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The Destructive Results of the Indian Child Welfare Act

by Roland Morris

Roland Morris, Sr. is a member of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe, Leech Lake, and has been actively opposed to much of federal Indian policy for the last ten years. Formerly a board member with the Citizen's Equal Rights Alliance, he is now the Secretary for the Citizen's Equal Rights Foundation and an Advisory Board member for the Christian Alliance for Indian Child Welfare. In 1996, Roland testified at an Oversight Hearing before the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs concerning the American Indian Equal Justice Act, and through the years, has lobbied and written openly in opposition to the Indian Child Welfare Act on the grounds that it was not created for, nor been operated for, the welfare of children, but instead, for the welfare of tribal government.

Roland and his wife, Lisa, currently have five birth children in their home as well as legal custody of four of his grandchildren. For them, the Indian Child Welfare Act is a personal affront and threat to their parental and custodial rights and responsibilities.

On March 2, 2004, two eleven-year-old boys were found dead in a frozen field just outside the reservation housing development where they lived. According to a Missoulian reporter, they both died of alcohol poisoning and had been dead for three days. The last time they were seen, they were drinking hard liquor with other juveniles. According to the county sheriff, no one, not parents or care givers, had reported them missing during those three days.

According to the National Indian Child Welfare Association (NICWA), "The Indian Child Welfare Act (Public Law 95-608), passed by the United States Congress in 1978, was a significant effort to curtail the massive removal of Indian children from their homes and cultures by public welfare agencies. The Act imposes certain procedural and substantive standards upon state courts and state child welfare agencies before an Indian child can be removed from his/her home and culture."

Supposedly, this was done with the welfare of the child in mind.

It is not usual for eleven-year-olds to die this way in reservation communities. However, it's not unusual for children to drink, smoke, and run around unrestricted. Although the tribe asserted the following day that the above parents had indeed reported the boys missing, the county sheriff knew nothing of it and some believe the tribal government created the reports in order to

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prevent negative information about Indian Country from being publicized. In fact, that same day, the county paper carried a report on another small community on the same reservation where residents of the community were complaining that parents are not taking responsibility for their children. Children, according to the report, are roaming the streets at night, drinking and vandalizing. When children are arrested for curfew, the tribal court does little to deter the behavior.

> ***• • • Federal statistics show that for years, the 1.5 million people who live on or near reservations have seen children die at about twice the national rate.***

Not all Indian communities have this problem, but many do. Therefore, it is necessary to publicize these problems for the sake of the children. It is also a necessary discussion if one is to explain why many parents and caregivers are reluctant to raise their children on the reservation or have tribal court interfere in their families, and why the Indian Child Welfare Act is doing more harm than good.

> ***• • • Many children, due to ICWA, are being kept within unhealthy family systems.***

How does the Indian Child Welfare Act have anything to do with the deaths of two little boys in March? While not all reservations or tribal families are the same, on many reservations, where many families are interrelated and have together become accustomed to a dysfunctional lifestyle, there are sometimes too few who have been able to rise above the despair. Of those who have, many had to move away from friends and family in order to gain that mental health. But can those few take the full burden of all those children that need homes? Of course not. That is why many children, due to ICWA, are being kept within unhealthy family systems.

According to one social service source quoted in the December 10, 1999 edition of the Native American Press, "Some of the mothers are losing their children first became pregnant when they were only 12 years old. They often have more children with other men. These situations often lead to their older children being abused by the step-father, or the parents live-in relatives." The source also claimed that some Indian programs in Minneapolis actually try to help parents avoid county drug screenings.

> ***"What you have are developing countries right in the heart of the United States. Each has a history of neglect and a legacy of trauma that explains these disparities. We need this history not as excuses for the disparities but as a need to intervene."***
>
> *– Jon Perez,*
> *Director of Behavioral Health at the Federal Indian Health Service*

FACTS

The last census tells us there are 4,119,301 American Indians and Alaska Natives in the United States and 562 federally funded tribes. Approximately 75% live outside the reservation, with about 55% now residing in metropolitan areas. Only about 25% live on reservations. If the reservation system is working, how come so many have left?

In addition, as much as 45% of reservation residents are non-Indian. In fact, on 30% of the reservations, the number of non-members is equal to or greater than the number of tribal members.

According to the Dec. 7th edition of the Oregonian, federal statistics show that for years, the 1.5 million people who live on or near reservations have seen children die at about twice the national rate. Quoted in the article is Jon Perez, Director of Behavioral Health at the Federal Indian Health Service, who said, "What you have are developing countries right in the heart of the United States. Each has a history of neglect and a legacy of trauma that explains these disparities. We need this history not as excuses for the disparities but as a need to intervene."

The Minneapolis Star and Tribune, on April 25, 2004, offered the following statistics for one Reservation:

- Cass County, where most of the reservation's people live, ranked last among 77 Minnesota counties in a 1999 government study that measured the health and safety of children.
- In 2002, Cass County had the state's highest percentage of children living in foster homes and other county-supervised care. Most of them were Indians from the reservation,

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taken away from their parents, or given up by them, because of abuse, neglect or delinquency.

- A statewide study of ninth-graders in the mid-1990s found that Cass County had the highest rate of heavy drug and alcohol use and the highest rate of alcohol abuse within their families. The county also ranked first in numbers of people admitted to detoxification centers.
- Death comes earlier here. In Minnesota, Indians' average life expectancy is about eight years less than for the population as a whole.

The Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978 hurts children, parents, and caregivers. In addition to preventing children from getting the protection they need when they need it:

- Some Tribal governments have claimed jurisdiction over children that have little tribal heritage and are not enrollable according to their constitutions.
- Some Tribal governments have interfered in custody battles between parents, overturned county decisions in favor of the tribally enrolled parent and ignored child abuse, neglect and drug abuse in those decisions.
- Many county courts and social services back away when ICWA is involved because they can not afford to fight back.
- Several State Governments have given "Full Faith and Credit" to tribal courts and will not review or overturn tribal court custody decisions.

This law requires Federal, State, and Tribal authorities to favor a child's tribal heritage over their Irish, Afro-American, Scottish, Latino, or Jewish heritage, or any other heritage the child has, no matter the percentages.

ICWA is a money-driven program for the tribes from three perspectives:

1) federal funds generated by tribal membership;

2) federal income to fund program jobs; and

3) federal funds to administer courts adjudicating ICWA cases. First, each tribal member generates $5,000 (1992) for the tribal administration from the thirteen federal agencies funding Indian programs.
The more members, the more federal funds. With no blood quantum (required), (some tribes allow) a person with as little as 1/2000th can be enrolled as an Indian. If an Indian child is adopted by non-Indians, the tribe loses $5,000 a year for the life span of the child.

According to Ms. Scott Kayla Morrison, an attorney from Wilburton, Oklahoma and a member of the Mississippi Choctaw Tribe, (deceased) "ICWA is a money-driven program for the tribes from three perspectives:

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"Second, federal dollars fund the ICWA program for the tribe. This generates jobs for tribal administration directly through program funds and indirectly through administrative costs. Of every federal dollar allocated by Congress, 89 cents goes to administer the Bureau of Indian Affairs. The remaining 11 cents goes to tribal administration. The Choctaw administration is allowed to take 46%, almost half or 5.5 cents, for administrative indirect costs. The remaining 5.5 cents are used to administer programs like ICWA. The more membership to serve, the more money the tribe requests that generates more jobs and more indirect costs. Allowing adoption outside the tribe cuts into the pocketbook of tribal administration.

"Third, one purpose of a tribal court or a Code of Federal Register (CFR) Court is to adjudicate ICWA cases. The amount of federal funds allocated to the court is based on the number of cases served by the

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ICWA program. The court program funds generate indirect costs and jobs."

An aide to Senator Baucus stated that parents and caregivers weren't invited to Senate ICWA Hearings in 1996 because the Senators choose who they want to hear, and they already have a full panel. That panel consisted of tribal leaders, adoption agencies, social workers, and lawyers representing the tribal governments. There was no one there to speak for the average parent and caregiver. The aide went on to say that unless there were tons of people wanting ICWA changed, they had no interest in hearing what we had to say.

> ***"I am deeply concerned with the chilling effect the continued misapplication of this act could have upon the successful and timely adoption of children in need of homes and loving families."***
>
> *– Representative Deborah Pryce*

Two of Senator Burns aides stated in meetings a year apart that Senator Burns will not change any Indian law unless all 500+ tribes agree to it.

Family Testimonies:

Ten years ago, a six-year-old boy and his five-year-old sister searched for breakfast while the adults in the house slept off the previous night's party. The boy was used to having to care for his four younger siblings. Many times it had been his job to keep them all in the bedroom while adults were enjoying themselves in other areas. During those frequent parties, according to the boy, they weren't allowed out of the room except to go to the bathroom. While in the care of their parents, the children never stayed in one home for very long. Whenever the parents failed to pay rent and were evicted, they stayed with friends or relatives, leaving most of their belongings, including toys, behind. Although he was enrolled in the first grade and his sister was enrolled in kindergarten, they rarely made it to school, their hair was infested with lice, and their parents sold the baby's formula to support their drug habit.

> ***• • • Because they were of Indian heritage, they were not allowed the same protection that other children would have received.***

On this morning, instead of finding cereal, the two small children found "long guns" in the cupboard. No, despite the behavior of the adults in his life, he didn't shoot his sister. However, a social worker commented later that had these children been of white or black heritage, they would have been removed from that home a long time earlier. But because they were of Indian heritage, they were not allowed the same protection that other children would have received. This same scenario of children suffering under the Indian Child Welfare Act continues to be played out across America on a daily basis.

In 1994, the Minnesota Supreme Court rejected a white couple's petition to adopt three Ojibwe sisters whom they'd been caring for quite awhile. The court held that non-Indians may adopt Indian children if they prove "good cause," but good cause can't be based on "a European value of family permanence". Subsequently, all three girls moved to a relatives' home. The oldest attempted to run away on several occasions, attempting to return to the white couple, only to be returned back to the relative in tears. She grew more unhappy and attempted suicide several times. At around 16 years old, she became involved with both Satanism and an angry, violent boy, who eventually murdered his father and attempted to murder the foster parents she had loved. In the year 2001, he was incarcerated and she was sent to in-patient therapy. Her sisters were also sent to separate treatment centers for troubled youths due to problems in the home of their relatives.

Also in 1994, Kayla, a fifth grader raised by her non-tribal aunt since she was 8 months old, wanted to stay in the only home she ever knew. She wanted to stay in Kentucky and continue with her basketball and cheerleading. But in 1994, the North Dakota Standing Rock Sioux Tribe sued. A reporter wrote for the Associated Press that the tribe needed her because they were struggling to keep their cultural heritage and identity intact. In that same article, a representative of a group called NARF estimated that 1.96 million people of Indian ancestry live off the reservations.

> ***This is the true purpose of the Indian Child Welfare Act: to return children to the reservation for the tribal government's benefit.***

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He said that puts the tribal courts at a disadvantage in custody cases. This is the true purpose of the Indian Child Welfare Act: to return children to the reservation for the tribal government's benefit. All Kayla wanted was for life to go back to normal.

In 1995, a small boy from Idaho was taken from the only home he had ever known and placed with unfamiliar relatives on the Oglala Sioux Reservation in South Dakota. It is agreed that the adoptive parents were good and he was happy. The only problem was that they were white. The couple argued that the tribe was notified prior to the adoption, and the adoption was completed before the tribe enrolled the child. The child was 50% Oglala Sioux; just as much non-Indian as he was Indian. The Supreme Court ruled against the adoptive parents.

In Indian Country, the assertion of cultural identity is often considered more important than the recognition of the fundamental purpose of enlightened government: to assist the well-being of the citizens it serves.

Also in 1995, two twin girls had been with their adoptive parents in Ohio since birth in 1993. At the time, the birth father wasn't a tribal member and didn't acknowledge any Indian ancestry. Later, he invoked his 3/32 Pomo heritage to gain custody. The final settlement stipulated the girls could stay with their adoptive parents, but have to be taken to visit the Pomo Reservation in California every other year. Former US Representative Deborah Pryce stated, "I am deeply concerned with the chilling effect the continued misapplication of this act could have upon the successful and timely adoption of children in need of homes and loving families."

During the process, a lawyer for the tribe confided that in this tribe of about five thousand members, they had about one thousand children in foster care.

Around 1996, A young South Dakota mother was diagnosed with cancer. Wanting her three children raised in a better way than she had, Ms. Hinsley moved off the reservation and began going to a Christian church. Feeling so strongly about how destructive her life on the reservation had been, she refused to enroll her children or have them be involved in tribal programs such as "Head Start". She also asked a friend to care for her children once she passed on. But before a legal will could be written, Ms. Hinsley died suddenly from a heart attack. The State Court turned the children over to the tribe as mandated by the Indian Child Welfare Act, pulling them out of school and away from non-tribal relatives and friends and placing them into foster care on the reservation. Although an Indian/white couple that lived off the reservation was interested in adopting the children, the tribal court chose instead to leave them in a reservation foster home. During the process, a lawyer for the tribe confided that in this tribe of about five thousand members, they had about one thousand children in foster care.

In 1997, attorney Michael Harris was asked by a county clerk to represent a natural father in a juvenile proceeding in a tribal court. The next day he received an order to appear for a status conference the following week. He wasn't given a phone number or address to contact the father, but because he was told it was just a status conference, he reasoned he could get by for now. This case revolved around the grandparents petition for custody. The natural mother, according to her attorney, was adamantly opposed to the grandparents' having custody. One of the children alleged she had been sexually abused by the grandfather. Evidence gathered by the child's psychologist and physician supported the claim. The mother also confessed to having been abused by the grandfather. The children were removed from the grandparents home, but the grandparents sued under the Indian Child Welfare Act, and this ultimately brought them to the status conference at hand.

But much to Harris surprise, the tribal Court, contrary to what was stated in the order to appear, immediately began a "full blown evidentiary disparities hearing". Despite the fact that neither natural parent was present or had even been consulted prior to this "status conference," the court began discussing the merits of giving custody to the grandparents, who had come to the hearing equipped with a plane ticket for the minor child in question.

Both Harris and the mother's attorney objected, and the Guardian Ad Litum attempted to intervene. A child welfare worker asked for a home study, but the request was ignored. Even the request for a criminal background check was dismissed. All evidence from the abuse investigation was suppressed, and in under 45 minutes, custody of the little girl was awarded to the grandparents.

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The attorney serving as Guardian Ad Litum subsequently quit serving the tribe in that capacity. Mr. Harris said later, "...but for the assertion of tribal jurisdiction (the grandparents) would in all likelihood both be serving substantial criminal sentences in California for their conduct which initially gave rise to this proceeding..." and "In Indian Country, the assertion of cultural identity is often considered more important than the recognition of the fundamental purpose of enlightened government: to assist the well-being of the citizens it serves."

In Indian Country, the assertion of cultural identity is often considered more important than the recognition of the fundamental purpose of enlightened government: to assist the well-being of the citizens it serves.

On June 11, 1999, Kimberly Cordova, a non-tribal member, was given 30 minutes notice to show up in Red Lake Tribal Court to defend the legal custody of her children. Not having any time to obtain counsel, she stood by helplessly as the court transferred physical custody of all three children to the man who had fathered the youngest two. The man, who was a tribal member, then turned around and obtained an order to forcibly remove Cordova from the reservation. On June 13, she was served the order to get off the reservation and wasn't given any time to return home to get clothes and possessions.

In November of 1999, an 8-year-old Brenda Swearington was beaten to death by her great uncle, whom she, along with her siblings, was placed with under the Indian Child Welfare Act. According to a court transcript, the uncle was quoted as saying..."I just lost my temper. Hit her, kicked her too hard when she wasn't doing what she was supposed to be doing." A witness stated having seen him pick the little girl up by her throat, "put her against the wall, let go of her, kicked her."

According to the Native American Press, after the child's death, other relatives begged the Leech Lake Reservation to pull out of the ICWA program, blaming the program's priorities and staff for the little girl's murder. One relative stated that if the ICWA staff had actually looked at the record of the great Uncle and Aunt, they should never have been chosen as caregivers. Robert Desjarlait, Brenda's former foster parent, is quoted saying, "When they placed those kids in that home, we knew it was a mistake." He also claims he had reported to authorities bruises he had seen on the children during visits. Despite his objections, Desjarlait said that the children were placed in the uncle's home under the Indian Child Welfare Act.

"One problem we're encountering is that when some of these people hear "ICWA" they just want to lay down and give up."

On Jan 6, 2000 – more than 2 years from their first notice that "Carl" was living with non-Indians off the reservation – a tribal council voted to gain custody of the child, seeking to "protect his Native American heritage." The tribal resolution indicated a transfer is more in the interest of the tribe than "Carl" when it stated; "Whereas, the Tribal Council has determined that there is no resource more vital to the continued existence and integrity of this Tribe than its children."

However, the birth mother, an enrolled tribal member, voluntarily placed her baby in foster care with the county when he was 18 months old and told caseworkers she was opposed to her tribe's intervention and that she had no ties to the tribe. The tribe subsequently declined jurisdiction, and continued to waive involvement over the next two years. The baby was placed in a white home. According to Carl's custodial mother, "One problem we're encountering is that when some of these people hear "ICWA" they just want to lay down and give up."

Also in the year 2000, 4-year-old "Mary" had known only one father her whole life. MH had taken care of her from the time she was 27 hours old. When she was born, she weighed only 4 pounds and was addicted to methamphetamine. During the first two years in his home, the birth mother made no effort to visit her, and so MH and his wife began the process to adopt her. According to MH, "She was born into adversity. She overcame drug addiction at way too young an age. She's overcome a tremendous amount of roadblocks to get where she is at. Why would anybody want to take that kind of success away from a child? It makes no sense."

But a tribal government did. Although Mary was only 1/32 Chippewa Cree and more Hispanic than Indian, the Tribal Government decided to claim her, and the State decided to allow them to. According to the State Child and Family Services Division, "Whether we think it is a good idea or not is immaterial; every state has to obey the Indian Child Welfare

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Act." According to 25 USC 1911, "... the Indian tribe shall retain exclusive jurisdiction..." and "...the (State) court, in the absence of good cause to the contrary, shall transfer...to the jurisdiction of the tribe...".

These are only some of the stories in the media or sent to us. There are many more children experiencing these same difficulties.

The tribe claims jurisdiction over my children and myself who are not accepted as members, we (including the children) are not enrollable.

Letter from a parent:

I was accepted into graduate school with a full tuition waiver, but would need to relocate 80 miles away...within a month after the move I was back in tribal court. This time C's council, "D"...was very good friends with the presiding judge. Full legal and physical custody was awarded to my ex.

The following March my daughter was removed from C's home by the tribes' child protective services for physical abuse. Evidently she got caught smoking marijuana and he kicked her so hard that he broke his toe. It is also in the record that he told her he would "take her out in the woods and kick her ass and that there would be no evidence," she was 14.

(My daughter) was first removed to a local center where D, who was now the tribes prosecuting attorney, took her into a private room and tried to bully her into saying that she had hired someone to give her the bruises. D also acted more like my ex's advocate instead of trying to prosecute him and the charges where dropped. Officially the case was dismissed because the officer who signed the child protection complaint said it was blank when he signed it and the child protection worker filled it in afterward. This was so upsetting that even the child protection worker broke down and cried in court.

(My daughter) was then removed to a treatment center in a different state and I wasn't allowed to have any contact with her for several months because I didn't have any custodial rights and my C would not put me on her visitors' list. Finally in early summer I did end up getting custody of (her) because she refused to go back to her dads'.

Social workers are so afraid of ICWA that it seems they would rather keep children in a bad situation than take a risk of upsetting tribal government.

...Every attempt to get the visitation (with the two younger boys) has been unsuccessful. The judge who issued the order told me to quit coming up there waving my court papers. ...The tribe claims jurisdiction over my children and myself who are not accepted as members, we (including the children) are not enrollable. ...I should mention that C's (new) mother in-law sits on the tribe's council. I realize everyone is not always protected equally under any law, but there should at least be a consistent attempt.

Letter, by Lisa Morris

In October of 1999, a beautiful baby boy was brought into this world. Just as the three siblings before him, he was born with crack cocaine in his blood. Time again, the parents made it clear their only real interest was in themselves. If there was a question as to whether to spend money on the children or on themselves, it was always themselves that came first. She had even been known to take Christmas presents meant for the kids and sell them for drug money.

After the children were put into foster care, the parents were given many chances to pull their lives together and get the children back. Social workers tried many times to get them into treatment. However, when workers arrived to her home to transport her, no one would answer the door. One time, when a social worker arrived to bring the mother to a treatment center, the mother hid behind a chair and cried to her sister "Don't let her in!" When the workers were successful in getting the mother placed in an outpatient or at best short-term center, they usually couldn't get her to finish. Time and again she left before completion. The father was also admitted to facilities on occasion, but, (maybe because they weren't married), the focus of social services was primarily on the mother.

At one point, in a politically correct attempt to reunite the family, the social workers sent the couple to visit some of their children by giving the couple full price airline tickets ($2600), a week in a motel, ($400) and cash to feed the children. The parents were broke within three days visiting the children. Despite some objections by relatives, the social workers said the experiment was a success and moved to reunite the family. Other relatives, aware that the couple was dealing drugs out of the apartment provided by the county, kept quiet in a sick assumption that they were somehow helping the couple. It was only

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a random drug test, showing positive for drugs, which stopped the social services from making their tragic mistake. Finally, after years of struggle, legal custody was given to others.

Minnesota law states that after children have been in a foster home for a year, there must be a legal move to place them in a permanent home. Despite this law attempting to protect children from languishing in foster homes, a social services worker has stated that this requirement is seldom lived up to. For children of Native American descent, however, being permanently placed into a good home is even harder. Social workers are so afraid of ICWA that it seems they would rather keep children in a bad situation than take a risk of upsetting tribal government.

This law fails to acknowledge that a dysfunctional family system, which includes large numbers of relatives, is frequently present.

In addition, ICWA demands that if the children can't be kept with the parents, relatives be considered second. It also demands that the social and cultural values of the reservation be taken into account when considering a placement of these children. What does it mean by that? Which values is it speaking of? One realizes that lawmakers were probably referring to traditional values. But many tribal members do not practice traditional values, and how does one measure if they do anyway?

This law fails to acknowledge that a dysfunctional family system, which includes large numbers of relatives, is frequently present. Within the family in question, there are few relatives that abhor violence, don't drink, don't do drugs, and believe strongly in the work ethic. Although there are some that are living happy, healthy lives, children raised in this family, in the custody of their own parents or with relatives, have frequently struggled with crime, drugs, murder and suicide. When sons are sent to jail, the family frequently blames others and has a hard time understanding what they themselves have done to help create the situation. Does it make sense to keep children within a dysfunctional setting?

For further information:

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Howard B. Hanson
Chairman
Resource Sentinel

We registered the Resource Sentinel in 1997 as a public service to educate citizens on issues concerning the environment and the proper economic management of our very valuable natural resources. The politics involved in the issue greatly impact our local and state economies and even more importantly our quality of life and social well being.

In 1980 we got involved supporting the resort tourism communities on Lake of the Woods and Rainy Lake whose local economies were being damaged by the overharvest of fish by commercial gill-netters. As this issue was drawing to a close in 1983, by buying out the netters, Indian tribes in Wisconsin and Minnesota started filing lawsuits to gillnet fish under the guise of 'treaty rights'. This led us to the study of the American Indian Movement and Federal Indian Policy. We had learned who the Tribes' friends were at the Capitol and we knew that something very "fishy" was going on.

In 1987 we connected with a group called the Citizens Equal Rights Alliance (CERA) that was formed in Montana and later incorporated in New Mexico. CERA works with tribal citizens studying Federal Indian Policy and the damage it is doing to reservation area citizens. We have been on the board of CERA for about sixteen years and have met many wonderful people including Lisa and Roland Morris.

The Morris' have contributed so much to our organization by educating us about the lack of human and civil rights on reservations. This fact sheet on the Indian Child Welfare Act is a testimonial to their dilemma because Lisa is caucasian and Roland is an Indian. Many legal minds have told the couple that if Lisa is the surviving spouse, the tribe may claim their grandchildren even though it is against Rolands' wishes. Presently he is their legal custodian however, he has a terminal illness. His will states that upon his death he wants them to stay in Lisa's care with their other children.

CERA publishes a newspaper and has an annual conference in Washington, D.C. To learn what every U.S. Citizen should know but what you won't see in your local newspaper go to *www.citizensalliance.org.*

In Minnesota, we were one of the founders of Proper Economic Resource Management. PERM has done an unbelievable job attempting to protect the interests of private landowners and their extremely important tourism economies in the treaty lawsuits filed by wards of the federal government who have an unrepublican and unconstitutional form of government but who claim to have "Sovereign Supreme" power. We believe that when they were conveyed U.S. citizenship in the 1920's that "We the People"would have also given them the responsibilities to abide by the Constitution of the United States and the "Equality" of its laws. To learn more about PERM go to *www.perm.org.*

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