

TOP Questions from Native Americans to Christians:

1. Why are only 5% of Native Americans Christian?
 2. What is the difference between beliefs, spiritual doctrines and superstitions?
 3. Which practices are from culture and which are from faith?
 4. How do we know when something is an idol?
 5. Can our beliefs differ from the Bible and still be true?
 6. Can traditions or harmless superstitions be wrong for Christians?
 7. Aren't Catholics (Christians) superstitious?
 8. Do Gentile Christians have to embrace Jewish customs or traditions? If not, why do Native Americans have to embrace "European" or U.S. culture?
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A person who becomes a Christian surrenders all previous notions about salvation, practices, and beliefs to the Bible. It alone stands as the authority. Whether you are Native American, Jewish, Communist, Republican, or whatever. Many "cultures" or ethnic groups still debate the hybrid (syncretism) of combining two religions into one's own personal applications. A true born again believer must drop all baggage from the past.

Do we have to imitate or practice Jewish festivals and customs? NO

Do we have to drop all customs not mentioned in the Bible? NO

Do we have to evaluate (pray and study the Bible) on **why** we do what we do? YES

In Non-Essential Beliefs, we have liberty. Accept him whose faith is weak, without passing judgment on **disputable matters**... Who are you to judge someone else's servant? To his own master he stands or falls... So then each of us will give an account of himself to God... So whatever you believe about these things keep between yourself and God. In All our Beliefs, we show charity... If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.

Romans 14:1-22 and 1 Corinthians 13:2

A "righteous proselyte" is a gentile who has converted to Judaism, is bound to all the doctrines and precepts of the Jewish religion, and is considered a full member of the Jewish people. The proselyte is circumcised as an adult if male, and immerses in a mikvah (baptism) to formally effect the conversion. *

Acts 15:1 - Certain people came down from Judea to Antioch and were teaching the believers: "Unless you are circumcised, according to the custom taught by Moses, you cannot be saved." ² This brought Paul and Barnabas into sharp dispute and debate with them. So Paul and Barnabas were appointed, along with some other believers, to go up to Jerusalem to see the apostles and elders about this question.

Formerly, when you did not know God, you were enslaved to those that by nature are not gods. But now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, how can you turn back again to the weak and worthless elementary principles of the world, whose slaves you want to be once more? You observe days and months and seasons and years! I am afraid I may have labored over you in vain.—Galatians 4:8-11

Rom 1:25 - They exchanged the truth about God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator.

To worship = extravagant respect or admiration for or devotion to an object of esteem. The feeling or expression of reverence, high homage, respect, honor, and adoration for a deity.

Idol = a person or thing that is greatly admired, loved, or revered. An image, likeness, fetish, totem, statue, figure, figurine, doll, or carving that represents a sacred object. A replacement for the worship of God alone. "Glory" given to something other than God as if it were God.

Superstition = a belief or practice resulting from ignorance, fear of the unknown, trust in magic or chance, or a false conception of causation. : an irrational abject attitude of mind toward the supernatural, nature, or God.

Superstition (2) = points of minor importance given god-like honor; excess or extravagance in the doing of things not required by God, or abstaining from things not forbidden

Superstition (3) = something labeled as the agent of superior powers, or in omens. In other words getting a blessing or a curse from animals, things, or events which really have no power.

Mark 7:8 - You have let go of the commands of God and are holding on to human traditions.

Col 2:8 - See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the elemental spiritual forces of this world rather than on Christ.

Acts 17:19 = Then certain philosophers of the Epicureans, and of the Stoicks, encountered him. And some said, What will this babbler say? other some, He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods: because he preached unto them Jesus, and the resurrection.¹⁹ And they took him, and brought him unto Areopagus, saying, May we know what this new doctrine, whereof thou speakest, is?²⁰ For thou bringest certain strange things to our ears: we would know therefore what these things mean.²¹ (For all the Athenians and strangers which were there spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell, or to hear some new thing.)²² Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars' hill, and said, Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too **superstitious**.²³ For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you.

²⁴ God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; ²⁵ Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things;²⁶ And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation;

²⁷ That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us:²⁸ For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring.²⁹ Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device.³⁰ And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent:

Acts 25:18 = Against whom when the accusers stood up, they brought none accusation of such things as I supposed: ¹⁹ But had certain questions against him of their own superstition, and of one Jesus, which was dead, whom Paul affirmed to be alive.

Consider...

The eagle is the strongest and bravest of all birds. For this reason, Native Americans have chosen the eagle and its feathers as a symbol of what is highest, bravest, strongest and holiest.

In the Native American culture, eagle feathers are given to another in honor, and the feathers are worn with dignity and pride. They are treated with great respect. Indians believe that eagles have a special connection with the heavens since they fly so high. Many Indians believe that if they are given this feather, it is a symbol from above.

When an eagle feather is dropped during a Native American dance, a special ceremony is performed to pick it up again, and the owner is careful to never drop it again.

An eagle feather is also used to adorn the sacred pipe because it is a symbol of the Great Spirit who is above all and from whom all strength and power flows.

Since the eagle holds high meaning in the Native American culture, eagle feathers and wings are used in special ways. For instance, when they are held over someone's head, it means the person is brave or is wished bravery and happiness. To wave it over everyone present means everyone is wished peace, prosperity and happiness.

“In an eagle there is all the wisdom of the world.” — Lame Deer

When Lakota pray, or do anything sacred, they see the world as having four directions. From these four directions — west, north, east and south — come the four winds. Each direction is also identified by a specific color. The shape of the cross in the center of the circle symbolizes all directions.

The Medicine Wheel is a sacred symbol used by the indigenous Plains tribes to represent all knowledge of the universe. The Medicine Wheel is a symbol of hope — a movement toward healing for those who seek it.

To the untrained eye, the Medicine Wheel might seem like a simple circle. For the Great Sioux Nation, the Medicine Wheel holds a much deeper meaning. Yes, its shape is that of a circle; however, the accompanying lines, the feather and the wheel's Four Directions combine to mean so much more.

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powwow — is a Native American gathering focused on dance, song and family celebration. Powwows celebrate the connections to tradition and spirituality, to the Earth and to one another in a social, personal and spiritual meeting.

Powwows began mainly as religious ceremonies to gain wisdom from and give thanks to **Wakan Tanka** — *Great Spirit*. Though many of today's powwows have evolved into social and contest-oriented dances, religious and ceremonial dances are still performed.