

The Dance of Welcome, the Ghost Dance & More

Val Brinkerhoff & James Mooney / Appendix B – The Remnant Awakens book

Ethnologist James Mooney was sent west by the federal government to explore the cause of the Messiah Craze, thought to be the Ghost Dance religion. His detailed research ended up in an 1136-page report entitled, “*The Ghost-Dance Religion and the Sioux Outbreak of 1890*” (14th annual report, part 2). It was commissioned by the Bureau of Ethnology of the Smithsonian Institution in Washington D.C. and submitted to its director John Wesley Powell in 1893. Mooney spent two years researching the report among twenty different tribes of Indians. His words follow. The author of this work has added words in brackets for clarification. For a PDF file download go to: <https://archive.org/details/ghostdancesioux00moonrich>

“Every organized religion has a system of **ethics**, a system of **mythology**, and a system of **ritual** observance. In this message from the high priest of the Ghost dance [Christ] we have a synopsis of all three. With regard to the *ritual* part, ceremonial purification and bathing have formed a part of some form or other of every great religion from the beginning of history, while the religious dance dates back far beyond the day when the daughter of Saul “looked through a window and saw King David leaping and dancing before the Lord.” The feasting enjoined is a part of every Indian ceremonial gathering, religious, political, or social. The dance is to continue four successive nights, in accord with the regular Indian system, in which four is the sacred number, as three is in Christianity. In obedience to this message the southern prairie tribes, after the return of the delegation in August, 1891, ceased to hold frequent one-night dances at irregular intervals as formerly without the ceremonial bathing, and adopted instead a system of four-night dances at regular periods of six weeks, followed by ceremonial bathing on the morning of the fifth day [a number tied to covenant-making in scripture].

The *mythology* of the doctrine is only briefly indicated, but the principal articles are given. The dead are all arisen and the spirit hosts are advancing and have already arrived at the boundaries of this earth, led forward by the regenerator in shape of cloud-like indistinctness. The spirit captain of the dead is always represented under this shadowy semblance. The great change will be ushered in by a trembling of the earth, at which the faithful are exhorted to feel no alarm. The hope held out is the same that has inspired the Christian for nineteen centuries—a happy immortality in perpetual youth. As to fixing a date, the messiah [Wovoca] is as cautious as his predecessor in prophecy, who declares that “no man knoweth the time, no even the angels of God.” His weather predictions also are about as definite as the inspired utterances of the Delphian oracle.

The *moral code* inculcated is as pure and comprehensive in its simplicity as anything found in religious systems from the days of Gautama Buddha to the time of Jesus Christ. ‘Do no harm to any one. Do right always.’ Could anything be more simple, and yet more exact and exacting? It inculcates honesty – ‘Do not tell lies.’ It preaches goodwill – ‘Do no harm to anyone.’ It forbids the extravagant mourning customs formerly common among the tribes. ‘When your friends die, you must not cry,’ which is interpreted by the prairie tribes as forbidding the killing of horses, the burning of tipis and destruction of property, the cutting off of the hair and the gashing of the body with knives, all of which were formerly the sickening rule at every death until forbidden by the new doctrine. As an Arapaho said to me when his little boy died, ‘I shall not shoot any ponies, and my wife will not gash her arms. We used to do this when our friends died, because we thought we would never see them again, and it made us feel bad. But now we know we shall all be united again.’ If the Kiowa had held to the Ghost-dance doctrine instead of abandoning it as they had done, they would have been spared the loss of thousands of dollars in horses, tipis, wagons, and other property destroyed, with much of the mental suffering and all of the physical laceration that resulted in consequence of the recent fatal epidemic in the tribe, when for weeks and months the sound of wailing went into night and morning, and in every camp men and women could be seen daily, with dress disordered and hair cut close to the scalp, with blood hardened in clots upon the skin, or streaming from mutilated fingers and fresh gashes on face, and arms, and legs, (it preaches peace with the whites and obedience to authority until the day of deliverance shall come. *Above all, it forbids war.*

‘You must not fight.’ It is hardly possible for us to realize the tremendous and radical change which this doctrine works in the whole spirit of savage life. The career of every Indian has been the warpath. His proudest title has

been that of warrior. His conversations by day and his dreams by night have been of bloody deeds upon the enemies of his tribe. His highest boast was in the number of his scalp trophies, and his chief delight at home was in the war dance and the scalp dance. The thirst for blood and massacre seemed inborn in every man, woman, and child of every tribe. Now comes a prophet [Christ and later Wovoca] as a messenger from God to forbid not only war, but all that savors of war—the war dance, the scalp dance, and even the bloody torture of the sun dance—and his teaching is accepted and his words obeyed by four-fifths of all the warlike predatory tribes of the mountains and the great plains. Only those who have known the deadly hatred that once animated Ute, Cheyenne, and Pawnee, one toward another, and are able to contrast it with their present spirit of mutual brotherly love, can know what the Ghost dance religion has accomplished in bringing the savage into civilization. It is such a revolution as comes but once in the life of a race” (pps. 782-83).

Dance Instructions by Wovoca

Of special note are the specific instructions Wovoca gave the Cheyenne and the Arapahoe in 1891 for *the Dance of Welcome* or *Peace*, presented hereafter. A copy of these instructions was given to James Mooney to deliver to leaders in Washington D.C. that they might understand the nature of what later came to be known as “*The Ghost Dance Religion*.” James Mooney stated, “He [Black Short Nose, a Cheyenne] stated that the Cheyenne and Arapaho were now convinced that I would tell the truth about their religion, and as they loved their religion and were anxious to have the whites know that it was good and contained nothing bad or hostile, they would now give me the message which the messiah himself had given to them [through Wovoca] that I might take it back to show Washington.” Translated into readable English, Wovoca stated:

“When you get home you must make a dance to continue five days. Dance four successive nights, and the last night keep up the dance until the morning of the fifth day, when all must bathe in the river and then disperse to their homes [after the feast]. You must all do [it] in the same way.

I, Jack Wilson, love you all, and my heart is full of gladness for the gifts you have brought me. When you get home I shall give you a good cloud (rain?) which will make you feel good. I give you a good spirit and give you all *good paint*. I want you to come again in three months, some from each tribe there (the Indian Territory). There will be a good deal of snow this year and some rain. In the fall there will be such a rain as I have never given you before.

Grandfather (a universal title of reverence among Indians and here meaning the messiah) says, when your friends die you must not cry. You must not hurt anybody or do harm to anyone. You must not fight. Do right always. It will give you satisfaction in life. This young man has a good father and mother (possibly this refers to Casper Edson, the young Arapaho who wrote down this message of Wovoca for the delegation).

Do not tell the white people about this. Jesus is now upon the earth. He appears like a cloud. The dead are all alive again. I do not know when they will be here; maybe this fall or in the spring. When the time comes there will be no more sickness and everyone will be young again. Do not refuse to work for the whites and do not make any trouble with them until you leave them. When the earth shakes (at the coming of the new world) do not be afraid. It will not hurt you.

I want you to dance every six weeks. Make a feast at the dance and have food that everybody may eat. Then bathe in the water. That is all. You will receive good words again from me sometime. Do not tell lies” (p. 781).

Mooney’s Summary of Wovoca

According to Mooney, “God gave him [Wovoca] control over the elements so that he could make it rain or snow or be dry at will, appointed him his deputy to take charge of affairs in the west, while ‘Governor [Pres.] Harrison’ would attend to matters in the east, and he, God would look after the world above. He then returned to earth and began to preach as he was directed, convincing the people by exercising the wonderful powers that

had been given him . . . He had been to the spirit world [“when the sun died,” a total solar eclipse on Jan. 1, 1889] and had been given a revelation and message from God himself, with full control over the elements . . . Wovoka has five songs for making it rain, the first of which brings on a mist or cloud, the second a snowfall, the third a shower, and the fourth a hard rain or storm, while when he sings the fifth song the weather again becomes clear . . . on the whole he seemed to be honest in his belief and his supernatural claims, although, like others of the priestly function, he occasionally resorts to cheap trickery to keep up the impression as to his miraculous powers...He does claim to be a prophet who has received a divine revelation. I could not help feeling that he was sincere in his repudiation of a number of the wonderful things attributed to him...but said simply that he had been with God...” (pps. 772-73).

Mooney was the first person to make a photograph of Wovoka. He stated that Wovoka had no association with the Ghost Dance, the ghost shirt, or trances, “his religion was on of universal peace . . . the Arapaho and Cheyenne, after debating the matter, refused to allow it [the Ghost Dance shirt] to be worn in the dance, on the ground that the doctrine of the Ghost dance was one of peace, whereas the Sioux had made the ghost shirt an auxiliary of war” (791-92).

Mooney’s Added Mormonism Insights

In James Mooney’s lengthy report to the Smithsonian Institution he refuted the idea that the Mormons were responsible for the Messiah Craze, as continually reported by General Miles of the U.S. Army (and others). In addition to providing the traditional information many give relating to the rise of Mormonism and its founding Prophet Joseph Smith, Mooney also included portions of a unique pamphlet circulated around Salt Lake in the summer of 1892. It was called, “*The Mormons Have Stepped Down and Out of Celestial Government; The American Indians have Stepped Up and Into Celestial Government.*” Mooney believed the pamphlet contained useful insights into Mormonism at the time in connection with the Messiah craze. The insights remain relevant today and to the thrust of this work.

Mormons Step Down, Indians Step Up Created and distributed by Latter-day Saint Angus McDonald, portions of this pamphlet are included hereafter. He began, stating, “The Messiah came to His people at the time appointed of the Father, March, 1890, notwithstanding the assertion in the Deseret Evening News, made January 1892: ‘**1890 has passed, and no Messiah has come.**’ Had the church-organ . . . added, ‘**to us,**’ the statement would not have misled thousands...” For He does not reveal himself to Israel while living under the law of carnal commandments [the lesser law rather than the fulness – *the Law of Consecration*] . . . which is appointed for the salvation of the Gentiles . . . while living beneath their rights and privileges. Aristocratic forms of government have prevailed . . . From these have sprung . . . land monopoly, individual property, selfish-exclusiveness, refined tyranny, usury . . . merchants, bankers, monopolists, speculators, and professors [and] . . . the necessary outgrowths of a false system of government . . . Those who are wedded to these distinctions will find no place in the celestial kingdom of God [where only *the Law of Consecration* governs].”

“Through clinging to these abominations, the church which the Lord God expressed himself as well pleased, November 1st, 1831, was subsequently handed over to the buffetings of Satan, with the promise that if they did not repent, “at the time appointed, you shall be rejected as a church, with your dead, saith the Lord your God.’ The same article stated, ‘*1891 has passed, and no pruning of the vineyard.*’”

McDonald continued, stating that Joseph Smith “restored the gospel of consecration, namely: ‘If thou lovest me, thou shalt serve me and keep all my commandments and behold, thou shalt consecrate all thy properties . . . unto me with a covenant and deed that cannot be broken’ [see D&C 42:29-30]. To those entering this covenant, power was given to lay the foundation of the church (under the gospel of consecration) ‘the only true and living church upon the face of the whole earth, with which I the Lord am well pleased.’ This language was addressed to the church of consecration, oneness in Jackson County, Mo., November 1, 1831, not to the church of tithes and offerings [lesser] in Utah today. The people of the church of consecration, transgressed the law, changed the ordinances and broke the covenant for which the Lord God handed them over to the buffetings of Satan on the

22nd and 23rd of September, 1832, Doctrine and Covenants 84:1-5, 54-58. On the 23rd of April, 1834, the covenant of consecration was revoked by the Lord God” [see D&C 104:1-6, 52]. On the 21st, of April, 1834, Joseph Smith Jun., prophesied that, ‘If Zion was not redeemed, the whole church wherever found, would be destroyed as in Missouri.’ M.S. Vol. 15 p. 50, this is now being literally fulfilled.”

McDonald went on to say that the “organization was command to build a temple in Nauvoo . . . to his name for the Most High to dwell therein assigning for a a reason that, there is not a place found on earth, that He, the Most High may come and restore **that which was lost** unto you or that which was taken away even **the fulness of the priesthood** . . . If ye do not these things at the end of the time appointed, ye shall be rejected as a church with your dead saith the Lord your God’ [D&C 124:1-11, 25-36, 123-145]. ‘*Zion can only be built upon the principles of the law of the celestial kingdom of God, consecration, a perfect oneness in all things temporal and spiritual*’ (D&C 105:4-5).

McDonald claimed that “the sign that was to usher in the work of the Father was given to the American Indians [around 1887 visitations occurred inviting many to come to Walker Lake and meet Christ], while March, 1890, witnesses the organization of a church under the restored order, where twelve disciples were chosen and ordained [at Walker Lake], whose *first allegiance is given irrevocably to the Lord God*, whereas that of the Telestial Church is given to the government fostering it. As early as the 22nd of June, 1834, the promise of a great endowment was given before the redemption of Zion, which endowment consists in sealing [Mosiah 5:15] the children on earth to their celestial fathers in heaven, not through temple or tabernacle ordinances do they become fair as the sun, clear as the moon and terrible as an army with banners, *but the ministrations of the Holy Ghost*, [baptism of fire, and] **the second comforter as at Mt. Sinai**, 1491 B.C., Ex. 19:10-17 [JST Ex. 34:1-2]; at Mt. Horeb, 1451 B.C., Deut. 5:24-28; at Bountiful . . . 34 A.D. ; III Nephi 19:25-30, and Walker Lake, March, 1890, A.D. D&C 90:8-11, 105.” McDonald then provided seven signs, signaling **the end of Gentile reign** over the kingdom. He stated:

“The following seven signs were to precede the fulness of the Gentiles upon the land of America [our day]:

(1) *The words of the book presented to the learned* – Isa. 29:11 [the Anthon Transcript taken to New York by Martin Harris]

(2) *The Book of Mormon given to the Gentiles* with a dispensation of the [lesser] gospel of tithes and offerings with its apostles, inspirations of the Holy Ghost . . . the ministry of angels, and temple ordinances for the living and the dead . . .

(3) *The Bible and Book of Mormon were to become one in the hands of man.* – Ezek. 37:17 . . . Joseph Smith Jr., and his followers in 1830 in the State of New York

(4) *When the Bible and the Book of Mormon become one in the hands of the Messiah.* – Ezk. 37:19, III Nephi 21:1-7 . . .

(5) *The coming of the Messiah* . . . March 1890, the people of God, who were notified by the three Nephites, met at Walker Lake . . . where a dispensation of the Celestial kingdom of God, the gospel in a covenant of consecration, a perfect oneness in all things, temporal and spiritual, was given unto them. Twelve disciples were ordained, not by angels or men, but by the Messiah, in the presence of hundreds, representing scores of tribes or nations, who saw his face, heard and understood his voice as on the day of Pentecost. – Acts 2, also fulfilling [D&C] sec. 90:9-11. Ezek. 20:33-37

(6) (Handwritten note: “Gen. 15:17-19, Insp. Version.”) *The fulness of the Gentiles.* In 1492, the Lord God let His vineyard to the nations of the Gentiles, to punish His people [the Lamanite remnant] the Branch of Joseph for 400 years (Gen. 15:13), bringing the fulness of the Gentiles the end of their rule over the American Indians Oct. 1892, Rom. 11:25-26; Gen. 50:25 New Trans. Matt. 21:33-41. [As a later righteous branch of the house of Israel on this chosen, covenant land, the Lamanites will blossom as the rose (Isa. 35:1; D&C 49:24), while the

Gentiles become a fading flower (Isa. 28). The time of our Native American brothers and sisters is soon to come in (the last shall be first), the time when the Gentiles (mainly of Ephraim) have become fully ripe in pride and wickedness (the wicked husbandmen), see JST Matt. 21: 26-56.]

(7) *The Pruning of the Vineyard*. The husbandmen upon this land began the last pruning of the vineyard in 1891 [see Jacob 5:62 & 71 in the Book of Mormon]. Prominent among which stands our government in fulfilling [JST] Matt. 21:33-41, saying *let us kill the heirs* and hold the inheritance [this Promised land] as shown in the massacre of Wounded Knee; the butchery of Sitting Bull; the imprisonment of Short Bull and others [Porcupine]; the breaking up of reservations and the attempts to destroy the treaty stipulations above mentioned by forcing the mark of the Beast, citizenship and statehood, upon the American Indians which will ultimately terminate in a war of extermination. – Isa. 10:24-27. Dan. 2:34 . . . Isa. 14:21.”

McDonald then concluded the pamphlet stating, “According to the astronomical, prophetic and historical evidence found in the Bible, Book of Mormon and Doctrine and Covenants for the redemption of Zion and the restoration of Israel there are seven celestial keys of powers to be used which cannot be handled by apostles, prophets, or angels. They can only be handled by the Messiah and His Father:

(1) The key of power that separates the child of night [those in darkness], the Gentiles, the husbandmen that are to be destroyed, from the children of day, Israel, upon the land of Zion, America.

(2) The key of power that restores the heirs, the American Indians to their own lands consecrating to them the wealth of the Gentiles.

(3) The key of power that turns away ungodliness from Jacob (the American Indians) enabling them to build the temple on the spot pointed out by the finger of God. (Independence, Jackson County, Mo.), on which the true sign of Israel is to rest, the glory of the living God of the Hebrews, the cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night . . .

(4) The key of power that will redeem Zion the Western Continent and restore it to its original dimensions.

(5) The key of power to gather three billions of Israel to the land of America and to sanctify, purify, glorify and redeem them.

(6) The key of power to build the Celestial city, the New Jerusalem.

(7) The key of power to establish the kingdom of God, a perfect theocracy on this land, to begin the Sabbath of rest . . .