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Based on the implications of religion and biology for survival, this paper will focus cultural change and the forced assimilation of the Mescalero Apache people of New Mexico and the impact of Christian missionization on their belief system. New evidence of these tragedies continues to accumulate and it is of great interest for utilizing the Pollen Path of Resistance in new ways. Special consideration will be given to the evolution of these religious traditions and the food quest, which in a former hunter and gatherer society required developing techniques addressed to the possibilities for sustainability. The essential interface between the biological aspects of being human and knowing one's ecosystem allows for developing methods for creative choices, acquiring skills, knowledge, attitudes, and religious traditions that function effectively in the natural world. Much of this discussion is based on my own qualitative research collected from my Elders and especially my philosopher/mentor, the late Apache/Navajo Chanter and specialist of our contemporary girls' puberty ceremony, the late Willitto Antonio. This eight-day ceremony called Isanaklesh recognizes young Apache girls who have reached puberty as special and worthy of this powerful and magnificent gift. The first four days are marked by elaborate ritual detail and festive social activities. The ceremony's songs, stories, and images combine to leave a powerful imprint of Isanaklesh, Earth Woman, on both the girl herself and the relatives, friends, and family members in attendance.

This transformation into womanhood is accomplished by ceremonially awakening the pubescent initiate to the world around her. For some girls, the ceremony is said to calm their adolescent imbalances. The Mescalero conceive of "fixing" the young initiate, ridding her of her childhood ways and helping her through the door of adolescence, for at this young age the girls are said to be soft and moldable, capable of being conditioned by their female kin and others around them. Timid girls may need to be awakened to their female identities, while others may need to be taught to settle down and be more sensible. By focusing here on the importance of the role of women, we learn that our people have always utilized appropriate ecological knowledge and careful methods for identifying technologies and resources. By correcting behavior, hope is embedded in these rules for living and sustainability is learned by young children as they hear the sacred narratives that come alive in ceremony while dancing and singing. This is where as Alcorta reminds us, "our young girls gain recognition as adults by their social groups as they learn our culture's sacred oral religious traditions at this time. Maturing connections among centers of memory, abstract reasoning, and emotion dispose teenagers to becoming emotionally invested in what is salient in their environment." This allows our young girls to be ritually transformed from being girls to becoming the female deity, Earth Mother, to becoming exemplary Apache women. These changes create an Apache theory of wisdom implying a continuity, that wisdom comes from a set of earlier conditions that are also qualities of mind.