. In addition through shamanic practice one learns respect for the physical environment and learns to live more in balance with the earth and its creatures.

### **Compatible with Bible?**

Honor of all living things

Medicine

Expressing yourself artistically

Practicing a balance with nature

### **Not Compatible**

Communicating with "spirit" world

"sacred" ceremonies, incantations using mediums such as peyote.

No mention of Jesus, sin, redemption

altered states of consciousness or

Trance like state of religious ecstasy.

Who is God? The Great Spirit has at times been conceptualized as an "anthropomorphic celestial deity," a God of creation, history and eternity, who also takes a personal interest in world affairs and might regularly intervene in the lives of human beings. There have been, and may be, many different speakers for the Great Spirit, each of whom must be dedicated to the preservation of the Native American way of life. The Great Spirit is portrayed in most North American Indigenous cultures as a powerful force that guides the people in wisdom and survival. In the various Nations, The Great Spirit might be called Earthgrasper, Earthmaker, Gisha Munetoa, Gitchi Manido, or simply "The Creator".

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Never confuse the Native American Culture, History, or Values with Christian doctrines and beliefs. A person does not have to be White or embrace European culture to have faith in Christ. Black people have a culture, Mexican people have a culture, this is not a theology. Many races have been violated by White European Christians who then tried to convert them. It is a travesty that most people do not differentiate these issues.

Jews have had a problem with “gentiles” saying that they too are now Gods chosen people. Many people in the new testament confused culture and traditions with theology or essential doctrines.

### **Eight differences between Indigenous and western worldviews**

#### **Indigenous worldviews (I) vs Western worldviews (W)**

**1.(I)** Spiritually orientated society. System based on belief and spiritual world.

**1.(W)** Scientific, skeptical. Requiring proof as a basis of belief.

**2.(I)** There can be many truths; truths are dependent upon individual experiences.

**2.(W)** There is only one truth, based on science or Western style law.

**3.(I)** Society operates in a state of relatedness. Everything and everyone is related. There is real belief that people, objects and the environment are all connected. Law, kinship and spirituality reinforce this connectedness. Identity comes from connections.

**3.(W)** Compartmentalized society, becoming more so.

**4.(I)** The land is sacred and usually given by a creator or supreme being.

**4.(W)** The land and its resources should be available for development and extraction for the benefit of humans.

**5.(I)** Time is non-linear, cyclical in nature. Time is measured in cyclical events. The seasons are central to this cyclical concept.

**5.(W)** Time is usually linearly structured and future orientated. The framework of months, years, days etc reinforces the linear structure.

**6.(I)** Feeling comfortable is measured by the quality of your relationships with people.

**6.(W)** Feeling comfortable is related to how successful you feel you have been in achieving your goals.

**7.(I)** Human beings are not the most important in the world.

**7.(W)** Human beings are most important in the world.

**8.(I)** Amassing wealth is important for the good of the community

**8.(W)** Amassing wealth is for personal gain