

## Benjamin Hawkins Civilization Speech to Creeks - 1796

Greetings brothers from my Great Father, George Washington. I am Benjamin Hawkins, agent to your people. You know me well as one who has lived among you and learned your ways. I have always dealt fairly and justly with you and you have welcomed me to your council meetings to smoke and drink tea with you. I now come with a plan that I hope will ease tensions between the White people and your people and help you provide food, clothing and prosperity to your people.

You and the white people have to learn to share this land. We sign treaties, but many of you violate the treaties, as do the farmers. They hunt your lands, you cross their lands to hunt, they cut your trees, you raid their villages. We are proposing a plan to civilize your villages and make your ways like our ways. We know your deerskin trade is drying up and you have begun raising small numbers of cattle and hogs, like your white farmer brothers. You have raised corn and beans and cultivated bountiful gardens for generations. We want to help you raise even more food on smaller plots of land to decrease the tensions between your people and the white people.

In order to become civilized, we propose that your men begin plowing your fields in our way, which will allow you to plant many more crops than you can do now by hand. Your men should give up the hunt, which leads to wild living and put his hand to the plow which teaches patience, discipline, and responsibility. We will be happy to provide you with plows and other tools we have invented along with seeds for cotton, flax, wheat, and other important grains. Your women can learn to weave and sew garments from cotton, rather than relying on deerskins and pelts. It is inappropriate for them to be out in your fields, digging with sticks, where man should be while they could be in the home sewing beautiful, light, garments for their families. You could raise more hogs and cattle as well as chickens and goats. You can learn to use many of these products yourselves, but also trade with the frontier families.

If our people hope to communicate, you will need to learn to read our language and use our numbers and money. Accumulating money and tools will be rewarding and generate a spirit of ambition among your men. Also, as you have seen the need for treaties, let us help you write down laws and rules as well as punishments in our way. The individual who commits a crime is the one who should pay the debt. You ensure fairness and justness when laws are written down and known to all men. We would be happy to accept your children into schools to teach them to read, write, and make numbers. We also want to reward the most industrious among you with medals for your successes in learning our ways.

In order to enforce these treaties, you should give your Mico more power to enforce the rules made by the Council. It causes conflict when the chief agrees to a treaty or deal and then can not enforce it upon his people. The wise men of the United States meet together once a year, to consider what will be for the good of all their people. The wise men of each separate state also meet together once or twice every year, to consult and do what

is good for the people of their respective states. Your traditions have similar practices in bringing your village counsels together for meetings. I encourage you to have these once or twice a year so that I may meet with you. I would give you information from the white people, such as the laws made by the Great Council for the preservation of peace. It should be agreeable to you to hold such a meetings to speak your mind to me, so I can communicate your wishes to the Great Father, President of the United States.

Finally, we share your belief in the Great Creator but want to introduce you to His Son, Jesus and His Spirit, which lives in all of us. We believe the Great Creator made all men and loves all men. We believe that we live differently because of the land and customs in which we grow. We want to improve your towns and lives by teaching you to be like us so you will be happier and we will be at peace.

I am sure you will have many good questions for me so that I can explain this generous plan to you more fully.