

## Native American Ministries #5

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The use of such terms as "Indian," "Native," "Native American," "Amerind," and others always imposes a challenge for us (Native Americans ed.) because there are inconsistent usages among Native people. However for this study, the terms "Indian," "Native," "American Indian" and "Native American" will be used interchangeably. Two exceptions exist in the cases of Native Alaskans and Native Hawaiians. I prefer the term "Native" but am strongly drawn to use "Indian." Although historically faulty, I can still hear my traditional Lakota father, Spotted Horse, declaring that we are "Indian" because that is the language used in the treaties and other legal agreements between the United States and tribal nations, bands and aboriginal organizations.

Unless one knows the precise name used by tribal people for themselves, almost anything expressed in the Spanish, English or French languages will be incorrect and merely repeat the names given those Native nations by immigrant invaders. For example, most of us are aware of the northern plains people called the "Sioux." However, that is a French term. The people call themselves either Lakota, Nakota, or Dakota, depending on which social grouping they are referencing. I am a Seneca belong to a confederation of five other nations known as the Six Nations to the English, or as Iroquois to the French. We call ourselves Haudenosaunee (the people of the Longhouse). Sometimes, some of us call ourselves the "Onkehonweh," the "real people." Our confederation is technically made up of the Seneca, Tuscarora, Onondaga, Cayuga, Oneida and Mohawk Nations. The Ho-chunk Nation has been referred to as Winnebago.

The Navajo call themselves the Dene (or Dine'). Who would know that the Creeks are Muskogee, or that Eskimos are Inuit or that Papagos are Tohono O'Odham? The examples continue through all of the nations. Suffice it to say, we will use Indian, Native American, American Indian, and Native in our discussions.