

# Navajo Voices and Christian Reformed Missions

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In December 1934, *The Banner* published “A Voice from an Indian,” by “J.C. Morgan, Navaho Indian.” Reverend L.P. Brink, a missionary, introduced Morgan and his article in a short piece entitled, “J.C. Morgan Writes About the Wheeler-Howard Bill.”

The Brink and Morgan articles are interesting in several ways. First, an article by a Native American was

Affairs, a prominent official in Franklin D. Roosevelt’s first “New Deal” administration.<sup>1</sup>

The Wheeler-Howard Act also was known as the “Indian Reorganization Act.” The act and Collier’s policies more generally sometimes are called the “Indian New Deal.” They transformed a century of policies designed to force Native Americans to give up their cultures, “civilize” and “Christianize,” and thus assimilate to American ways (e.g., through boarding schools for children). This re-education goal was summarized bluntly by Captain Richard Pratt in 1892. He ran the Carlisle school in Pennsylvania, the most influential boarding school for Native children in the nation. “[All] the Indian there is in the race should be dead,” Pratt said. “Kill the Indian in him, and save the man.”<sup>2</sup>

Morgan’s article defended the civilizing and Christianizing program and criticized Collier and the “Indian New Deal” for being out of touch with “Indian” needs. Brink’s anger at Collier and “the whole bunch of radicals that [were] in cahoots with him” was evident.

More interesting, perhaps, is how Brink’s introduction and Morgan’s article supported each other, reinforcing the hierarchical sensibility that shaped missions in this era. Brink’s white Christian voice gave CRC approval and authority to a Native American voice. Morgan’s voice provided authenticity for the CRC’s criticism of Collier, his policies, and their threat to the prevailing mission model. “I am a Navaho Indian and



J.C. Morgan with his family, ca. 1925-1930. Image courtesy of Heritage Hall

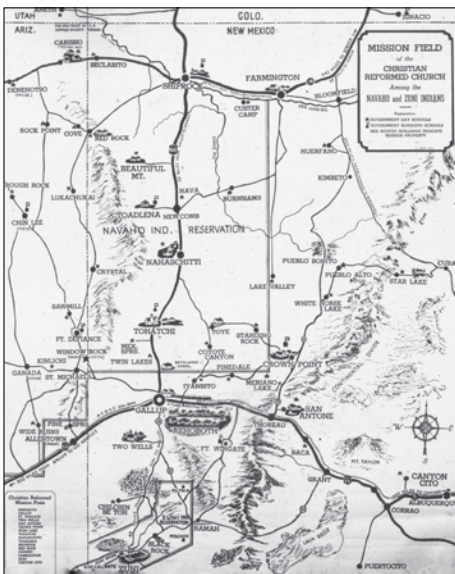
a rarity in *The Banner*, despite the Christian Reformed Church’s four decades of missions in Navajo communities. Usually, missionaries wrote about and spoke for “their” Indians. Second, Brink’s introduction of Morgan got the main headline, not Morgan’s article. Third, with Brink and Morgan’s articles, the CRC and *Banner* were criticizing recent federal legislation and John Collier, Commissioner for the Bureau of Indian

should know the inside life of my people,” Morgan concluded. “You have heard the voice of an Indian concerning his people.”<sup>3</sup>

The relationship between Brink and Morgan as missionary and assistant and their *Banner* articles suggest how church leaders and government officials sometimes listened to, sometimes used, and often did not listen to Native voices. This essay explores these issues through the lives of two Navajo men who worked with L.P. Brink and other CRC missionaries: J.C. Morgan and Edward Becenti.

### Contexts

The context for this story is the history of conquest, removal to reservations, and efforts to assimilate Native peoples. The U.S. Army established forts in Navajo territory after defeating Mexico in war in 1846 and seizing northern Mexico as U.S. territory. New Mexicans and Navajos raided each other occasionally, taking livestock. New Mexicans also sometimes took Navajo women and children



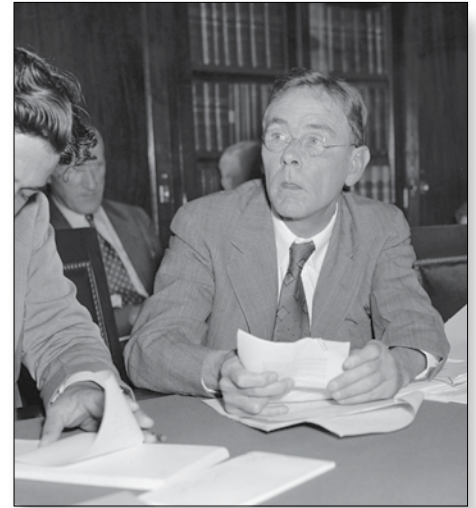
Map of the CRC “Mission Field” to Navajo and Zuni peoples in New Mexico and Arizona. The map is from a glass slide, presumably used by missionaries when they visited churches in the Midwest to encourage support for the mission work. Image courtesy of Heritage Hall.

as captives. In the early 1860s, New Mexico’s militia and U.S. Army forces attacked Navajo communities, killing and destroying crops and homes. In 1864, the U.S. Army forced 10,000 Navajo (and Apache) people on the “Long Walk,” a 300 mile trek to Bosque Redondo, a reservation. There, disease outbreaks and inadequate water, wood, provisions and livestock led to the deaths of 2400 people. In 1868, the Army escorted the survivors back to their home territories, creating reservations there.

During the “Indian Wars” in the West (1860s-1880s), the Bureau of Indian Affairs established policies to assimilate conquered Native Americans. These included schools for children (often forcibly separating children from families and communities, sending them to boarding schools) and banning Native religious practices. The government also bullied tribal governments into accepting programs where reservation lands were broken up into individual holdings and allotted to individual Native men, women, and children. The rest of the land then was opened to white settlement. In the allotment process (1880s-1930s), the government took 90 million acres from Native American communities (two-thirds of Native land held by treaty in the early 1880s).<sup>4</sup>

Churches played a crucial role in the assimilation process, promoting Christianity and civilization. Native American leaders recognized the need for change. But they wanted a say in deciding what education and economic development programs would look like. Instead, the U.S. government forced changes on reservation communities and families. Churches established missions, did evangelism, ran boarding schools for Native children, and promoted modernization and assimilation.

The CRC started its mission work



U.S. Indian Commissioner John Collier appearing before the Senate Indian Affairs Committee in June 1940, testifying about opposition by some Indian nations about the Indian Reorganization Act. Courtesy of the Library of Congress. LOC 2016877727.

with the Navajo in 1896. By the 1930s, it had mission churches in New Mexico and Arizona in locations such as Zuni (1897), Tohatchi (1898), Rehoboth (1899), Crownpoint (1912), Toadlena (1915), Farmington (1925), Naschitti (1926), Gallup (1928), Fort Wingate (1930), Shiprock (1934), Teec Nos Pos (1934), and Red Valley (1934). Rehoboth also had a school and hospital and Zuni a school.<sup>5</sup>

Histories of missions in Native American communities often have put the missionaries and the institutions they build at the center of the story. This approach reflected churches telling their histories, with missionaries often doing the writing, just as histories of the United States historically tended to focus on white Americans and U.S. institutions. This approach also reflects the fact that most of the documents we have are from churches and their publications. Histories of CRC missions are not unusual in this regard. In the material generated by the church and its missionaries, however, we can occasionally hear Native American

voices and catch glimpses of Navajo perspectives.<sup>6</sup>

### J.C. Morgan

Jacob Casimera Morgan was born into the Salt Clan near Crownpoint, New Mexico in 1879 and raised by the last Navajo generation that had known life before conquest and captivity. His first sustained contact with white Americans came in 1889 when his family sent him to a government-run Navajo residential school at Fort Defiance in Arizona. A year later, at a school in Grand Junction, Colorado, Morgan converted to Christianity. In 1898, he went to the Hampton Institute in Virginia to learn carpentry and business.<sup>7</sup>

These experiences led Morgan to become an advocate for assimilation. He wore a suit and tie in public, as an adult, and carried a briefcase. In 1910, he married Zahrina Tso, a Navajo woman who like him was school educated. They had three sons, Irwin, William, and Jacob Casimera, Jr. (Buddy).

Morgan's education and work put him in the borderland between Navajo and white cultures. His many jobs included being a clerk and interpreter for the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and operating a trading post. In 1910, he began to assist the CRC missionary Reverend Brink, helping him with Bible translation. In 1914, Morgan became a shop teacher and the band director at boarding school in Crownpoint, New Mexico. He had learned to play coronet at Hampton. He joined the staff at Boarding School in Shiprock in the 1920s.

These experiences did not lead Morgan away from his Navajo community, however. In 1923 he won a seat on the Navajo Council. He and some other Navajo boarding school graduates felt that they were being excluded from BIA jobs by older Navajo leaders such as Chee Dodge.

Morgan criticized Dodge for his Roman Catholic faith and alleged immorality.

Sometimes conflict like that between Morgan and Dodge is categorized in terms of “progressive” vs. “traditional” Native Americans. These labels are not entirely helpful, however. Elements of each category could be found in younger men like Morgan and older ones like Dodge. Both generations were finding their way among Navajo traditions and modern American ways.

Morgan also continued his work with the CRC. In 1925 he left his BIA job and moved to Farmington to assist Brink. He taught in the CRC school, continued translation work, and served as a “Native Evangelist.” His name appeared in CRC publications in stories by missionaries like Brink describing their mission work. He visited churches “back East” to promote the mission work. And he occasionally wrote in CRC periodicals, including *The Banner*.<sup>8</sup>

As his *Banner* article showed, Morgan sometimes criticized traditional Navajo beliefs and practices, especially those that conflicted with Christianity—notably Navajo religious ceremonies and medicine men. Yet, Morgan also explored parallels between Hebrew concepts of story and family and Navajo traditions in his sermons. Brink's fluency in Navajo likely meant that he understood what Morgan was doing, unlike most of the other CRC missionaries, who were less fluent.<sup>9</sup> Brink trusted Morgan as a translator, not just in the linguistic

sense but in a broader cultural and theological one.

Morgan's work with Brink provides the context for his opposition to “Indian New Deal” and John Collier. Collier ended federal policies that repressed Native traditions and promoted assimilation because he believed that Native peoples should have religious and cultural freedom. He also believed that their traditions should be reinvigorated, that American society was unhealthy, and that white Americans could learn from Native peoples. His “Indian Reorganization Act” also promoted a new



Missionary with Henry Beets, CRC director of missions from the 1910s to 1930s, during a visit to the mission field in New Mexico and Arizona.

form of “tribal organization” that Collier claimed would enable Native self-government and lead to more efficient relations with the BIA.

In 1934, Morgan and other Native leaders hostile to Collier's program started the American Indian Federation. Morgan was its first national vice chairman.<sup>10</sup> In his article in *The Banner* in 1934, “A Voice from an Indian,” he explained his views in detail. While the federal government said that it wanted to encourage “the American Indian” to “live his own life in his own way,” Morgan said reorganization would leave Indians worse off, as the new policies ignored local circumstances and were “supposed to apply to every tribe alike.”

Morgan described the poverty of

many Navajo homes and claimed that Collier's policies would keep them this way. He also criticized "medicine men" and the "paganistic practices" that Collier wanted to preserve, noting his refusal to teach his own children some Navajo traditions. Morgan praised efforts to promote civilization and Christianity so that Native people could better support themselves. "To deny education to an Indian," he insisted, "is to deny him his right to citizenship of his own country."

In some ways, Morgan shared the perception of white Americans, including reformers who styled themselves "friends of the Indian," that Native Americans, or at least their ways, were fated to disappear.<sup>11</sup> Photographs and paintings often depicted this fate by showing Native peoples at sunset, their day presumably over. Morgan argued that Collier's policies, meant to reinvigorate traditional ways, would "hold back" Indians and lead to such decline. "The future of the Indian under this idea," he concluded, "is a sunset, it is gloomy and—come to your own conclusion on this question."<sup>12</sup>

And yet, in 1935, seemingly in contradiction to his embrace of modernization, Morgan helped convince the Navajo to reject the Indian Reorganization Act's proposal to replace the traditional Navajo council with a more American-style representative structure. Political allies such as Senator Dennis Chavez, Protestant missionaries, former boarding school students, and some traditional tribal leaders supported Morgan. Indeed, some Native critics accused Collier of subverting American values. Many Native Americans disagreed with Morgan, wanting to preserve or adapt elements of their traditional cultures. But like Morgan, they often opposed the reorganization of "tribal" government structures. In common, Navajo "progressives" and "conservatives"

opposed government officials imposing things on them, particularly one-size fits all policies. In his resistance to listening to Native Americans on matters like this, Collier was not so different from BIA officials in the past.<sup>13</sup>

In 1937, the relationship between Morgan and the CRC turned sour. L.P. Brink, the missionary with whom Morgan long had worked, had died in March 1936. While convalescing in Grand Rapids, in February 1936, he wrote *The Banner* about the work in New Mexico. "We rejoice," Brink said, "that J.C. Morgan is steadily carrying on the work in Farmington which includes the school work at Ignacio and at Burnham, putting about 250 people under his care and much evangelistic opportunity."



An image scanned from a glass slide (1910s?) depicted Native Americans at the end of a day, silhouetted in the setting sun, a classic "vanishing Indian" image. Courtesy of Heritage Hall.

Morgan expected to become the new missionary after Brink's death, as he had long been the assistant and had taken over much of the work during Brink's illness. But the CRC sent another Calvin Seminary educated, Dutch American missionary to Farmington instead. Morgan was angry at having been passed over, despite his extensive experience, and he felt slighted because the new missionary treated him as a subordinate not a partner.

The conflict between Morgan and

the new missionary in Farmington led the CRC mission board to decide that Morgan had to resign from his mission work or be transferred to another station. Morgan resigned and left the CRC to form his own congregation in Shiprock, west of Farmington. A significant portion of the Navajo population of the Farmington congregation left with him.

What should we make of this separation? Difficult personalities doubtless were part of the conflicts between Morgan and CRC missionaries, BIA officials, and "Indian New Deal" policies. The larger context, however, was the failure of white Americans—government officials and missionaries—to truly listen to and consult with the Navajo and Native communities generally.

Collier's New Deal tried to impose a new system of tribal organization in one-size-fits-all fashion. Worse, Collier and the BIA forced the Navajo to cull their herds of sheep and goats. They did not consult with Navajo women, who by tradition controlled the herds. They did not listen to Navajo leaders who appealed to long experience on the land and argued that overgrazing was not the problem, but drought. And they did not trust that the Navajo had experience in riding out droughts.

The CRC, similarly, did not adequately listen to or give agency to the Navajo. It resisted "indigenization" (encouraging Native leadership of mission churches and schools). This was true not just for the Navajo missions, but in Africa and Asia.

The CRC board of missions had not even proposed Morgan as a possible successor to Brink, despite warnings from a veteran missionary that not doing so would lead to trouble. The directly stated issue was the necessity of being educated in a Reformed seminary and ordained. But the CRC did under special circum-

stances occasionally ordain Dutch American men without seminary education for CRC congregations. More deeply, the issue was about race, in not trusting Native peoples deemed primitive and uncivilized.

When missionaries encouraged him to rejoin the CRC and tried to make peace between CRC mission efforts and Morgan's independent church, a frustrated Morgan pushed back, saying that it "sounds very much like no one is saved from wrath to come unless he belongs to your church." Morgan had experienced his relationship with Brink as one of trusted partners. This was not the case with the board of missions and Brink's successor, who viewed Morgan as a subordinate, not recognizing his stature in his community. There was not much chance of "an Indian ... gaining justice," Morgan observed about the CRC's decision. A "white jury will always decide in favor of the white."<sup>14</sup> From Morgan's perspective, neither the mission board and the CRC nor Collier and the BIA trusted the Navajo with self-determination, unless it was on their terms.

In 1938 the Navajo chose Morgan as chairman of the Navajo council. He now spoke for his people. Practical necessity led him and the BIA to cooperate on a variety of issues, even livestock reductions and BIA-sponsored commercial enterprises. This cooperation undermined Morgan's standing among many Navajo. He lost his reelection effort in 1942 and Chee Dodge succeeded him.

During World War II, Morgan supported the war effort and encouraged Navajo men to register for the draft. Tragically, his son Buddy was captured in the Philippines and died in a Japanese POW camp.

Morgan retired from politics in 1942 and returned to religious work. Floris Vander Stoep, a new CRC missionary, tried to reconcile Morgan

and the denomination. The mission board seemed willing to recognize Morgan as a "native missionary" with his own congregation, but ultimately rejected the idea. Morgan continued his evangelistic work with his own people and established missions among the Apache and in other Native communities in the region.

The Evangelistic Alliance of Wheaton, Illinois, ordained Morgan in 1943, and friends and the Methodist mission in Farmington celebrated the occasion with him. When Morgan died in May 1950, the community laid his body to rest in the Methodist cemetery in Farmington.

### Edward Becenti

Edward Becenti (1882-1929) was a Navajo who converted to Christianity and worked with the Christian Reformed Church (CRC) as a missionary. We don't have many of his own words on record. But missionaries who worked with Becenti testified that his was a fluent, compelling voice.<sup>15</sup>

Becenti first encountered missionaries from the CRC in his teens, in the mid-1890s. He



Navajo shepherd with sheep. 1910s? Image scanned from glass slide. Courtesy of Heritage Hall.

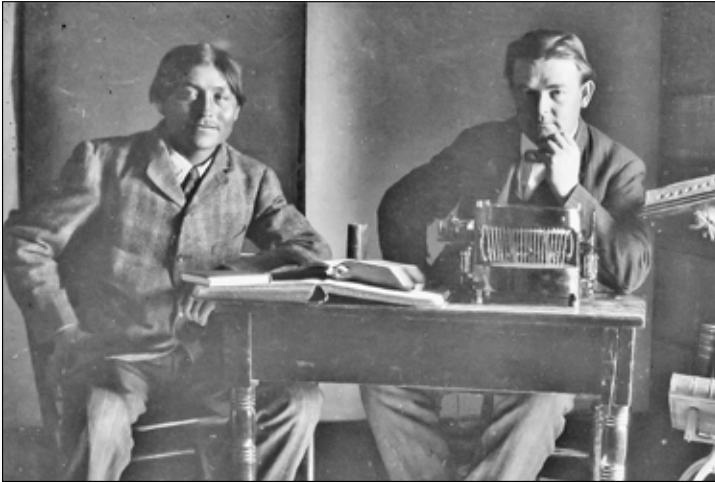
was a student at the boarding school for Navajo student at Fort Defiance when Reverend Herman Fryling and Andrew Vander Wagen started a CRC mission there. With some of the other students, Becenti attended a Bible study that the two missionaries had organized. Vander Wagen soon moved on to a mission among the Zuni.

Vander Wagen and Becenti met again in 1902 at a trading post northeast of Gallup, NM. Vander Wagen was looking for a new mission site. He noticed a young man watching him. A Navajo woman pointed out the young man, Becenti, as someone



Edward Becenti in his teens with other members of Andrew Vander Wagen's Bible class in Fort Defiance in 1897. Becenti is on the left in the first row of students. The image was used at the time of Becenti's death in 1930 in *The Christian Indian*, a Christian Reformed mission publication. Image courtesy of Heritage Hall.

who spoke English. Becenti asked if the missionary remembered him. It took Vander Wagen some time, as he recalled the names of the students in the Bible class and tried to connect the boys that he remembered to the young man in front of him. He eventually recognized Becenti and confirmed the young man's memory of him. In Vander Wagen's telling,



Edward Becenti and L.P. Brink studying together. 1910s? The image is a scan of glass slide. Courtesy of Heritage Hall.

Becenti exclaimed that Vander Wagen and Fryling “were the best friends I have had in the world!”<sup>16</sup>

Excited by the unexpected encounter, Vander Wagen asked if he could give a brief gospel message. Becenti explained the request to the Navajo at the post and got their permission. Then he translated Vander Wagen's brief message. Vander Wagen hired Becenti on the spot and Becenti worked at the mission in Zuni, Arizona, for a time. It is hard to know what Becenti's goals were in this moment. He had not yet declared himself Christian. Perhaps he simply judged that there was opportunity in renewing his connection to the missionaries.

In 1904, Leonard Brink, then a missionary in Rehoboth, NM, hired Becenti to haul lumber for the mission. Brink also performed a Christian marriage for Becenti and his wife at Becenti's request.

Soon Becenti was teaching the Navajo language to the eager Brink, six to eight hours a day, painstakingly helping him with pronunciation. Brink credited Becenti for his knowledge of Navajo. Becenti also helped Brink translate the Bible, catechisms, and other missionary material into Navajo. In the process, he became a Christian. He asked Brink to baptize

him in 1909, and his children and wife Johanna eventually were baptized too. She did not speak English and was the first member of the local church who had not attended a boarding school for Native American children.

Becenti became a deacon

in the local CRC congregation, the first Navajo man chosen for such ordination. “His opinion is especially valuable as understanding both Navajo and English,” Brink reported. “If he is a prophecy of what Navajo Christians are going to be, we may take courage. At present I am giving him special training in Biblical knowledge, and he shows wonderful interest and zeal.”<sup>17</sup>

Following his own inclination, and with Brink's encouragement, in the 1910s and 1920s Becenti served as a missionary in a variety of ways. “I told him that my intention was to send him out off and on to hold meetings with his scattered people,” Brink remembered; “he was glad, and said: ‘I wish I could spend all my time that way.’”<sup>18</sup>

Becenti was not just a translator. Like Morgan, he helped to interpret the gospel message culturally in ways

that made sense to his Navajo people. In the process, he became an effective preacher. Descriptions of camp meetings list Becenti and Morgan as speakers, along with the Dutch Reformed missionaries. Jacob Kamps, a CRC missionary, remembered Becenti this way.

Mr. Becenti was an interpreter, not merely a translator. He sought to convey the spirit of a message as well as the thought and often he said more than he was asked to. Once we were giving a talk on the ten commandments. I had said they served as a mirror to show us our faults and our sins. As he interpreted this part of my message the people began to laugh. I wondered why and felt a little bit uneasy. They quieted down very soon but the next day I asked him what he had said to make the people laugh. “Well,” he said, “just what you told me; only I added that often we look at each other instead of God's law. If we do, we will probably be just like two men who were laughing at each other. The one said: ‘What are you laughing at me for?’ The other replied, ‘Why your face is all black. But what are you laughing at me for?’ ‘Why?’ he said, ‘your face is black too.’ They all laughed but he soon stopped them by saying in a very convincing way that this was no laughing matter.”<sup>19</sup>

Kamps, who worked at Rehoboth from 1927 to 1951, knew the mature Becenti. He viewed Becenti as genuinely Christian, authentically Navajo, and highly effective in his work. In formal terms, Kamps recalled, Becenti “was a man of limited training.” But he was gifted intellectually and “a convincing and persuasive speaker.” Becenti also spoke at CRC churches in the Midwest about the work in New Mexico.

### Listening for Navajo Voices

How do we recover the voices and experiences of people like Edward Becenti, where we know something of



Edward Becenti (front left) and Jacob Kamps (front right) in a Navajo camp, 1920s. Image courtesy of Heritage Hall.

them but mostly through the memories and reports of others? For J.C. Morgan, who was formally educated and became a prominent political figure, we have a variety of material in his own words—letters, articles in magazines like *The Banner*—and church, political, and government records. We hear Becenti’s voice indirectly—quoted, summarized, or remembered by missionaries. Henry Ippel, a historian at Calvin College (1950s-1980s), spent time at the Rehoboth school in retirement and researched the history of CRC missions among the Navajo. He met some of Becenti’s descendants. So, we know something of Becenti’s family legacy.

Becenti died suddenly of appendicitis in his late 40s, in October 1929. The funeral was in Rehoboth, and they laid him to rest there. Stories in 1929 and 1930 recounted Becenti’s work and poured out grief at a life cut short. They can be found in *The Banner* and mission magazines such as *The Christian Indian*.

Morgan spoke at Becenti’s funeral. “He was always ready to go,” Morgan said. “Nothing stayed him. Indeed, he has kept the faith.” Both men worked as missionaries for the CRC, translating, interpreting, and preaching. Both were effective because they remained vitally connected to their indigenous

culture and community.<sup>20</sup> We don’t know what Becenti would have thought of Morgan leaving the CRC in 1937 over frustration at not being recognized as a missionary with the same status as semi-inary-educated, ordained, white clergy. Becenti would have recognized that the CRC did not see Navajo evangelists like him and Morgan as equal in status with CRC clergy. And he would have recognized how this CRC viewpoint in part echoed the racial assumptions that had shaped both the conquest of Native American nations and assimilation policies. We have no record of any involvement by Becenti in politics or of his views of assimilation policies and Navajo relations with the federal government. So, we are left to wonder.

Reading what the missionaries said directly, and reading between the lines, Becenti seems to have chosen to engage with the missionaries, Christianity, and the wider American culture, rather than avoid them. He seems to have found his own way of keeping faith with both his Navajo traditions and the

Christian ways that he made his own. And he made a profound impression on the people he worked with.

### Conclusions

Perhaps most importantly, Becenti’s and Morgan’s stories are a reminder that the history of Christianity among the Navajo is its own story, distinct from the stories of Christian Reformed missionaries. Both sets of stories are important to tell. And they are entangled stories. But they’re not the same story.

The lives of Becenti and Morgan also remind us that the CRC’s story has long been a diverse one. The CRC’s story often is told as one of origins in separation from the Dutch national church and from the



Edward Becenti and his family, on the cover of *The Banner* in January 1911. Image courtesy of Heritage Hall, used with the permission of *The Banner*.

Reformed Church in America, and immigration from the Netherlands to the United States and later Canada. But the CRC is more diverse than this Dutch-dominated story allows.

Already by the 1890s and early 1900s, the CRC’s story began to

include Native Americans, with missions in Navajo and Zuni communities in the American Southwest and congregations dating to the early 1900s. Today, some 170 Christian Reformed congregations use a language

other than English (or Dutch). There are predominantly Korean, African-American, Hispanic, Navajo, Chinese, and Vietnamese congregations, for example. The voices of individuals like Becenti and Morgan, and the

stories of their communities, are as essential to understanding Christian Reformed history, as the founding and evolution of the first Dutch Reformed immigrant colonies in the Midwest. ☁

## Endnotes

1. L.P. Brink, "J.C. Morgan Writes About the Wheeler-Howard Bill," *The Banner*, 21 December 1934, 1116. Morgan's part, "A Voice from an Indian," was on 1116-1117. On Navajo history, see Peter Iverson, *Diné: A History of the Navajos* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2002). "Diné" is the Navajo name for their people. "Navaho" is an older spelling; I use it only in quotations.

2. See David Wallace Adams, *Education for Extinction: American Indians and the Boarding School Experience, 1875-1928* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2020). For comparisons to Canada, see Andrew Woolford, *This Benevolent Experiment: Indigenous Boarding Schools, Genocide, and Redress in Canada and the United States* (Norman: University of Nebraska Press, 2018). Richard H. Pratt, "The Advantages of Mingling Indians with Whites," *Americanizing the American Indians: Writings by the "Friends of the Indian" 1880-1900* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1973), 261.

3. All Morgan quotes from "A Voice from an Indian," 1116-1117.

4. See Iverson, *Diné*, chapter 2, on conquest and the Long Walk; chapters 3-5 on the assimilation era.

5. On CRC missions, see Scott Hoezee and Christopher Meehan, *Flourishing in the Land: A Hundred-Year History of Christian Reformed Missions in North America* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1996), chapter 1.

6. For Native American voices, see Jacqueline Emery, ed., *Recovering Native American Writings in the Board School*

*Press* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2017). It has material from students, including well-known graduates such as Gertrude Bonnin (Zitkala-Ša), Charles Eastman, and Luther Standing Bear. Also see Frederick Hoxie, ed., *Talking Back to Civilization: Indian Voices from the Progressive Era* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2001), which has material from activists, 1890s-1920s.

7. My summary of Morgan's life depends on Bruce James Gjeltema, *Jacob Casimera Morgan and the Development of Navajo Nationalism* (PhD Dissertation, University of New Mexico, 2004), and Donald Lee Parman, "J.C. Morgan: Apostle of Assimilation," *Prologue: The Journal of the National Archives* (Summer 1972), 83-98.

8. See "Newsletter by J. C. Morgan, Native Evangelist to the Navajoes," *The Banner*, 19 February 1926, 105.

9. See Gjeltema, *Jacob Casimera Morgan*, 229-230.

10. See Laurence Hauptman, "The American Indian Federation and the Indian New Deal: A Reinterpretation," *Pacific Historical Review* 52:4 (November 1983), 378-402. See also, Brian W. Dippie, *The Vanishing American: White Attitudes and U.S. Indian Policy*, Revised Edition (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1991).

11. See William T. Hagan, *Theodore Roosevelt and Six Friends of the Indian* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1997).

12. All Morgan quotes in this section are from "A Voice from an Indian," 1116-1117.

13. See Donald Lee Parman, *The*

*Navajos and the New Deal* (Yale University Press, 1976) and "J.C. Morgan: Apostle of Assimilation." Parman interviewed former CRC missionaries. Heritage Hall has an interview in the Jacob H. Bosscher (1909-1966) collection (COLL 312, box 2, folder 6).

14. Letter from Morgan to J.C. DeKorne, 9 December 1939. Heritage Hall, Calvin University, CRC Record Group, box 69, folder 12; also quoted in Gjeltema, *Jacob Casimera Morgan*, 233. Gjeltema has a detailed account of the controversy.

15. My account of Becenti draws on material about him during his life and at his death and a brief account by Henry Ippel, "Edward Becenti: God's Messenger to His People," *Rehoboth Newsletter* (Winter 2004), in Heritage Hall's collection of material from Ippel (Collection 519, box 4, folder 10); there also is material collected by Ippel on Becenti and his family in box 6, folder 3.

16. Ippel, "Edward Becenti: God's Messenger to His People."

17. L.P. Brink, Tohatchi, NM, to Henry Beets, Secretary of Board of Christian Reformed Missions, 23 January 1910. Heritage Hall, CRC Record Group, box 224, folder 5.

18. L.P. Brink, "Becenti, Our Helper, A Sketch of His Life," *The Banner*, 5 January 1911, 12.

19. Jacob R. Kamps, "Edward Becenti---? 1929," *The Banner*, 27 December 1929, 993.

20. Ippel, "Edward Becenti: God's Messenger to His People."