

ALTA M. WASHBURN: ICONOCLASTIC PENTECOSTAL “TRAILBLAZER” TO THE TRIBES¹

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I have spent so much time reflecting over these past forty-two years God has given us to minister the Gospel to Native Americans. We feel no regrets, [we] only wish we could have many more years to work in this great Harvest for the Lord. Clarence and I are consoled by the knowledge that our vision is perpetuated by those whom our lives have touched.

-Alta M. Washburn, *Trail to the Tribes*, p. 100.

Introduction

Historically, organizational and paradigmatic shifts occur when radical, iconoclastic leadership emerges, forcing the status quo in new directions. Iconoclasts challenge us to destroy our preconceived notions and stop venerating the past. They urge us to examine our previously held views and reshape our vision for the future.

Alta M. Washburn (1906-1990) was one such iconoclastic leader.² Largely instrumental in the paradigmatic shift away from a “missionary-driven” model to the more “indigenous-driven” model of leadership within the U.S. Assemblies of God (AG) missions work among American Indians,³ Washburn was boldly innovative in that she established the first Pentecostal Bible college for Native Americans with the stated objective of: “...train[ing] the Native

Indian worker in sound Bible Doctrines that they may in turn go out to reach their own tribes in the native language, thereby spreading the Gospel quickly to every kindred, tribe and tongue.”⁴

In her role as a missionary church planter and founder of a Bible institute, Washburn was boldly innovative in her willingness to serve in a “male-dominated” role and also to promote the empowerment and equality of Native Christian leadership at a time when such a position was considered untenable by many.

This article briefly examines the life and ministry of this iconoclastic leader whose two most enduring contributions to AG missionary work among Native Americans include her missionary church planting of several congregations in the southwestern United States, and the founding of the first

Bible training institute (today, a regionally-accredited Bible college) to serve the broad tribal spectrum of American Indians, Alaska Natives, and First Nations peoples in the United States and Canada.⁵ Washburn distinguished herself in these two roles—positions traditionally held by male leaders. This paper also makes some brief comparisons of the ministry of Alta M. Washburn with that of Alice E. Luce, well-known AG missionary to Latin America who later established the Latin American Bible Institute (in La Puente, California and along with Henry C. Ball, in San Antonio, Texas). Although Washburn and Luce were most likely unknown to each other, there are some remarkable similarities in their ministry trajectories that should be noted for readers of missions history.

Moreover, establishing a Bible school for American Indians may not seem radical today, but in the late 1950s the concept of indigenous ministry among Native Americans within the Assemblies of God had only begun to emerge. Despite full gospel ministry to Native Americans being chronicled within Pentecostal publications as early as 1909, it really was not until the late 1940s and early 1950s that Native American indigenous leadership really becomes visible in nascent form.⁶ Early Pentecostal Native leaders included Andrew C. Maracle (Mohawk), Charles E. Lee (Navajo), and Dick Boni (Apache).⁷ Still at that time, indigenous Native leadership was quite rare, and the “missions-driven” paradigm was still the prevailing missiological model used within the Assemblies of God among American Indians. Various written reports from that time period indicate that with very few exceptions, missionaries provided the bulk of leadership in evangelism and church planting efforts among Native Americans.⁸ Alta M. Washburn was a major actor in the

shift toward the realization that the indigenous church principle needed to be applied within the Native American field.

Biographical Overview

Born in Sandfork, West Virginia on June 28, 1906, Alta came to faith in Christ in 1931 when an unnamed itinerant evangelist preached a series of tent meetings in Clarksburg, West Virginia and the surrounding communities. Initially resistant to the gospel, Alta’s Aunt Elva—a newly saved Christian herself—evangelized her twenty-five year old recalcitrant niece, who had been suddenly stricken with a life-threatening case of scarlet fever. Paralyzed and crippled, Alta lay dying and had a vision of impending judgment if she refused to accept Christ as Lord and Savior: “Sometime after midnight I went into the jaws of death. I was suspended over the abyss of hell on a narrow slippery path, struggling to climb and escape the creatures who reached to drag me in [sic].”⁹

Recognizing her need for a Savior, Alta accepted Christ—some would say partly in response to the all night prayerful intercession held at her aunt’s church in Fairmont, West Virginia. Washburn’s conversion in 1931 included a call to ministry as a missionary:

What a day to be remembered when I arose from the bed that had long held me prisoner. More glorious was my deliverance from the bondage of sin. Not only does that day in 1931 mark the date of my salvation and healing, but it was the day I heard God call me to be a missionary. Little did I know what the future held for me.¹⁰

In the years to follow, Alta began to internalize and “flesh out” the call of God upon her life by serving as a youth worker, then subsequently as a tent evangelist, followed by a brief stint as pastor of the First Assembly of God church in Salineville, Ohio.¹¹ While serving at that church, Sister Washburn once again felt the pervasive call to the Native American mission field on the San Carlos Apache Reservation in eastern Arizona. In 1947 (the same year she was ordained), Alta, along with her husband Clarence, assumed the pastorate of the San Carlos Apache Assembly of God that had been founded in 1936 by missionaries Ernest and Ethel Marshall; certainly it was one of the first Assembly of God churches planted among Native people, although this article has already made previous reference to Pentecostal missions to Indians as early as 1909.¹²

This thriving church had been characterized by a *Pentecostal Evangel* article in 1942 while under the Marshall’s capable leadership as “experienc[ing] a tremendous revival characterized by overflowing crowds, salvations, and reports of ‘signs and wonders.’”¹³ Although warmly received by the growing Apache congregation of over 100 converts, the Washburns found it necessary to relocate to Phoenix, Arizona by 1947 after a brief sojourn in order for Clarence to procure adequate employment. Unfortunately job opportunities were extremely limited in San Carlos at that time, and the church was unable to supply an adequate income for the Washburns’ livelihood.

As they continued in their efforts to reach Native Americans for Christ, the Washburns established All Tribes Assembly of God in Phoenix to reach the growing population of southwestern Indian tribes moving to the greater Phoenix area. Moreover, this was

part of their strategy to establish a means of evangelistic outreach to the nearby Gila River, Salt River, and Papago (now Tohono O’odham) reservations, as well as the Yaqui Indian community in Guadalupe, near south Phoenix. During the years that Alta served as pastor of All Tribes AG (1948-1972), the church not only continued to grow numerically, but also exponentially through its church-planting efforts by establishing new works at Casa Blanca, Laveen, and Co-op (Gila River Indian Community), the Salt River Indian AG on the Salt River Indian Reservation, and the AG Church in Guadalupe (Yaqui Indian).¹⁴ Washburn had an apostolic vision for church planting and was an effective church planter long before it became “the thing to do.” Cherie Sampson, a Pima Indian and AG minister, is part of Washburn’s legacy because her father and uncles were saved and called to the ministry under Alta’s ministry within the Salt River Indian Community. Now pastor of the Salt River Indian AG, near Scottsdale, Arizona, Sampson remembers Washburn fondly, “I would say that she was a woman ... ahead of her time. She forged ahead when it wasn’t popular for a woman to be in this kind of ministry.”¹⁵

If Washburn had remained exclusively involved with pastoring and church planting, she would still have had a successful ministry characterized by the many souls won to Christ and baptized in the Holy Spirit under her ministry. Nonetheless, as an iconoclast, Washburn was not willing to “color within the lines.” Not only was she convinced of her own calling, but she recognized that many of the Native people she served also had the callings and gifts to assume roles as pastors, evangelists, and other forms of church leadership.

By 1956, Sister Washburn recognized that in order for American Indians to be

successfully empowered for church leadership, a special school would need to be created that would focus on equipping Native Pentecostal indigenous leadership. A conversation with Virgil Sampson, a Pima Indian saved under Washburn's ministry, resulted in a "seed being planted" toward this possibility. Returning to the Phoenix area after completing his education at an AG Bible college that enrolled predominantly white students, Sampson was frustrated at his experience of cultural discontinuity when he asked Sister Washburn: "[W]hy can't we Indians have our own Bible school? We can preach in our language but we need a place where we can study the Word together; a place where we have more in common than in a school where most of the students are Anglo."¹⁶

Challenged by this request, Washburn felt a confirmation that this was indeed the direction in which she was being led. She records her response to Sampson's sincere request, "That heart-felt appeal was another confirmation that God was leading us into a great challenge for Him. I was determined to obey the Lord and see the answer He was making clear to me."¹⁷ Up to that time few Native leaders had attended any sort of Bible college training; noteworthy among the small number who had were Charles E. Lee (Navajo), a graduate of (then) Central Bible Institute in Springfield, Missouri and Andrew C. Maracle (Mohawk), who completed his studies at (then) Zion Bible Institute in Barrington, Rhode Island.¹⁸ In Washburn's thinking, it was now time to develop a specialized institution to serve Native Pentecostal leaders.

On September 23, 1957, the All Tribes Indian Bible School (ATBS) opened its doors for the first time at 4123 E. Washington Street in Phoenix, becoming the first AG Bible School for Native Americans

established by the Assemblies of God.¹⁹ It began with very little "fanfare" in the traditional sense and was run on a very modest budget. According to Washburn:

We charged the students \$1.00 a day; only a token payment on the cost of the school's operating expense. No money came from the tribes for the students' education in those days or from parents who were practically all living far below the poverty level. But we trust[ed] God to meet each day's need, and He never failed us.²⁰

Although ATBS began with little more than a dream to empower and equip Native Pentecostals for ministry, this vision took hold in subsequent years. A number of Native American graduates have come into the ministerial ranks through educational and spiritual formation at ATBS (and its subsequent names). Alta Washburn continued in her role as the institute's principal²¹ until 1965 when health concerns forced her retirement from that work. She remained as pastor of All Tribes Indian AG until 1972 and remained in pastoral ministry along with her husband until 1986. Rev. Alta M. Washburn passed away on September 16, 1990 after a lengthy illness and just after completing her memoirs with the assistance of Rev. Alma Thomas, long-time missionary educator and close friend.

An Iconoclastic Legacy

Alta M. Washburn has, for a number of reasons, left an iconoclastic legacy. In light of the fact that modern Pentecostalism has just passed its "century mark," Pentecostals have become more keenly aware of the changing dynamics that prevailed throughout the twentieth century, continuing now into the twenty-first century.

First and foremost, Washburn was willing to assume two roles traditionally denied to women within modern Pentecostal circles: senior pastor and president of a Bible college. In 2006, only 3.97 percent of the AG ministers serving as senior pastors were women.²² In the fifties it was almost certainly *less*.²³ By 1957 when Sister Washburn established ATBS, little historical precedent existed for women serving as heads of Bible colleges or institutes within the Assemblies of God.²⁴ Not only was All Tribes Bible School the first Bible training school for Native Americans within the AG since its inception, but Washburn was its founding principal.²⁵ She cast her role as an educator metaphorically in terms of that of a “warrior,” protecting the “flock” from unsound biblical teaching and exploitation from unscrupulous evangelists. In that way, she compared herself with David protecting God’s people against the “giant” Goliath.²⁶

Despite her non-traditional role as a woman serving in educational and pastoral leadership, church historian Angela Tarango notes that in spite of Washburn’s preeminent role throughout the fifties and sixties, all articles in the *Pentecostal Evangel* highlighting her missionary and educational activities listed her as “Mrs. Clarence Washington.” Her first name was not mentioned in print until her memoirs were published, and she was always publicly recognized in conjunction with her husband, Clarence, who she viewed as an equal partner in ministry despite his less visible role. A skilled mechanic, Clarence Washburn’s background was essential in keeping the buses running that regularly transported students and parishioners to the Bible School or church. He also helped a great deal in building and maintenance tasks.²⁷ Nonetheless, Alta greatly revered her husband’s supportive role in undergirding her ministerial calling. She

credits him with encouraging her to remain faithful to her role when she became discouraged by the criticism of others. Indeed, Alta regarded Clarence as her pastor:

My husband rebuked me for being affected by the criticism. Clarence never felt a call to pulpit ministry, but he ministered to me in my many times of discouragement. Had it not been for his love, encouragement, exhortation, and standing by me, I doubt if I could have accomplished much for the Lord. In the truest sense he was my pastor.²⁸

As a woman leading a Bible college, Washburn had few role models. Among the few women who had made inroads into Christian postsecondary education at that time was Alice E. Luce, a former Anglican missionary to India, who joined the AG and worked among Hispanics. Luce later founded the Latin American Bible Institute (LABI), originally located in San Diego, California and that later moved to La Puente, California.²⁹

Luce strongly advocated the teachings earlier promoted in Anglican missionary Roland Allen’s 1912 groundbreaking work, *Missionary Methods: Saint Paul’s or Ours?* Like Allen, Luce believed that churches established abroad should be free from paternalistic oversight and become *self-supporting, self-governing, and self-propagating*. Upon joining the AG in 1915, Luce spent much of her life and ministry developing indigenous churches among Hispanics within the United States using LABI as a thrust for this venture. From the onset of her involvement with the AG, Luce was an articulate spokesperson for the promotion of the indigenous church principle; her writings just prior to the 1921

General Council held in St. Louis helped set the stage for endorsing the Pauline missiological approach of the three “self’s” previously mentioned.³⁰

Although I have no evidence that Washburn either knew Luce or was even aware of her contributions, I believe that Luce merits mention as another iconoclast also greatly instrumental in advocating a paradigmatic shift in missiological philosophy and praxis. Like Washburn, Luce established a Bible training school at a time when women rarely accomplished such feats. Moreover, Luce established LABI in 1926—more than thirty years *before* Washburn founded ATBS in 1957.

Washburn (like Luce) was an iconoclast in that she was a strong advocate for the indigenous church principle among American Indians (as Luce was for Hispanics)—at a time when the prevailing philosophy of paternalism was still the dominant paradigm among Native American Pentecostal missionaries. Thanks to Luce’s far-sighted articles in 1921,³¹ and later *The Indigenous Church*, published in 1953 by Melvin L. Hodges, missions efforts beginning in the early twenties were theoretically undergirded by a belief in indigenous ministry within the local church found on the foreign field. Although the indigenous principle was becoming well established in overseas ministry, there was far less initial receptivity toward it among Native American ministry within the AG. Prior to 1950 it is difficult to find much evidence within the AG that suggests that the indigenous principle was taken seriously as a missiological framework among Native Americans.³²

However, in 1950 *The Pentecostal Evangel* did publish an article that proudly proclaimed that “the time for which we have waited and prayed has come, and several

consecrated Indian young people have stepped out to dedicate their lives to Christ and His gospel.”³³ By this time significant Native Pentecostal leaders such as Charles E. Lee (Navajo) and Andrew C. Maracle (Mohawk) were beginning to emerge—leaders who would during their lifetimes become role models for future generations of Pentecostal Native leadership. It was also during this same time period that Alta Washburn began to receive her vision for developing Native Christian leadership within a cultural context that embraced Native value systems and learning styles.³⁴ Although Rev. Washburn was widely heralded by some as being innovative, not everyone was in agreement with her vision for establishing a Bible college to develop Native American pastoral leadership. In fact, early on, Rev. Washburn was admonished that the Bible training school she had established was indeed *not* to be used for training Indians for pastoral ministry; moreover, its sole purpose was to train Native workers who would *assist* their missionary pastors—who would be the “leaders in charge.”³⁵ Thankfully, Washburn did not heed those admonitions!

Finally, in order to fully appreciate the innovation of her vision, the reader must be cognizant of the fact that Native Americans had no appreciable legacy in postsecondary education at that time, and even today they account for only .9 percent of the total population of Americans in higher education, although they are now proportionately represented (per their population size) within the broader national demographic landscape.³⁶ In the fifties, when Native American presence was virtually non-existent within the academy, Alta M. Washburn was an iconoclast because she believed in providing American Indians with an opportunity to “better” themselves through education—even if it was in a Bible school setting.

Historically, Native Americans have been considered “at risk” for any form of higher education,³⁷ and few have been willing to make a significant investment of time, capital, and other resources in advancing their educational status. During the fifties it was virtually unheard of to envision American Indians and Alaska Natives participating in any form of postsecondary education. In 1928, less than thirty years before the founding of the original All Tribes Bible School, the Merriam Report,³⁸ the first comprehensive sociological and educational analysis of the state of affairs among America’s indigenous peoples, painted a grim picture—advocating a paternalistic approach toward “bettering” the Indian people. But notwithstanding, Washburn’s iconoclastic vision enabled her to establish both a church that continues to produce Native leadership and a school that has evolved into the first and only regionally-accredited Bible college for American Indian and Alaska Native college students in the United States.

In summary, I believe that Washburn (like Luce) is characteristic of Pentecostal women leaders who have worked within existing ecclesiastical structures to reform and refine the understanding of what women could do without rhetorically challenging those structures. Washburn did not forego her responsibilities as a wife and mother in order to fulfill her call to ministry. Yet she chose the strong decisive action of missionary church planting and promoting the indigenous church principle among Native Americans rather than attacking existing administrative structures that favored more paternalistic policies. She chose to work within the organizational context of the Assemblies of God and brought reform through faithfully carrying out her apostolic vision. Moreover, her legacy is that of an iconoclastic, Pentecostal trailblazer to the tribes whose life and ministry has had a profound and far-reaching effect on evangelizing and equipping Native Americans in fulfillment of Christ’s Great Commission.

¹An earlier version of this paper was presented at the 37th Annual Meeting of the Society for Pentecostal Studies at Duke University in Durham, North Carolina, March 13-15, 2008.

²Angela M. Tarango, an emerging church historian, has extensively researched modern Native American Pentecostal missions within the Assemblies of God. Regarding Alta Washburn, while viewing her through a critical feminist perspective, Tarango notes that even though Washburn was unconventional in her role as a female leader—she would never herself have defined herself as a feminist although she undeniably helped to redefine and reshape the role of women involved in Pentecostal Native American ministry. See Angela M. Tarango, “Assemblies of God Missions to Native Americans,” *Assemblies of God Heritage* 29 (2009): 45-51, 69. Previously, I have noted Washburn’s efforts to balance her role as a wife and mother with that of her calling to full-time missionary work in Joseph J. Saggio, “Alta M. Washburn: ‘Trailblazer’ to the Tribes,” *Assemblies of God Heritage* 27 (2007): 28-33.

³In this paper I use the terms: *American Indians*, *Indians*, *Alaska Natives*, *Native Americans* and *First Nations* somewhat interchangeably to refer to the pre-Columbian indigenous peoples of North America. For a more detailed discussion about the “indigenous-driven” model vs. the “missionary-driven” model among Native Americans, specifically within the Assemblies of God, see Joseph J. Saggio, “Towards an Indigenous Model of Native American Ministry in the Assemblies of God,” in *Society for Pentecostal Studies: Memories of the Azusa Street Revival: Interrogations and Interpretations*, 35th Annual Meeting held at Fuller Theological Seminary, March 23-25, 2006, Parallel Session Papers: 336-343.

⁴See Joseph J. Saggio and Jim Dempsey, eds., *American Indian College: A Witness to the Tribes* (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 2008), 66. This is quoted directly from an unpublished promotional flyer from All Tribes Bible School, 1957. Over the years, the school (presently known as American Indian College of the Assemblies of God) has undergone a number of name changes. It was referred to in its early years 1957-1965 as *All Tribes Bible School*. Subsequently, the name was changed as the institution grew and developed to *American Indian Bible Institute*, *American Indian Bible College*, and in 1993 to its present name.

⁵Today, American Indian College of the Assemblies of God (known as AIC for short) is located at 10020 N. Fifteenth Avenue in Phoenix, Arizona and operates as a regional college of the Assemblies of God under the auspices of the Division of U.S. Missions. Their Web site address is www.aicag.edu

⁶See Jeremiah Rundle quoted by A. H. Argue from personal correspondence to him, “Pentecost among the Indians of the North,” *The Latter Reign Evangel* 2 (April 1909): 17. Although this may well be the first reference of Pentecostal ministry among First Nations people, it is not the first reference of Indians receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit. For example, in (circa) 1903, Howard Goss, an early Pentecostal leader, reports an elderly Indian chief receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit in a pre-Azusa Street revival meeting in Galena, Kansas. See H. A. and Ethel Goss, *The Winds of God* (New York, NY: Comet Press, 1958), 11, 12 cited in Carl Brumback, *Suddenly from Heaven* (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 1961), 28. We also know that Native Americans were part of the Azusa Street Mission under Pastor W. J. Seymour during the early part of the twentieth century. See Cecil M. Robeck, Jr., *The Azusa Street Mission and Revival: The Birth of the Global Pentecostal Movement* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Inc., 2006), 88.

⁷See Saggio, “Towards an Indigenous Model of Native American Ministry in the Assemblies of God,” (SPS 2006): 338-339. See also “Indians to Train for Service,” *Pentecostal Evangel* No 1897 (September 16, 1950): 12.

⁸I have personally reviewed hundreds of articles (particularly brief missionary accounts from the *Pentecostal Evangel*) from that time period and found that only a scant few acknowledge any form of Native leadership until the late forties. For example, in 1948 at the first Indian Convention held by the Assemblies of God, the anonymous writer records: “How the Apaches did drink in the Word of God as it was given by various visiting missionaries as well as by the Home Missions Director, Brother Vogler, and by our General Superintendent E. S. Williams, see “First Indian Convention, *The Pentecostal Evangel* No. 1770. (April 10, 1948): 10-11. This convention took place on the San Carlos Apache Indian Reservation and featured Native participants and

missionaries from Arizona, Washington, and Idaho. Although there were some testimonies by young Native preachers, the bulk of the preaching and leadership was clearly provided by Anglo missionaries.

⁹Alta M. Washburn, undated correspondence, 1. See also Joseph J. Saggio, "Alta M. Washburn 'Trailblazer to the Tribes,'" *Assemblies of God Heritage*, 27 (2007): 28.

¹⁰Alta M. Washburn, *Trail to the Tribes* (Prescott, AZ: 1990), 4-5. See also Saggio, 2007, 28-29.

¹¹Saggio, 2007, 29.

¹²See Jeremiah Rundle cited by A. H. Argue, 17.

¹³See Saggio, 2007, 29. Herein I reference "Revival among the Apache Indians," *Pentecostal Evangel*, No. 1474 (August 8, 1942):7. See also Jim Dempsey, "Part I: Assemblies of God Ministry to Native Americans," *Assemblies of God Heritage* 22:2 (Summer 2002): 8-9.

¹⁴Saggio, 2007, 30.

¹⁵*Ibid.*, 32.

¹⁶Washburn, 48.

¹⁷*Ibid.*, 48.

¹⁸See Joseph J. Saggio, "Towards an Indigenous Model of Native American Ministry within the Assemblies of God," *Pneuma*, 31: 1 (2009, In Press). In this article I give a detailed account of the development of indigenous ministry within the Assemblies of God of Native American ministers from its inception to the present time.

¹⁹Subsequent institutions established to serve Native American students include Native American Bible College founded in 1968 by Pauline Mastries, Charles Hadden, and Hubert Boese, and now located in Shannon, North Carolina. Good Shepherd Bible Institute in Mobridge, South Dakota was founded in 1970 by Leo and Mildred Bankson (later renamed Black Hills Indian Bible College in Rapid City, South Dakota). Its successor is the Institute for Ministry Development, an intercultural distance education program for Native Americans. Far North Bible College in Anchorage, Alaska was established in 1973 through the efforts of Arvin and Luana Glandon along with Kenneth Andrus. See Saggio, 2007, 33 and unpublished promotional flyer from All Tribes Bible School, 1957.

²⁰Washburn, 55.

²¹The original title was "principal" and was later changed to "president" under the subsequent leadership of Rev. Don Ramsey beginning in 1965, see Don Ramsey, "Presidential Reflections ... Don Ramsey" in *American Indian College: A Witness to the Tribes*, ed. Joseph J. Saggio and Jim Dempsey (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 2008), 199, 204.

²²See Statistics of the Assemblies of God (USA), http://ag.org/top/about/statistics/Statistical_Report_Summary.pdf (accessed September 7, 2007).

²³The Statistician's Office of the General Council of the Assemblies of God does not provide statistical data on the number (or percentage) of women serving as credentialed ministers before 1977.

²⁴Alice E. Luce established Latin American Bible Institute (LABI) in 1926 in San Diego, California (later moved to La Puente, California. See Gary B. McGee, *This Gospel Shall Be Preached: A History and Theology of Assemblies of God Foreign Missions to 1959* (Gospel Publishing House: Springfield, MO, 1986), 97. Also, Christine Gibson, along with a few loyal supporters established Mount Zion Bible School in East Providence, Rhode Island in 1924. The school is now known as Zion Bible College and later occupied the former location of Barrington College in Barrington, Rhode Island. As of Fall 2008 the school relocated to its new location in Haverhill, Massachusetts.

President Gibson served the school until her death in 1955 at age 75. See Pat Pickard, “Still Living by Faith and Miracles after 70 Years: Zion Bible Institute, *Assemblies of God Heritage* 15:1 (Spring 1995): 17. Both Luce and Gibson had just passed from the scene immediately before Washburn established All Tribes Bible School. Finally, I must mention that Minnie T. Draper, Elizabeth V. Baker, and Virginia E. Moss established Bethel Bible Training School, the Rochester Bible Training School, and the Beulah Heights Bible and Missionary Training School, respectively. Although none of these women ever held ministerial credentials within the AG, their respective ministries are recognized as having made significant contributions toward ministerial and missionary training of early AG personnel. See Gary B. McGee, “Three Notable Women in Pentecostal Ministry,” *Assemblies of God Heritage* 5:1 (Spring 1985-1986). McGee commends these three women as having success in establishing Bible schools at a time when this was traditionally considered to be a man’s calling.

²⁵As mentioned in a previous footnote, the title “President” was later conferred on Donald Ramsey, the second person to head the Bible school. Later, in 1968 Pauline Mastries (who had served previously at ATBS) along with Charles Hadden and Hubert Boese would found Eastern Bible Institute, in Shannon, North Carolina. This institution would later be renamed Native American Bible College and moved to Fayetteville, North Carolina. Thus, it might be argued that Alta Washburn set a precedent (at least within Native American ministries) for women to assume leadership positions within institutions of postsecondary learning.

²⁶See Washburn, 48 where she made reference to David challenging Goliath found in 1 Samuel 17.

²⁷See Lillie Ward Neal, “Alumni Reflections ... Lillie Ward Neal” in *American Indian College: A Witness to the Tribes*, ed. Joseph J. Saggio and Jim Dempsey (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 2008), 355.

²⁸Alta M. Washburn, “Trail to the Tribes” in *American Indian College: A Witness to the Tribes*, ed. Joseph J. Saggio and Jim Dempsey (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 2008), 54.

²⁹In 1926, concurrent with the establishment of LABI in San Diego, California, Luce’s longtime colleague and friend, Henry C. Ball, was also establishing another LABI in San Antonio, Texas. See McGee, 97.

³⁰See Gary B. McGee, *This Gospel Shall Be Preached: A History and Theology of Assemblies of God Foreign Missions Since 1959 – Volume 2* (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 1986), 33.

³¹Luce wrote three consecutive articles entitled “Paul’s Missionary Methods” found respectively in the January 8, January 22, and February 5 editions of *The Pentecostal Evangel*. Herein she elucidates some of the missiological premises articulated in Roland Allen’s book published in 1912, *Missionary Methods: Saint Paul’s or Ours?* while also further “unpacking” indigenous ministry from a Pentecostal perspective that includes a theology of signs and wonders. For additional biographical information on Alice Luce, I recommend Everett A. Wilson and Ruth Marshall Wilson, “Alice E. Luce: A Visionary Victorian” in *Portraits of a Generation: Early Pentecostal Leaders*, ed. James R. Goff Jr. and Grant Wacker (Fayetteville, AR: The University of Arkansas Press, 2002): 159-176.

³²See my previous footnote comments where I explain that my view on the origin of indigenous Native Pentecostal leadership is predicated upon review of hundreds of written sources detailing early AG ministry among Native Americans as well as a number of oral interviews with key actors who have significant longevity within this work.

³³“Indians to Train for Service,” *Pentecostal Evangel* No. 1897 (September 16, 1950):12.

³⁴I need to mention here that I do not mean “traditional” value systems whereby various Native religious belief systems (including animistic and polytheistic belief systems are embraced, but rather non-religious cultural traits such as “hands on” learning styles vs. the passing on of propositional knowledge via primarily written codification, non-Western views of the family system, dietary preferences, clothing styles, recognition that English is a second language for many Native people, etc. Ignorance of these cultural areas has caused historic “flash points” in the ongoing attempt to successfully evangelize and disciple Native peoples into the Christian faith.

³⁵Having myself served for fourteen years at American Indian College in Phoenix as an administrator and faculty member (1994-2008), I have had several conversations with Rev. Alma F. Thomas, Professor Emeritus at American Indian College and long time U.S. missionary to Native Americans. The service of Rev. Thomas and her late husband Lonnie to the College extends intermittently back to the early sixties. I have also spoken many times with long-time missionary educator Rev. Jim Dempsey, who currently serves as Campus Pastor at American Indian College. Dempsey has also confirmed that same belief through his own archival research and anecdotal evidence. Finally, Angela M. Tarango references material documentation of similar conversations through her archival analysis of the meeting minutes from June 2, 1956 pursuant to the establishment and incorporation of All Tribes Bible School (the original name of the school) in Phoenix, Arizona. See Angela Tarango, "Institutionalizing the Indigenous Principle: Sister Washburn and the American Indian College of the Assemblies of God, 1956-1965", unpublished research paper.

³⁶See National Center for Educational Statistics, *Education Statistics Quarterly*, vol. 7, Issues 1 & 2, *Postsecondary Education*, "Enrollment in Postsecondary Institutions, Fall 2002 and Financial Statistics, Fiscal Year 2002." http://nces.ed.gov/programs/quarterly/vol_7/1_2/5_asp (accessed December, 3, 2007).

³⁷See for example Joseph J. Saggio and Laura I. Rendón, "Persistence among American Indians and Alaska Natives at a Bible College: The Importance of Family, Spirituality, and Validation" in *Christian Higher Education: A Journal of Applied Research and Practice*, 3 (Fall 2004): 329-347. Herein we detail how Native American students have been historically "at risk" and how American Indian College serves as a role model of an institution that has had some success at equipping Native students in light of its educational mission.

³⁸The full name of the report is *The Problem of Indian Administration: Report of a Survey made at the Request of Honorable Hubert Work, Secretary of the Interior, and submitted to him*, February 21, 1928. http://www.alaskool.org/native_ed/research_reports/IndianAdmin/Indian_Admin_Problms.html (accessed September 14, 2007). This is a "must read" for those interested in gaining a deep historical understanding of the relationship of the federal government to Native Americans vis-à-vis educational and social issues. It is clearly not representative of modern thought; however, the prevailing attitudes toward American Indians had not changed appreciably from 1928 up to the time of Alta Washburn's founding of All Tribes Bible School in 1957. Thus, I cite this comprehensive report to help historically contextualize the issue of postsecondary education for American Indians in the United States prior to 1957.